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Understanding the Bible *Biblical Survey*

A Survey of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation

Cornerstone Christian Fellowship

PART II - NEW TESTAMENT

Understanding the Bible — Biblical Survey

A survey of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation
(Revised 2017/2018)

Part II
The New Testament

**From the UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE
STUDY SERIES**

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Unless otherwise noted, all the Scriptural passages used throughout this study are from the NKJV.

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Lesson Eight — The First Coming of the Christ

Day One — The Prophecies of The Messiah

Day Two — His Birth

Day Three — The Identity of Jesus

Day Four — The Offer of the Kingdom

Day Five — The Offer Rejected and Withdrawn

Last week we completed Understanding the Bible – Biblical Survey Part I. We barely scratched the surface of the Words of the Prophets with respect to establishment of Israel’s theocracy, its fall, the scattering of the people, the future re-gathering of the nation, and the reestablishment of the kingdom. During the reign of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, the kingdom was divided, as the people continued in disobedience. Eventually, both kingdoms were destroyed — the Northern Kingdom (aka Israel) was scattered amongst the Gentile nations, the Southern Kingdom (aka Judah) was overthrown, captured and exiled to the Gentile nation of Babylon, and the City of Jerusalem was destroyed. Seventy years after the Southern Kingdom was exiled, a remnant was allowed to go back to their land and rebuild. With a number of Jews back in the land, God sent the last prophet, Malachi, to speak to His people.

Some 400 years later, God sent His angel, Gabriel, to speak to a priest who had been chosen by lot to minister in the temple that day. The words the angel said to Zacharias, the priest, were the exact words that God has spoken to His people 400 years prior through Malachi.

In the Old Testament portion of this Survey, we have been able to glimpse, at least in part, what God had begun to reveal — His plans and purposes for the ages. In the Old Testament, *a portion of the complete picture was held in mystery*. Now with the unfolding of God’s *written* Word (through the pen of the New Testament writers), we are able to grasp the picture with much more detail. As we begin to peruse the pages of the New Testament, we will begin to see more of the details of God’s eternal plan, which was laid down in the Old Testament.

Isaiah was a pre-exilic prophet predominantly sent to the Southern Kingdom during the time the Northern Kingdom was taken captive and scattered. In spite of the warnings that Isaiah spoke, along with several of the other pre-exilic prophets, the Southern Kingdom, with some exceptions during the reign of certain righteous kings, continued to spiral down and away from the Lord. Isaiah prophesied to kings and to a generation of Israel who would not allow themselves to be impacted by God’s Word. The Southern Kingdom was taken into Babylonian captivity about 140 years after the destruction of the Northern Kingdom.

Shortly after the onset of Judah’s captivity, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. Then, after the Medes and Persians overtook Babylon, which coincided with the end of the 70-year period of Judah’s captivity (as prophesied by Jeremiah [Jer. 25:10-13]), Judah was allowed to go back to their land and rebuild Jerusalem, the temple, and wall. There were three post-exilic prophets — Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi (see chart at the end of our last lesson) — each telling the plans the Lord

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had yet for Israel. After the Word of the Lord came to Malachi, the final prophet, there was a long period of silence from Heaven — 400 years.

The prophecy of Amos came to bear on the Jews. Amos, after being told by a priest to leave the Northern Kingdom and go prophesy in the Southern Kingdom (Amos 7:12), uttered these words:

Amos 8:11

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD...”

So there was silence...

...for 400 years!

And then...

A woman who was called barren,
bore a son; and they called him John.

Suddenly a bright light shone in the darkness...
...a star shining in the east.

A virgin had conceived and had borne a Son, and they
called Him Immanuel, “God with us.”

Then a voice was heard...

...a voice crying in the wilderness
...calling the people to

**“Repent, for the Kingdom of the
Heavens was at hand.”**

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Day One— The Prophecies of the Messiah

Begin your week in prayer. Pray for continued understanding, asking the Holy Spirit to be your Teacher. And be sure to praise God for Who He is! Then we can begin our lesson.

For 400 years, God did not raise up a man to speak His word. For 400 years there was silence!

Centuries prior, the prophet Nathan had prophesied to King David an awesome promise —

II Samuel 7

12 “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son...”

Write out the last statement printed above —

Then the prophet Isaiah added more details concerning this promise —

Isaiah 7

14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

And —

Isaiah 9

6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever...

What do these prophecies mean?

Yes, the Jews knew that “Immanuel” meant “God with us” (Mt. 1:23). God’s presence *had been* with His people before in Shekinah Glory from the time He hovered over Sinai to the time His presence filled the temple in the days of the kings. Here Isaiah told them to expect GOD to come *in human flesh* — born of a virgin.

How could it be? *A virgin* to give birth to *God* as the *Son of God*? Let’s read about how the story unfolds.

Luke 1

5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6

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And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years....

....11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

List all the things that the angel told Zacharias about his forthcoming son. (Isaiah had prophesied concerning Zacharias’ son John, in Isaiah 40:3.)

A short time later, an angel had another message to give. He appeared to a young virgin named Mary.

Luke 1

26 Now in the sixth month [of Elizabeth’s pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” 29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; 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 of His kingdom there will be no end.”

34 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” 35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible.”

Write out how this pregnancy will occur.

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There are five prophecies in v. 32 and 33. List them below and on the next page:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Is there any reason to believe that any of these prophecies should be taken in a spiritual (i.e. non-literal) sense?

Mary's response —

38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Mary went straightway to Elizabeth's house.

Luke 1

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

What did Elizabeth say about Mary's baby?

What did Elizabeth say about Mary (v. 43)?

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Mary's response to Elizabeth —

Luke 1

46 And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. 49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. 50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. 54 He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy,

Make a list of the things Mary says about God.

We'll pick it up tomorrow.

Day Two— His Birth

We will continue today where we left off yesterday. Be sure to begin your study in prayer.

Mary stayed with Elizabeth and Zacharias for about three months, until it came time for Elizabeth's baby to be born. As their son was born, read what Zacharias says:

Luke 1

67 Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 68 “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, 69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, 70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, 71 That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: 74 To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

What did Zacharias say that God has done? Especially notice v. 73.

Zacharias continues his prayer, now speaking to his newly born son:

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76 “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, 77 To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; 79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”

What does Zacharias say concerning his son’s relationship to Mary’s baby (v. 76)?

What will Zacharias’ son do?

Now back to what is happening in Mary’s life. After staying about three months, she left Elizabeth’s house and returned home. Most likely by this time, it would be becoming evident that she was indeed pregnant. The Lord knows all and as Mary trusted God for His timing, God sent an angel to Mary’s betrothed, Joseph, to tell him of His plan.

Matthew 1

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Notice the identity of Joseph’s lineage (v. 20). From what line did Joseph come?

What did the angel tell Joseph about the baby?

In making these lists of all that the angel and the different people had said about Jesus, we are learning quite a lot about Him. But we have a few more lists to make. Remember, “line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, there a little” (Isa. 28: 9, 10). It’s how we learn!

In order to be counted in a Roman census (for taxation purposes), Mary and Joseph made a trip to Bethlehem, during which time the Baby was born. These events were brought about in order to fulfill a prophecy concerning the birth place of Jesus — that it would take place in the town from which King David came — Bethlehem.

Not far from the city of Bethlehem was a place where shepherds were keeping watch over a flock of sheep. After “Immanuel” was born, an angel appeared to these shepherds.

Luke 2

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory

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of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ [5547] the Lord [2962]. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

First look up these words in the appendix:

Christ <5547>

Lord <2962>

Now make a list of all that the angel told the shepherds about the baby.

Continuing —

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

Then, on the eighth day, Jesus’ parents brought Him to the temple for His circumcision. Note what an elderly man, having been filled by the Holy Spirit, said of Jesus.

Luke 2

25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. 27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.” 33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against 35 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

List what Simeon said about Jesus:

We’ll note the words of one more person.

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Luke 2

36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; 37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. 38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

From this passage, describe this woman named Anna.

What did she say about the Child?

Before we close for today, look over the lists that you have made and write a brief but concise statement of *who* Jesus Christ is and *why* He came.

Day Three— The Identity of Jesus

Now that we have established the details of Jesus' birth, let's look at some New Testament passages which deal with the purpose of His first coming. Some of these verses will be familiar to you, and some may not be quite so familiar. But putting them together may give us a better grasp of the whole picture. As you read these verses, make a note in the space provided as to *why* Jesus came, *what* He did, for *whom* He did it, etc.

Let's look first at a few passages out of the first chapter of the Gospel of John. There are some interesting facts to gather and ones that may be easily overlooked. We'll just gather the facts for now. Later we'll look at the implications of these statements.

John 1

1 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. ...

...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.

Describe what these verses say of Jesus.

John 1

15 John [the Baptist] bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"

What did John, the Baptist, say of Jesus?

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John 1

19 Now this is the testimony of John [the Baptist], when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” 20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” 21 And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” 22 Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” 23 He said: “I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Make straight the way of the LORD,”’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

These are interesting questions posed to John, with interesting responses.

“I am not *the Christ*.” The word Christ means *Messiah, Anointed One*. (Catch what they are asking!)

“Are you the Prophet?” (This would refer back to what Moses said about God sending a Prophet just like him [Duet. 18:15-18]).

What do these questions reveal about their thoughts concerning One Who is to come?

John 1

29 The next day John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!...”

... 34 “And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” 35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

The phrase John uses twice here is an interesting one. In both places he calls Jesus “the Lamb of God.” John is speaking of Jesus fulfilling both the Old Testament pictures of the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, the means of redemption, and also His fulfilling the picture of both the sacrificial animal and the scape goat on the Day of Atonement. The Feast of Passover was the an annual feast to remember how God redeemed Israel out of bondage; and the Day of Atonement was an annual feast which allowed for the cleansing of the sins of God’s redeemed people. The differences between the two feast days are important to understand, even as we consider John’s words here.

The Passover and the Day of Atonement were two feast days separated by seven months, each having two completely separate contexts and meanings. Passover was the day to remember how God redeemed the people out of bondage, and became the reminder of the God-given means of redemption for someone not yet redeemed — faith in the death and shed blood of the lamb. Then seven months beyond that feast, the Day of Atonement was an annual feast day set aside for the cleansing of the sins of *redeemed people* committed that previous year. Two animals were involved on the Day of Atonement, both vicariously dealt with the confessed sins of the people for the year — one was sacrificed (for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness), and the other was led out of the camp alive taking away the sins of the people. Both animals were required in order to fully do away with the sins of the people. It was in this respect that John called Jesus *the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the people*. Jesus was to be the sacrificed animal, a blood

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sacrifice, for the cleansing of their sins; *and* He was to be their scape goat, for the doing away with the sins — once for all.

With this in mind, go back and read the John 1:29, 34-36 printed above and see if you understand the meaning a bit differently now.

Continuing in John chapter one, note the description of Jesus:

John 1

40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).

45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Write out what both said about Him. What was emphasized in their statements?

Then, once Nathanael met Jesus, he said:

John 1

49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Do you notice that the two titles which Nathanael used are related? What is the relationship?

Please write a short review of what you learned in today's study.

Day Four — The Offer of the Kingdom

It must be seen that the New Testament is *enfolded* in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is *unfolded* in the New. Since the NT is a continuation of the OT, it is an unfinished picture if a student of God's Word studies only *half* of Scripture and not the *whole*. This is the goal of this study course, to grasp an understanding of the whole.

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Yesterday we glimpsed the first chapter in the Gospel of John, in order to get an idea of the thoughts of the people during the presentation of Christ to them. You may want to re-read your summary to have these thoughts fresh in your mind as we begin today. Also remember to pray for your study time.

Today we are going to glimpse some of the statements of and about Christ as to the *purpose* of His coming. It may shed a little different light than what you have previously thought concerning His first coming. (That's why it is imperative to pray for understanding.)

First, let's see what the message was from the forerunner of Christ — John the Baptist. Below are his first recorded words in the Gospel of Matthew. When you come to his quote, underline what John says.

Matthew 3

1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

At this point in your understanding, what do you think is the meaning of John's words?

Immediately following Jesus' baptism by John, God speaks from heaven concerning Jesus. Underline what He said.

Matthew 3

16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

In order to understand the import of the Father's statement, and in order to understand what the Jews knew this statement to mean, it *must* be related back to the prophecy given in II Samuel 7:12-14a, which we looked at on Day One.

Relate God's statement in Matthew 3:17 to God's statement in II Samuel 7:14. What is obvious?

The statement spoken from heaven is clearly the fulfillment of what was previously stated by God in II Samuel. It reveals that Jesus is the One Who is David's descendant, the One Who will sit on David's throne, and the One Who will have an everlasting kingdom. Remember Jesus came to the Jews as their King! And as such, he came to offer them *the Kingdom of the Heavens*. We must get the important meaning of the title "the Son of God." We must hear it for what it is rather than letting it slip by without understanding its true meaning. (Next week we will work on the meaning of the phrase "the Kingdom of the Heavens.")

After Jesus' baptism and sometime either during or after His 40 days in the wilderness, John was taken into custody. When Jesus heard this news, He began preaching the same message that John had preached. Underline His words in both passages below.

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Matthew 4

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”...

...23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom....

Luke 4

41 And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of God!” And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ. 42 Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; 43 but He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.” 44 And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

According to these two passages, what was the message Jesus was taking to the Jews? Compare it to the message John had been giving.

From the passage in Luke chapter four, what did the demons say of Jesus?

Jesus states the specific reason why He was sent. Why?

To whom did He give the message?

For the following three years, Jesus did public ministry. He walked the streets of Jerusalem and the surrounding regions, continuing to take this message to the Jews, but not to the Gentiles. It was a message *concerning the Kingdom of the Heavens*, which had to do with the unconditional covenant made with Abraham in Canaan, and related to the conditional covenant made with Abraham’s descendants through Moses at Mt. Sinai. The irrevocable promises made to Abraham and to His descendants concern the land, and his descendants having an inheritance in the land — the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17:7-8). But an *individual’s participation* in the promises of this covenant is fully conditional upon their willingness to obey — the Mosaic covenant (Ex. 19:5-6).

The message of the New Testament, though, had to do with the second realm of the kingdom promised to Abraham’s descendants. It had to do with *the heavenly portion* of the kingdom, which can be easily seen as one peruses the pages of the New Testament. The Firstborn Sons of God are in a place to receive a double-portion of the inheritance! And both realms of the kingdom make up the double-portion.

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(It is an interesting study to look at a red-lettered edition of the Bible and see what was uppermost on Jesus' mind in His last week on earth prior to His death, even His entire public ministry, for that matter.)

It becomes very obvious that the focus of His message concerned offering the Kingdom of the Heavens to Abraham's descendants, the only ones on earth who were in a position to be made such an offer¹. They were the people of God, the only people who had access to the Living God, and the only people who were descendants of the one to whom the promises were given. God was their King. Jesus was God in the flesh, and had come to offer the Kingdom of the Heavens to them. They only needed to repent from their sinfulness and receive their King and the kingdom.

Tomorrow we'll see how they responded to this offer. And we will continue to study these things as we work through the next several weeks of study.

That's it for today! Have a nice one!

Day Five — The Offer Rejected and Withdrawn

Thus far this week we have glimpsed the message which was brought by both John the Baptist and the message of Jesus Christ. Both brought an identical message to God's people — the only people on earth who could have been offered this specific message. The message had to do with *repentance* and *the Kingdom of the Heavens*. Next week, we will delve into the message more fully, striving to understand exactly what it was that was offered to the Jews. But in order to finish up our lesson this week, we will look into something which we already know — the Jews rejected the message and crucified the Messenger, the King.

Today we will look at a few events which took place during the last week of Christ's public ministry, exactly prior to His death. We'll begin on the first day of that week.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Look to see what the crowds were saying on this day —

John 12

12 The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!"

Matthew 21

8 And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" 10 And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" 11 So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

Mark 11

8 And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 Then those who went before and those who followed

¹ For more information on this subject see the article in the Appendix entitled ISRAEL A SPECIAL CREATION SEPARATE FROM THE NATIONS.

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cried out, saying: “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ 10 Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

Luke 19

37 Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, 38 saying:” ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!’ Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

From all four gospel accounts, what seems foremost in the minds of the Jews this first day of Christ’s last week?

As Jesus entered into the city that day, numerous things began to take place in rapid succession. It seems that the hatred on the part of the leadership toward Jesus grew daily. Just a few weeks prior, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the leaders had already decided to look for an opportunity to kill Him. (So adamant had they become in desiring to kill Jesus, that they sought even to put Lazarus to death as well.) With the events of this first day of the week of Passover, they looked for a way to kill Him all the more!

Early in this particular week of Passover, Jesus spent the days walking through the streets teaching the crowds and answering the Pharisees accusations, talking much about the Kingdom of the Heavens. But in the evenings, He would retreat with His disciples to have some very intimate moments with them, as He continued to teach them and encourage them, again talking much about the Kingdom of the Heavens. Of course, in His omniscience, He knew His time was growing shorter by the day.

At some point in the final weeks of Christ’s public ministry the leaders, speaking on behalf of the nation of Israel, crossed over the line. There was a defining moment in Matthew chapter twelve when the leaders attributed Jesus’ power to perform miracles to Satan. As a result, here in chapter twenty-one, Jesus mentions the fact that He was going to withdraw the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens, which He had been making to them for the previous three years. Let’s read about it.

Matthew 21 (speaking to the Pharisees)

33 “Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ 39 So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”

41 They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’S doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’? 43 Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”

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45 Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

Who does the landowner represent?

What did the landowner do with the vineyard?

What did the vinedressers do?

When did the landowner send his son?

What did the vinedressers do with the son and why?

Jesus asked the next question directly to the Chief Priests and Pharisees. “When the landowner comes, what will he do with the vinedressers?” How did they answer?

What will the landowner do with the vineyard?

Does the landowner have the right to do this? Why?

What does v. 43 imply that the vineyard represents?

According to v. 45, whom do the vinedressers picture?

Why will the vineyard be taken from the vinedressers and given to another people? What are these other people to do?

This is exactly what happened. Due to the continual unrepentant state of the leadership of the Jews, and their sway over the people, Jesus withdrew the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens from the Jews and, as we will

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see next week, was going to offer it to a new man, a new creation. We will study this more in upcoming weeks. But just a few more details need to be filled in before we end for the week. Notice something here. John wrote —

John 12

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

What do these verses say?

As a result of a lack of repentance on the part of the majority of the leadership and their holding sway over the people, they connived to kill their King. And the very crowd who had begun the week singing praises to the “Son of David” as He rode into the city on a donkey, had another cry —

Mark 15

12 Pilate answered and said to them again, “What then do you want me to do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?” 13 So they cried out again, “Crucify Him!” 14 Then Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they cried out all the more, “Crucify Him!” 15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.

And so they did! They crucified their King!

So what happened? Has there yet been a change of powers in “the Kingdom of the Heavens”? The One offering the kingdom to the Jews was crucified by them! So did Satan win? What does this all mean? And what does it have to do with Gentiles, who are not a part of the descendants of Abraham? Where do they fit into all of this? Is this plan of God thwarted completely?

Not at all! It is all a part of God’s overall plan. This is ALL Plan A, and not Plan B. There is not Plan B with God! The fulfillment of these things had to take place, and were the working out of Old Testament prophecies concerning the eternal plans and purposes of God. We’ll see more of the unfolding of God’s plan as we continue in the weeks to come.

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Lesson Nine — The Kingdom of the Heavens

Day One — God’s People, a Kingdom of Priests

Day Two — Two Realms of One Kingdom

Day Three — Beginning with the Earthly,
Moving Toward the Heavenly

Day Four — The Gospels

Day Five — The Sower and the Seed

We are at a turning point! Thus far, we have glimpsed various large portions of the Biblical puzzle, fitting many of the detailed small pieces together into various, separate sections. The sections are as follows:

- The purpose of man’s creation — man was created to rule.
- The present system of rulership — fallen angelic forces ruling from the heavens over the earth, headed by Satan.
- The call of and promises to Abraham and his descendants — that they would 1) be innumerable (as the sand and the stars), 2) possess a land, and 3) receive an inheritance in that land.

We have also seen Abraham’s descendants through Isaac and Jacob, grow in numbers, become enslaved in a land not their own, and be redeemed from slavery for the purpose of being taken into another land. We have seen this first generation fall away, losing their inheritance due to their disobedience.

We have also seen the establishment of the theocratic kingdom within the land, the interruption of that kingdom, and the displacement of Israel from the land (due to continual disobedience). Then we have glimpsed some of the prophecies concerning Israel’s future reestablishment.

Last week we viewed the first coming of Christ, and the message He pronounced — *the Kingdom of the Heavens*. We witnessed the rejection of the offer of the kingdom and the crucifixion of the One making the offer — the very King Himself. The question that we will consider this week is this — What does the phrase *the Kingdom of the Heavens* mean? Exactly what did Christ’s offer entail for Abraham’s descendants?

Understanding the answers to these questions is essential in order to fit together these large and various sections of Scripture. As we get more into the New Testament, the overall picture of Scripture will really begin to take shape and dimension, as these sections fall into place. Please continue to pray for yourself and the others in your group as you work through this week’s lesson. Let’s begin.

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Day One — God’s People, a Kingdom of Priests

Let’s remember for a moment how God’s Word is structured. God purposely begins at one point and purposely ends at another point. (Remember your timeline?) The foundation of the entire Scripture is laid down in Genesis 1:1-2:3. It is this:

- In the beginning, there was a perfect creation (Gen. 1:1);
- there was a ruin of that creation (Gen. 1:2a); and
- there was a restoration of the ruined creation, in which God took six days to complete (Gen. 1:2b-31). Then
- God rested on the seventh day and He sanctified it (Gen. 2:1-3).

That’s it. Plain and simple!

And it is upon this foundation that God builds the structure of the remainder of Scripture. In the beginning, He explains the created purpose of man — to rule; and in the end He brings that purpose to fruition — Christ, the *Son of Man*, ruling from an established throne with redeemed mankind ruling with Him for an entire period of time (one thousand years [Rev. 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]). This thousand-year period is called the Messianic Era or the Millennial Reign of Christ. It is also referred to as the Sabbath Rest (Heb. 4:9-11; cf. Gen. 2:1-3). And everything between the beginning point and the end point is a part of the puzzle that fits together with precision, accuracy, and purpose. (We will continue to build on this foundation in upcoming weeks.)

In order to comprehend *the big picture of Scripture*, we must see and understand how God deals with Abraham’s descendants *in both* the Old Testament and the New Testament, understanding exactly who Abraham’s descendants are, along with the implications thereof.

First, the specific promises made to Abraham have to do with *redeemed people*, not the world-at-large (although the world-at-large will ultimately be blessed through these promises being fulfilled in the Coming Age [Gen. 12:3]). The promises are given only to those who are saved! So it is necessary to understand how salvation is accomplished in the Old Testament, and what are the implications thereof. As we have seen, *the means* and *the end* of salvation in the Old Testament is the same as *the means* and *the end* of salvation in the New Testament. The *means* of salvation involves faith in the provision God gives, which has always been *death and shed blood*. (Initially, God shed the blood of an animal [Gen. 3:21], which remained *the means* of salvation throughout the entire Old Testament. As we have previously seen, more details were added to the revelation of the means of salvation [Gen. 4; Gen. 22; Ex. 12], all of which ultimately pointed to the shedding of blood and death of Jesus Christ.) Anyone putting faith in the provision God made — the blood of an animal in the Old Testament (pointing to or foreshadowing, Christ’s redemptive work), or the blood of Jesus Christ in the New Testament — was saved!

And *the end* of salvation remains unchanged also. *The end* is eternal life, which has been, is now, and always will be a *free gift*. This free gift is received apart from any work of an individual himself. It is only God Who can accomplish this work. The only thing necessary on the part of an individual in order to be saved is to *believe* in the provision made — the death of the lamb (OT) /Lamb (NT).

But more is implicated in this salvation than solely the free gift of eternal life. Once this salvation/redemption has taken place, a door of opportunity opens up. When Abraham’s descendants were redeemed on the night of Passover, they were placed in a position to participate in a *theocracy* (a system of government wherein God would be King and His people would be the administrators of that kingdom). Redeemed Israel was placed in a position where they might become a *kingdom of priests*, a holy nation (Ex. 19:4-6). Two things were necessary on the part of an individual in order to partake in this kingdom: 1) he was to have been redeemed through faith (realizing salvation, passing “from death to life”), and 2) he was then to exercise

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faithful obedience toward God's commands. The first is a singular event (salvation/redemption) which takes place at a particular *point in time*. This *event* is referred to in Scripture as *salvation* or *redemption*. Both terms are interchangeable in this regard. The second is a process which is to take place over a *period of time*. This *process* leads to what is also referred to in Scripture as *salvation/redemption* or *the inheritance*. These terms are interchangeable in this regard.

The term *salvation* in Scripture can either be referring to *the initial event*, or it can be referring to *the succeeding process*. (More on that in Lesson Twelve.) The former takes place the moment a person puts faith in the provision God gives, and the latter subsequently takes place along the way of life as a person exercises faithful obedience. Context would determine which facet of salvation is in view in any given passage.

Again, there is something essential to understand at this point. To experience *initial* salvation only involves one thing on man's part — *faith!* But to take part in the theocracy as a priest in God's kingdom involves something beyond simple faith, it requires *faithful obedience*. And participating in the kingdom has to do with *receiving the inheritance* as a firstborn son. (As we shall see in upcoming weeks, this distinction clears up much misunderstanding concerning the issues having to do with salvation!)

Another way to state the previous paragraph is to say that only family members (those who are redeemed through faith into the family of God) have the right to become priests in God's kingdom and receive the inheritance as a firstborn son of God. The free gift, received through faith, puts an individual into the family. Ongoing faithful obedience allows that redeemed individual to receive the inheritance as a firstborn son. And the inheritance has to do with the theocracy, the kingdom of God. We have seen some of this play out in the Old Testament. This week we will begin to see how this plays out in the New Testament.

As we close for the day, would you summarize in your own words the contents of the last six paragraphs, adding any questions you have about this at the end of your summary. (The purpose of this exercise is to solidify your understanding of these things.)

Day Two— Two Realms of One Kingdom

As we begin today, please read the summary you wrote at the end of yesterday's lesson. (Hang on to the questions you may have; most likely they will be answered for you in upcoming lessons.) Be sure to pray as you begin.

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Let's think through a few things. You know that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Write down which two realms are mentioned in this very first verse in the whole Bible?

You also know that Satan and his fallen angels rule over the earth. But from where do they rule? Are they ruling the earth *from the earth* or *from the heavens* above the earth? (Look at the end of Eph. 6:12 and the end of Dan. 4:26, if you need help in answering this question. Or go back and skim Lesson Four.)

So, what two realms are obviously involved in Satan's domain?

Even now Satan and his angels are ruling from the heavenly realm over the earthly realm. (Of course there are heavens beyond that over which Satan and his angels have no control. The heavens from which they exercise control are the heavens that have to do with the earth, not the heavens extending throughout the universe.)

We have also seen that in Satan's fall, as the Scriptures state, his sanctuaries (plural) became profaned, or desecrated, which would refer to both the earth and the heavens that surround the earth (Ezek. 28:18).

Both realms are mentioned in the very first verse of the Bible — *God created* the heavens and the earth. And subsequent to this first verse in all of Scripture, we get information of His creating things *to fill* both of these realms. In the passages printed below, Paul states some of the details (not that this is the first place this information can be seen in Scripture, but Paul words it so succinctly here).

Colossians 1

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

Paul tells us that God created things *in* these two realms. With respect to *creation*, which realm is mentioned first? (This answer is seen in this passage, as well as in Gen. 1:1.)

Then what does Paul say God created within the two realms?

Did you notice that there are both *visible* and *invisible* thrones, dominions, principalities, powers? Write out the obvious — which set goes with which realm?

Continuing —

...20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

According to v. 20 (as it follows v. 16), what needed to be reconciled through the blood of Christ?

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Putting all of this together, what do you think is the reason for *things* in *both* realms needing reconciliation?

According to Colossians 1:16, 20, specifically what things on earth needed reconciliation?

According to Colossians 1:16, 20, specifically what things in the heavens needed reconciliation?

Both sets of created things — *visible* and *invisible* thrones, dominions, principalities and powers — needed to be reconciled to God, showing that in time past, both realms of authority had been in perfect accord with God, then became out of accord, resulting in a need for a reconciliation. And according to the passage, both realms *are reconciled* through the blood of Christ.

We will glimpse another passage written by Paul which has to do with the same idea.

Ephesians 1

8 ... in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His 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

How is this passage similar to the one we studied in Colossians?

What added facts can you draw from the Ephesians passage?

According to this passage, in the fullness of time, what will be summed up in Christ?

Recount in your own words what you just learned from these two passages in today's lesson.

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Day Three — Beginning with the Earthly, Moving Toward the Heavenly

The Old Testament deals primarily with the earthly realm, along with an earthly inheritance for Abraham's physical descendants (through Isaac and Jacob) — the land. Now we are going to see that the New Testament deals primarily with the heavenly realm, along with a heavenly inheritance for Abraham's spiritual descendants (through the blood of Christ) — the heavenly land. The offer of the heavenly realm of the kingdom is that which the Jews, as a nation, forfeited when they rejected the One making the offer. We will look more closely into these things in upcoming weeks, but today we want to see if Old Testament saints knew anything about this heavenly realm and the inheritance therein.

Abraham was called by God and was told of a land that God would give to him and to his descendants after him. Throughout the progressive revelation God gave to Abraham, he learned that he would have many descendants, that these descendants would have a land of their own, and that they would have an inheritance in that land — possessing the gates of their enemies (i.e., exercising power over them). Throughout eleven chapters in Genesis (chs. 12-22), God begins to unveil and make known the details of His promises to Abraham. And we have learned much about the promises given to Israel, through studying these eleven chapters. But there is more to learn about the promises of the inheritance for Abraham's descendants throughout the New Testament. Again, for the most part the Old Testament deals with the land, the *earthly portion* of the kingdom; and the New Testament deals with the heavens, the *heavenly portion* of the kingdom.

But there are a couple of questions which must be asked — Since there is *an inheritance* connected with the earthly kingdom, would there also be *an inheritance* connected with the Heavenly Kingdom? Did Abraham and his descendants know anything of *the heavenly realm* and the inheritance therein? One of the places in Scriptures where the answers to these questions are evident is in the Book of Hebrews. Read through these passages in Hebrews a few times, and make study notes in the margins. Then answer the questions which follow.

Hebrews 11

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude-- innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

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What did Abraham do when he was called (vv. 8, 9)?

For what was Abraham looking (v. 10, 16)?

What two Old Testament descriptive phrases did the author of the Book of Hebrews quote to describe the numbers of Abraham's descendants (v. 12)?

What did those who "died in faith" confess (v. 13)?

For what were these Old Testament saints seeking (v. 14)?

For what type of country were these Old Testament saints looking (v. 16)?

Compare v. 16 with v. 10. From these two verses, describe the city they were looking for.

Continuing in Hebrews chapter eleven, the author cites the works done through faith by these Old Testament saints. After citing several specific examples (vv. 4-31), the author goes on to give some general examples of faithfulness. Before you answer the questions which follow the passage, be sure to spend some time studying through this passage, making notes of what you learn in the margins. (We are going to be studying the specific examples of faithful saints in Lesson Fifteen. But today we are only looking to see if Old Testament saints could have understood some things concerning the heavenly inheritance.)

Hebrews 11

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in

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deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

At the end of v. 35, what does the author state is the reason for the actions of these faithful saints?

Write out the statement made of these saints at the beginning of v. 38.

Write vv. 39 and 40 in your own words.

The question we are considering is this — Did Abraham and his descendants know anything of the heavenly portion of the kingdom? After studying through these sections of Hebrews chapter eleven, what do you think — Could Old Testament saints have known and understood about the heavenly portion of the kingdom? From the text, what makes you think so?

And here is another question — With these things from Hebrews chapter eleven in mind (along with the information from last week's study as to the first coming of Christ, His offer and the nation's rejection), *should* the Jews of Christ's day have understood His message, the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens? Why, or why not?

We'll end here for the day. Please keep entrusting yourself to God the Holy Spirit as He guides you into understanding. Keep asking Him to open up your mind to understand more and more from His Word, as we compare Scripture with Scripture.

We'll look at more of this tomorrow.

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Day Four — The Gospels

With the message which John the Baptist brought, and the fact that Christ's message was exactly the same as John's — *Repent, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand* — we must look at the gospels in this light (Mt. 3:1,2; 4:17, 23). The gospels literally lay out in detail the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to God's people. Last week we studied some of these details. Today and tomorrow we want to glimpse more details of the offer made to Abraham's descendants – the Jews – in the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew is the only gospel writer who uses the phrase *the kingdom of heaven* (Gk. “*the Kingdom of the Heavens*”). The other gospel writers use the phrase *the kingdom of God*. Throughout the gospels there is no difference in the meaning of the two phrases; it is just a different way of saying the same thing. (In a few passages in the Bible, the phrase *the kingdom of God* can cover a larger scope, actually the entire universe. The subject matter and context of a given passage in which the phrase is used will determine its meaning. And this must be understood for proper understanding.) Simply stated, “the Kingdom of the Heavens” (or “the kingdom of God” in most of the places it is used) refers to the *rulership from the heavens over the earth* (cf. Dan. 4:26b).

To get started today, we'll review a couple of passages we looked at last week.

Matthew 4

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

...23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

It is easy to see from these two verses what Jesus' message was. Luke records a similar phrase in his gospel, clearly explaining the purpose for which Christ had been sent, quoting Christ Himself.

Luke 4

43 but He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because

What was Christ's own stated purpose for coming to the earth?

Jesus came to offer the Kingdom of the Heavens to the only people on earth who, at that time, could receive this offer — the Jews. But just as receiving the earthly kingdom at Kadesh Barnea was individually conditional upon faithful obedience, so is receiving the Heavenly Kingdom individually conditional upon faithful obedience. And the spiritual condition of Israel at the time of Christ's first coming was so deplorable, that a message of repentance needed to preface the message of the offer of the kingdom. Hence, the message John brought and the message Jesus brought — Repent!

Jesus' first sermon — commonly known as *the Sermon on the Mount* — was spoken in the hearing of a great multitude, but directed specifically to His disciples. It is important to study Jesus' message in this light. This sermon was spoken to individuals who were the first followers of Christ. The intent of Jesus' words to them was *not* how to receive the free gift of eternal life, but rather *how to live in such a way so as to inherit the Kingdom of the Heavens*. The assumption that the disciples had already been saved through faith in the provision God had made in the Old Testament is obvious.

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Let's take a little time and sort through this beginning portion of this message. When you come to the words or phrases having to do with the Kingdom of the Heavens, inheritance, or reward, underline it. Remember, He is speaking to His disciples.

Matthew 5

- 1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:**
- 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- 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 heaven.**
- 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 heaven,
for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

Fill in the details from the passage in the chart below. I've done the first one for you.

Blessed are —

1) the poor in spirit

For theirs/they shall —

1) is the Kingdom of the Heavens

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Based upon this first section of His sermon (this entire sermon runs from Mt. 5-7), what do you think Jesus wants His disciples' focus to be?

From succeeding portions of this sermon, it is easy to see that treasures can be stored in either of two realms — earthly or heavenly. What is the difference between the two? At this point in your understanding, how do you think you would store up treasures on earth?

In the heavens?

Jesus desires His disciples to take their focus off of the present world and place their focus on His Heavenly Kingdom. After speaking to them about the differences between the reward here and now given by men, and the reward in the future kingdom given by the Father (6:1-21), read what He says to them about storing up treasures.

Matthew 6

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

What does Jesus say our focus should be with regards to storing up treasures for ourselves?

Jesus reiterates His desired focus as He tells His disciples about seeking the things of this world versus seeking the things of heaven by finishing this section of His message with the following words. Underline what He tells them to seek first.

Matthew 6

31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you...”

What did He say was necessary to seek?

And what would happen as a result?

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A study of the entire sermon (Mt. 5-7) reveals the type of lifestyle Jesus says is necessary for one *to receive his inheritance in the Kingdom of the Heavens*. The focus of this sermon is *not* on how one receives the free gift of eternal life. Understanding this distinction clears up major misunderstanding in these passages (as well as many others). As we end today's study, you may want to read the sermon in its entirety, but if your time does not allow it, at least read the end of the sermon as it is printed below. Think through these things. Keep it in mind the context of the whole message that Jesus was giving to His disciples.

Matthew 7

13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ 24 Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” 28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Answer these couple questions as you consider this passage.

In the way of review, to whom is He speaking (Mt. 5:1)?

What seems to be the subject of this entire sermon?

A couple of things need to be remembered while studying through these verses at the end of the sermon, wherein Jesus sums up what He has taught them. In doing so, He talks about *entrance into* or *exclusion from* the Kingdom of the Heavens. It is not a free gift/eternal life issue. (His comments are directed to people who are saved [5:1, 2]). And He is talking about fruit-bearing in the spiritual realm. Only people who are alive spiritually can bear fruit in the this realm, either good or bad. Those who are dead spiritually would never be expected to bear spiritual fruit, as it would be impossible for someone to bear fruit if they are spiritually dead. Think on these things as you end your study today.

See you tomorrow.

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Day Five— The Sower and the Seed

As we come to the conclusion of this week’s lesson we will endeavor to understand a little more clearly the message of the Kingdom of the Heavens as it is laid out in the first parable given in Matthew chapter thirteen.

If you were to read through the first twelve chapters of the Gospel of Matthew, you would see Jesus being baptized by John, His public ministry beginning, His calling twelve men to Himself, His offering the Kingdom of the Heavens to the descendants of Abraham — the nation of Israel, and His performing many miraculous signs during the course of the offer. He did not take His message to the Gentiles as He could not do so. Because the promises were made to Abraham and his descendants, the offer *could only be made to Israel*. Even when He sent out His disciples with the message of the kingdom, He instructed them to only go to the house of Israel (Mt. 10:5-7; cf. Mt. 15:24; Ro. 15:8).

But already, the Pharisees and the leadership of the Jews were trying to disparage Jesus and His ministry, saying that He performed miraculous signs by the power of Satan (Mt. 9:32-34). As Matthew’s gospel unfolds, it becomes evident that the leadership of the Jewish people were not only disparaging Jesus, but also His message. In truth, they *hated* Him, and *despised* the message He brought. So much did they hate Him, that they sought for a way to destroy Him (Mt. 12:14).

As His public ministry was gaining momentum and as Jesus continued to teach and perform miraculous signs, more and more Jews were following Jesus believing that He was, in fact, the son David, the Son of God. Many others were beginning to wonder. He had made it very clear Who He was through His words and miraculous signs! In fact, at one point, Jesus cast a demon out of a man, causing the people to wonder *aloud* if it were true — Is this the Son of David (Mt. 12:23)? If the nation accepted the fact that Jesus was the Expected One (the son of David, the Son of God), it would mean that He would have ushered in the final kingdom. Though some of the people asked the question — Could this be the Son of David? — the way the question is worded in the Greek reveals that the people, in fact, *doubted* that He was! The way they worded their question revealed a “middle-of-the-road” attitude, so to speak, leaning very strongly to the possible answer being a negative one.

When the Pharisees heard that the people were wondering this, they publicly made a statement that Jesus cast out demons by the power of Satan (Mt. 12:24). In a sense, this was a line crossed over! They had committed a sin which would not be forgiven in *this age* (the present age) nor *in the age to come* (the Messianic Age). They had blasphemed the Holy Spirit. Through the use of miraculous signs (signs done through the power of the Holy Spirit), God had been validating the Words and the Works of Jesus, in order that the people might recognize that He was Who He said He was — the Christ! But instead of recognizing and agreeing with the power and work of the Spirit, the Pharisees credited His power to Beelzebub (Satan). This action blasphemed the Holy Spirit, which was a sin that could not be forgiven in this age (the present age), nor in the age to come (the Kingdom Age).

This sin on the part of the leadership caused Jesus to change His course of actions. He went out of the house and sat by the seaside (Mt. 13:1). And there by the seaside, Jesus began teaching through the use of parables. Below is the first one He gave. Let’s see what we can learn from this first parable.

Matthew 13

1 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 “And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7 And some fell among

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thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Before we go any further with this parable, list the information about each seed in the first two columns. We’ll fill in the third column as we come to it.

Conditions of of the soil:	What happened to the seed:	Interpretation:

Continuing —

10 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 heaven, 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 <1994>, So that I should heal <2390> 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.

What question did the disciples ask in v. 10?

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What was the very next statement (v. 11, 12) Jesus made to the disciples before directly answering their question (v. 13)?

In the space below, make careful notes as to the reason that Jesus had begun speaking to them in parables (vv.14, 15).

Be sure to look up the definitions for the words *return* and *heal*.

turn <1994>

heal <2390> (Also look up the root word <4762>)

Write out what Jesus would do for these people if they would open their eyes and ears to see and hear.

After explaining these things, Jesus Himself gives the commentary as to the meaning of this parable, leaving absolutely no doubt as to its meaning.

18 “Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

According to Jesus’ Own Words, what is the topic of this parable (v. 19a)?

There is a key to understand the Parable of Sower correctly, without which understanding would be difficult at best. The key is this: When the Word of the Kingdom is sown into a person’s heart, God expects that

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individual to bear fruit with respect to the Kingdom. Now that person has a choice to make – he will either be fruitful with respect to the Kingdom, or he will not be fruitful, and the degree of fruitfulness is up to that individual himself. With this in mind, refer back to the list you made on the four different soils and complete the chart, specifically noting what happened to each, *why* it happened, and the outcome of each.

Contextually, what is the ultimate goal of the seed when it is sown?

Can you see why this parable is not dealing with the free gift of eternal life? It is dealing solely with people who are capable of bearing spiritual fruit! And bearing fruit has to do with things *beyond* the free gift of eternal life. Bearing fruit has to do with a Christian's work here and now with a view to an inheritance in the future. We will see this more clearly as we continue to study.

In your own words, write out briefly what the meaning of this parable is.

The four soils in this parable represent the willingness a person has to produce fruit whenever “anyone hears the Word of the Kingdom” (v. 19a) In the way of a personal question — Having now come into a deeper understanding of what is required when “anyone hears the Word of the Kingdom,” what needs to be your goal?

Is there anything in your life that needs to change in order to produce fruit?

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Lesson Ten — A New Nation, a New Creation, a New Man

Day One — A Spiritual House

Day Two — Living Stones

Day Three — A New Man, a New Creation

Day Four — The Body of Christ

Day Five — God's People

In the past two weeks we have studied issues and events surrounding the first appearance of Jesus Christ and the purposes thereof. We have seen that not only did Jesus come to die on the cross to make reconciliation; He initially came to offer the Kingdom of the Heavens to Abraham's descendants — Israel. But Israel, as a nation, refused the offer of the kingdom and Jesus withdrew the offer, saying that He would raise up a new nation who would produce the fruits of the kingdom (Mt. 21:43). This new nation would be a new creation; it would make up a new man — the Body of Christ — with Christ as the Head, and the individual members forming the Body. And this is the topic we want to study this week — the new creation.

But first, here is a thought to consider. Sometimes we are tempted to think that “the Church” is a building on a corner in town, into which we go once or twice a week and participate in the activities therein. That is not the Church! That is only a building on a corner in town, into which we go once or twice a week and participate in the activities therein. This building often houses the Church, but it is not the Church.

Rather in a literal sense, the Church is a living organism, not a physical building of bricks and mortar. It is referred to in Scripture in several different ways, each description giving a different aspect of this living organism. The Church is a new nation, a new creation, a new man. It *is* a building, but not a physical one; it is a spiritual building. It *is* a house, but not a physical house; it is the house of Christ, the household of God. Along with understanding this, it is important to realize that the Church has been created for a specific purpose, and called to perform certain functions. Therefore, as we discuss things about the Church throughout this week of study, please think of the Church in the terms Scripture uses, rather than in terms of a brick and mortar building on a corner in town.

Day One — A Spiritual House

At one point in time prior to the last week of Christ's public ministry, Jesus spoke of the Church. It was at a time when it had become apparent that the Jewish nation as a whole would not believe that Jesus was Who He said He was. In this setting, Jesus mentions the Church for the first time. Let's read about it.

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Matthew 16

13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” 14 So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

What two questions did Jesus ask?

What was Peter’s answer to the second question?

Write down how Jesus responds to Peter’s answer (v. 17ff). (Be sure to note that He deals with both realms of the kingdom in v. 19.)

The Greek word for *church* is the word *ekklesia*, which means “called out.” This new entity — the Church — would be made up of individuals who, through placing faith in Jesus Christ, have been *called out* for a purpose. And the purpose for this *calling out* is seen in several passages in the New Testament (some of which we will cover in this week’s homework). This passage in Matthew chapter sixteen (printed above) begins to reveal what the purpose of the Church is. With this in mind, go back to the passage and see if you can ascertain what one of the future purposes for the Church will be. Write out what you find.

In Matthew 16:17-18, Peter made a statement, the essence of which had been revealed to him by the Father in heaven. The statement was: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” The phrase *the Christ* means *the Messiah, the Anointed One*. This phrase involves all three offices which Jesus would, at some point in time, hold — that of

- Prophet, His first coming, His **past** work;
- Priest, His **present** work as High Priest in the heavens;
- King, His **future** work, as King/Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

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He appeared the first time as *Prophet*, proclaiming the Coming Kingdom; He is presently appearing in the heavens, at the right hand of the Father, fulfilling the office of *High Priest* on behalf of God's people, offering a cleansing for sin with a view to entering the kingdom; and He will appear on earth a second time, when He comes as *King*, ushering in His kingdom. All three offices — prophet, priest and king — required an anointing by God (*cf.* Isa. 61:1, 2; Lev. 8:30; I Sam. 10:1), and all three offices have to do with an ultimate goal in view, that of the Coming Kingdom. Hence, He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. Thus, it is easy to see that Peter understood these things, as He connected the title “the Christ” with His being the “Son of God,” an obvious reference to the prophecy God gave to David in II Samuel chapter seven.

(Remember our study in II Samuel chapter seven? God told David, through the prophet Nathan, that David would have a Descendant Who would sit on an eternal throne and would establish an eternal kingdom, and this Descendant would be the Son of God (vv. 13, 14). The essence of the statement that Jesus is “the Son of God,” encapsulates the idea of His Kingdom, as revealed through the contents of the prophecy made to David. *Sonship has to do with rulership*. Therefore, whenever the title *Son of God* is used in Scripture, it carries the idea of His Coming Kingdom. The two cannot be separated. And we would do well to remember that.)

Upon Peter's identification of Who Jesus is, Jesus said that it is upon *this rock* — the statement that had been revealed to Peter by the Father in heaven — that Jesus would *build* His Church. The first mention of *ekklesia*, was that it would be *built upon a Rock* (inferring a ‘building’ being built). The Rock is Jesus Christ, the Anointed One, the Son of God, the Coming King. The inference is that this spiritual building being built upon the Rock, represents the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the One coming to establish His kingdom; and that the *ekklesia*, the spiritual building itself, would have the keys to the kingdom, inferring that this spiritual building would eventually have control over the heavens and the earth — both realms (v. 19b). Thus, one can see that the Church, being built upon the Rock, has to do with a people being called out to receive Christ's kingdom, establishing His household. Therefore, one of the purposes for the establishment of the Church is that God would call out a people to Himself, and build a spiritual household, a people who would administer His kingdom from the heavens over the earth, with Christ in their midst as King.

Now let's look at another place wherein the purpose for this Church can be seen. We studied this passage in Lesson Eight, Day Five, but we want to look at it again as it helps to fit this picture together.

The context of this passage is the Parable of the Vineyard. Jesus gave this parable to the chief priests and elders, at the end of which, He asks what the vineyard owner should do to the tenants who refused time and again to give the expected produce to the owner. They responded that the owner will bring “those wicked me to a miserable end,” and “lease out the vineyard to other vine-dressers, who will render to him the fruits in their seasons” (v. 41). Now read Jesus words in response to their response:

Matthew 21

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’? 43 Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

In the way of review and according to this passage, essentially what did the Jews reject?

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And as a result of this rejection, what is Jesus going to do (v. 43)?

Do you see how the new nation is now the recipient of the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens?

But how can Jesus offer the Kingdom of the Heavens to anyone other than Abraham's seed? After all, the promises concerning these things were given to Abraham and to *his* descendants. So how can anyone other than Abraham's descendants receive this offer? The answer is, "Jesus can only make this offer *to Abraham's descendants!*" Just watch, though! See how this "IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES"!

Through the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians, it is clearly established *how* the offer can be made to a people who are not Abraham's *physical* descendants. Chapter three deals with the subject matter extensively. So let's take a look at a few of the verses.

Galatians 3

...6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 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.

...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.

Who does Paul say are the sons of Abraham?

What does Paul say the Scriptures foresee?

What do we learn from v. 14?

Now read how Paul sums up the subject in the last few verses of this chapter.

Galatians 3 (continuing)

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

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Based upon the truth set forth in this passage, how can God offer the Kingdom of the Heavens to someone other than to the Jews?

What does v. 29 tell us?

From what we have studied thus far, what would Paul mean when he talks about the blessings of Abraham? In other words, what would individuals making up the Church now be able to acquire through faith? (At this point, it may be somewhat difficult to answer this question, but give it a try.)

We'll pick it up tomorrow.

Day Two — Living Stones

We are learning some things about the inception of the Church and the purposes thereof. We will continue to build upon these ideas as we work through the study. Please be in prayer that you may grasp the significance of the Church and your participation in it.

As we have seen in Matthew chapter twenty-one, the Jews, who were the original tenants of the vineyard, did not produce the fruits of the vineyard. There was no repentance on the part of the Jews, and consequently, no fruit-bearing (*cf.* Mt. 3:7, 8). The fruitless tenants of the vineyard rejected the Messenger and His message. (Notice that *producing fruit* has to do with the kingdom. This is an important connection to make.)

It was the Jews who rejected “the chief cornerstone,” i.e., Jesus Christ (Mt. 21:42). The use of the term *cornerstone* implies a substructure upon which the superstructure will be built. Notice what Paul writes in Ephesians chapter two.

Ephesians 2

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.

What does Paul say of the Church?

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Then think back to what Jesus told Peter in Matthew chapter sixteen, “Upon this rock I will build My Church...” Having these things in mind, study through the following passage. (Notice that the author of this passage is *Peter* —the one who answered Jesus’ question in Matthew 16.)

I Peter 2

...4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” 8 and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Based upon the passages that we have considered in last week’s lesson and thus far in this week’s lesson, what do you think it means that *He was rejected by men*? (In other words, who were the men who rejected Him?)

List everything you see about ‘living stones’ in this passage.

From what Peter wrote, what kind of building is presently being built?

In v. 6, what does it say about those who believe?

According to v. 8, what happens to those who reject The Cornerstone?

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What do vv. 9-10 reveal about the Church?

John the Baptist told the Jewish leaders that from stones God was able to raise up descendants of Abraham, who would become the recipients of the promises.

Matthew 3

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 “and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

Make a note as to the connection between what John told the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew 3:7-9, with what Peter says about the Church in I Peter 2:4-10, with what Jesus said about the Rock in Matthew 16:18-19. What connections can you make?

Matthew 3:7-9

I Peter 2:4-10

Matthew 16:18-19



Go back and reread 1 Peter 2:5, 9-10. About whom is Peter speaking (v. 10 gives a good hint)?

Now we have a comparison to make. Looking back in the Old Testament, the children of Israel were called out of Egypt for a specific purpose. They were told of their purpose once they arrived at Mt. Sinai. (We studied it weeks ago, but it bears on what we are presently studying.)

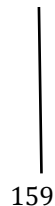
Exodus 19

“... 5 ‘Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; 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 which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

The Church (the *ekklesia* [the called out]) has been called out for an identical purpose. Write out the similarities between Exodus 19:5-6 and the passage in 1 Peter 2:5, 9.

Exodus 19:5-6

I Peter 2:5,9



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God has raised up children to Abraham. He is still in the process of building His Church upon the Rock of Jesus Christ. He is raising up sons of Abraham, a people who *were not* a nation, but because they have put faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, they have become a *new* nation and are spiritual descendants of Abraham. Therefore Gentiles, along with the Jews, can partake in the promises of Abraham. It is an awesome picture, isn't it? Any thoughts?

We'll pick it up tomorrow.

Day Three — A New Man, a New Creation

Let's look at more passages that reveal what actually takes place when one puts faith in Jesus Christ.

II Corinthians 5

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Galatians 6

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

What do these passages say?

At the beginning of yesterday's homework, we looked at a passage found at the end of Ephesians chapter two. For the remainder of our study time today, we are going to look at the complete chapter. This chapter encapsulates some of what we have learned throughout the study thus far:

- our condition prior to faith in Christ,
- the fact that Satan is the present ruler of the world, and
- reveals what God has done for us — *how* we are saved, *why* we are saved, and *the benefits* of being saved.

Wow! All in one chapter.

We'll begin with the last two verses in chapter one, then we'll go right into chapter two. If time allows, it would be a good idea if you could read through the chapter two or three times, making your own study notes in the margins. Then answer the questions which follow.

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Ephesians 1:22-2:22

...22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

1 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 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.

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According to vv. 1 and 5, what was our condition prior to coming to Christ?

Verses 12 and 19 further describe this condition. What was it?

According to various verses throughout this chapter, what did Christ accomplish for us? Make a list of the things you find.

Relating v. 11 with v. 14, who are the two groups brought together as one?

Look at vv. 14-18 and relate what Jesus has done for these two groups. Be sure to see that He has made the *two into one new man*. Then underline that phrase in v. 15.

How did Jesus make the two groups into one new man?

Paul quotes a prophecy from Isaiah 57:19, revealing that this prophecy has been fulfilled. What was the essence of the prophecy as quoted in v. 17?

Because of the cross, Gentiles (who believe) are no longer strangers and aliens, but what are they now (v. 19)?

Finally, what do vv. 20-22 picture for us?

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In the way of a summary, God has made a new creation! He has brought two groups of people together, making the two into *one new man*! Now rather than there only being Jews and Gentiles in the world, now there are Jews, Gentiles, *and Christians* (cf., I Cor. 10:32). Any Jew or Gentile who puts faith in Jesus Christ becomes a new creation — a Christian — and becomes part of the Body of Christ. That individual is no longer a Jew, or no longer a Gentile (whichever the case may be), but is a new creation. The old things have passed away (II Cor. 5:17), he has become new. (These passages have nothing to do with the doing away of our old sinful nature [the man of flesh], as so many people teach. These passages have to do with our becoming *a new creation in Christ*, part of His Body. This is the topic of the study tomorrow.)

And as a new creation, now being neither Jew nor Gentile, an individual can receive the inheritance promised to Abraham (*i.e.*, things surrounding the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens), through faith in Jesus Christ. Abraham's physical descendants, as a nation, rejected the offer. Therefore, Jesus said that He would withdraw the offer from the descendants who refuse to produce the fruits, and will give it to a new nation who would produce the fruits (Mt. 21:43). Then Jesus calls out a people for the purpose of offering the Heavenly Kingdom to them. This entity is a new nation, a new creation, a new man, who is set apart for purposes having to do with the Heavenly Kingdom — the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

We'll pick it up tomorrow.

Day Four — The Body of Christ

Thus far, we have seen that the Church is a living organism, a living temple of God, a spiritual building, a new creation, a new nation, a new man. This new man is also described in Scripture as “the Body of Christ.” We will focus today on the Church being identified as the Body of Christ.

There are several passages in the New Testament that deal with the Body of Christ, each teaching things pertaining to different aspects of the Body. We will only glimpse a few of the passages in order to understand some of the facts about the Body. We will need this as a building block for further study.

Let's glimpse some passages.

Romans 12

4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

1 Corinthians 12

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

...27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

From these few passages, what is the picture you get about the Church?

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Here is an admonition from the Apostle Paul to the Church at Ephesus. (Notice the admonition has to do with a calling [v.1].) Spend a bit of time on this passage. There is a lot here. Remember, we have been called out for a purpose — to be built into a spiritual house, administering the kingdom with Christ when He comes into His kingdom.

Ephesians 4

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

... 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Explain the purpose of the Body and how it is to work together.

Colossians 2

19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Describe the picture this passage gives us.

Now, let's take this picture just a bit further. With the individual members of the Church making up the Body of Christ and with Christ as the Head, we have something else to learn about this Body, the new man. Read the passages below and make note of what you read.

I Corinthians 15

45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam

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became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.

Obviously, who is “the first man”?

Who is “the second man, the last Adam”?

How does this passage describe both?

Now look at what Paul says about these two individuals.

Romans 5

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.

In the last part of this verse, what does it say Adam was?

This English word *type* is from the Greek word *tupos*. It has the sense of something bearing the exact representation of something else. As it is used here, Paul reveals that Adam is *an exact representation* of Christ. Adam is the type; Jesus is the antitype. Information gained through studying Adam becomes instructive for us in studying Jesus Christ; and the reverse is also true. The whole picture is instructive beyond degree for us!

This chart reveals how a type and antitype work in Scripture:

Just as Adam...	Even so Christ...
<i>Just as</i> Adam was created as a son of God...	<i>even so</i> Christ is the <i>only begotten</i> Son of God.
Just as Adam was created to rule over a restored creation...	<i>even so</i> Christ was begotten to rule over the restored creation.
<i>Just as</i> Adam’s helpmate (his wife) was taken from his body...	<i>even so</i> Christ’s Helpmate (His Bride) will be taken from His Body.
<i>Just as</i> Adam through partaking of the sin of his wife, died...	<i>even so</i> Christ took upon Himself the sin of the world and He died.
<i>Just as</i> Adam’s death on behalf of his wife made possible life through the promise of a Redeemer...	<i>even so</i> Christ’s death made possible redemption and life for all who would believe.

(Notice how the phrases “Just as...” and “even so...” work throughout the scenario. This is an easy way to

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see how types and antitypes work.)

Any thoughts or questions?

Day Five— God’s People

This week we have seen how God made a way for the Gentiles to be grafted in as the seed of Abraham through the blood of Christ. At the present time, because of Israel’s rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah, the Nation has been set aside. Because Israel as a nation rejected the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens, God is presenting calling a people unto Himself from amongst the Gentiles forming the New Man in Christ – the Body of Christ, the Church. Once this dispensation comes to a close – which will occur at the “catching up” (the rapture) of the Church – and the JSOC in the heavens is concluded, God will begin dealing with Israel once again. (We’ll deal with ‘dispensations’ in next week’s lesson on Day Two.)

Through faith in Jesus Christ, an individual becomes part of this new and distinct nation. It is not an earthly nation that is being formed, it is a heavenly one. And as such, the individuals making up this nation are presently *sojourners* passing through, *ambassadors* for Christ. Their citizenship is in heaven. And these citizens will receive the promises *that have to do with the heavens*. (We’ll see the development of this in upcoming weeks of study.) Certain promises now pertain to the Church that do not pertain any longer to Israel. And the reverse could be said as well – certain promises still pertain to Israel, that do not pertain to the Church.

There is coming a time when this new nation will be called heavenward so that the promises pertaining to the heavenly portion of the Abrahamic covenant can be fulfilled for Abraham’s spiritual descendants. Many things will take place in the heavens at that time. (The heavenly events following the rapture will be our subject of study in upcoming weeks.) Both realms are dealt with in the reconciliation through the blood of Christ. Read the passage below, noting how Paul puts all of this together. (We’ve studied this passage before, but it bears repeating here.)

Colossians 1

16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

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Study through this passage and make notes as to what you can learn from it. Notice that Paul brings together several of the things that we have been dealing with in these past weeks of study.

Now relate the concluding promises that God made to Abraham as he had just offered his son Isaac on the altar. God stops Abraham from slaying his son by first saying to him —

Genesis 22

11 ... “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.” 12 And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” 13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, “In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided.”

This *first statement* (vv. 11-14) has to do with the *first coming of Christ*. It has to do with the means of redemption from bondage, that of death and shed blood. It has to do with a substitutionary death, pointing to the death of Christ. Verse 14 summarizes it beautifully!

Now the Lord calls to Abraham a *second* time. In the passage, underline the words *a second time*. Verse 15, the *second* time God called to Abraham, has to do with a future redemption, that of the redemption of the inheritance. (Yes, that’s right — a *future* redemption!)

Continuing in Genesis 22

15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son - 17 “blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Verse 17 refers to two realms wherein Abraham’s seed will exist. What two realms are they?

What does the passage say that Abraham’s seed in *both realms* will do (v. 17b and 18)?

Once the Body of Christ, the new man, has been taken up, God will turn His attention back to Israel so that He can fulfill the promises pertaining to the earthly portion of the Abrahamic covenant for Israel. Those promises to the nation of Israel are irrevocable. In order though, for these promises to be realized by Israel, Israel will have to be brought into a place of repentance (which will happen as a result of the coming tribulation [“Jacob’s Trouble”]).

Words inadequately express how awesome it is to see the way God has put this altogether. He gives Abraham an *unconditional covenant*, telling him that his seed will be as numerous *as the sand on the seashore* (Isa. 10:22; 48:19; Hos. 1:10; Ro. 9:27 [the land of Israel lays at the shore of the Mediterranean Sea]), and stars

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in the sky (Dan. 12:3 [our citizenship is in the heavens]). The numbers of the grains of sand and stars represent numbers in two distinct realms — earth and heaven — which has reference to the two realms of the kingdom. At the time of the covenant and because of Abraham's faithfulness, God irrevocably deeded over a land (Canaan) within the earthly realm to Abraham's physical seed (through Isaac and Jacob). This land would be the place from which a theocracy on the earth would emanate.

God continues the working out of His complete plan of redemption. (Remember that His plan involves redeeming fallen man, as well as redeeming the earthly and heavenly places of authority [Col. 1:16, 20].) He took Abraham's descendants into a land that was not theirs (into Egypt), allowing them to increase in numbers. During this time, they put into the bondage of slavery, wherein they had need to be redeemed. God accomplished this redemption by the means of slain animals, the blood of which was to be appropriated on the door posts and lintel of their houses. This redemption put Abraham's descendants in a position wherein they could become a nation of kings and priests, a kingdom of priests. All of this was enacted with the idea of Israel claiming their own land, the land which God had previously deeded to Abraham and his descendants 400 years prior with the nation of Israel inhabiting that land as the head of all the nations and not the tail.

But, as is God's way, after He redeemed the Children of Israel, He tested them; they had to prove themselves worthy to inherit the land and be placed in rulership. The point of proof was their obedience. (Obedience is always the point of proving oneself worthy.) The Children of Israel unanimously agreed to the conditions of the covenant, and God — through Moses and the angels — instituted a *conditional kingdom covenant* with Israel (the Mosaic covenant [Ex. 19:8; 24:3; 24:7; cf. Gal. 3:19]).

From that first generation, the individuals who were wholly devoted and obedient to God — Joshua and Caleb — received their inheritance in the land; the individuals who were not wholly devoted — the remainder of the first generation — lost their inheritance. Not one redeemed person, however, was sent back into slavery, even though going back to Egypt was their stated desire. They remained God's redeemed people; He never left them and never forsook them. Going back into to slavery in Egypt was a moot point. God didn't address their expressed desire.

(Their going back into slavery — in the sense of becoming unredeemed [after they had once been redeemed] — would be equivalent to saying that a person today could become unsaved [after one had once been saved]. It was a moot point in Scripture *then*; it is a moot point in Scripture *now*. Just as it couldn't happen in the OT, it cannot happen in the NT. The issue of losing one's eternal salvation (i.e., the free gift) is simply not addressed in Scripture. A person redeemed by the action of God cannot become unredeemed by any action on the part of the individual.)

For two thousand years, from Abraham to Christ, though both realms of the kingdom (earthly and heavenly) could be seen through all that God had revealed, attention was focused on the earthly, not the heavenly. However, even though attention was focused on the earthly realm of the kingdom, certain Old Testament saints aspired to a higher calling. They looked beyond the earthly to the heavenly (e.g., Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived as aliens, dwelling in tents [Heb. 11:9], as well as others, many who are mentioned in Hebrews chapter eleven).

Finally, at the appointed time, the King appears in order to climactically offer *the Kingdom of the Heavens* to Abraham's descendants. As a nation, they rejected the offer (though a number of individuals believed). And while the earthly land had already been irrevocably deeded over to Abraham's physical descendants, the heavenly land would now be given to another people — a new creation, a new nation, a new man — the Body of Christ.

This new creation is also Abraham's seed, through the blood of Christ, Who is Abraham's Seed. Now, for the first time in the entire history of mankind, there are three distinct groups of people — Jews, Gentiles, and Christians see (I Cor. 10:32). Jews and Christians are both of the seed of Abraham. But, since the rejection

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of Christ by Israel (Abraham's physical seed) at His first coming, Jesus is presently offering the realm of the Heavenly Kingdom to Christians (Abraham's spiritual seed) — to anyone who would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. In believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, individuals are made partakers of Abraham's promises through the blood of Jesus, Who is Abraham's Seed. Now, for the past two thousand years, this offer is being made to the Church, the new nation, and will also climax in Christ's second coming when He comes to judge His people and set up His Kingdom.

Do you see the picture? Isn't it exciting? God is faithful to His Word! Praise His Holy Name. Jesus is the Chief Corner Stone, and we are the living stones, being built into a spiritual house. And we are made partakers of His house, *if we continue in faithful obedience* (Heb. 3:6). After the leaders of Israel had rejected Christ, and the kingdom had been taken away from them (as depicted through the Parable of the Vineyard), Jesus pronounced woes upon the leaders of Israel (Mt. 23). In the end, He describes what the leaders have done, but also states the ultimate hope in v. 39.

Matthew 23

37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 “See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 “for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”

Due to their stubborn and unrepentant heart, Israel lost a great blessing. Presently, their “house is left desolate.” But there is coming a time when God will turn back to Israel, and begin dealing with His wife, Israel, again. And following their national repentance, when the Jewish people see Him again, they will say, “Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.”

In the interim, God is calling out a people within the Church to inherit that which Israel rejected — the Heavenly Kingdom. The next weeks of study will be taken up with what the implications are for us as the Body of Christ. I hope that these last couple of weeks have laid a good foundation upon which we can build, so that we can see the purpose for the Church. Please continue to pray for spiritual insight and discernment for yourself and others who are in your class. We have some very exciting things to learn yet.

Do you have any thoughts or comments?

See you in class.

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Lesson Eleven — The Book of Acts: Part 1

Day One — Eternity vs. the Ages

Day Two — Dispensations

Day Three — The Day of Pentecost

Day Four — The Days Following Pentecost

Day Five — Miraculous Signs Among the People

We will be spending the next two weeks of study on the Book of Acts. Understanding the transitory nature of this book will help us be able to more clearly understand some very important distinctions within the epistles. And *that* is important to our understanding of how God has laid out His Word! We will see that not only does the Book of Acts outline the history of the early Church, but it is also marks a very important transition within God’s economy. The Book of Acts transitions from the Gospels to the Epistles, and in so doing God is seen transitioning from dealing with the Nation of Israel to dealing with the New Nation, the New Man in Christ – the Church.

In order to see God making this transition, we will have to get a few things straight as to how God deals with Eternity, the Ages, and Dispensations. Most Christians only think in terms of Eternity and Time, not giving much thought beyond those two distinctions. But there are a few other things to consider! In particular we need to see that Eternity is distinct from the Ages, and then within the Ages, God has fit several dispensations. At this point, these distinctions may not seem all that important to understand, but at the end of these two lessons, it should become clear just how important this understanding is, especially when we see that it is all laid out by Divine Inspiration. So, study well.

Day One — Eternity vs. the Ages

Some say that a picture is worth a thousand words. So let’s lay out a “picture.”

This simple timeline reveals how most Christians think of “time and eternity”—



This would seem to be a very simplistic way of looking at God’s dealings within time and eternity. But the problem is that seeing time and eternity this way is fundamentally wrong! Yet sadly, it is the way most Christians see it. In seeing things this way an individual cannot grasp a correct understanding of some *very, VERY* important things that God has laid out for His people to understand.

So, there is so *much more* to the picture! And the “much more” is so exciting to see! Let’s get started.

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The Book of Acts: Part 1

Lesson Eleven

One thing that is helpful in an overall perspective of the way God laid things out is to see that we really shouldn't think in terms of "time and eternity" without a perspective on the AGES. That is, we really should think more in terms of "eternity and ages." (We will see that "time" as we know it, fits into two ages, and beyond that, we really wouldn't know how to calculate "time". But let's put that thought aside just for a minute.) To grasp the distinctions of eternity and ages, we will need to get a bit technical, so please bear with this as we work our way through this piece of the puzzle.

Technically speaking, the only thing or only One Who is *truly* eternal is God! One very succinct statement of His eternality is found in **Deuteronomy 33:27a** **The eternal God is your refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms...** He is the One with no beginning *and* no ending. No one else, and nothing else is technically *eternal* in that nothing else has "no beginning". Everything else, besides God, has a beginning.

You may want to cry out – But what about '*eternal*' life??? Well, *eternal life* for each of us has a beginning, doesn't it? And even though it has no ending point, it does have a beginning. So, from this perspective, God is the only One Who is 'technically' eternal – with no beginning, and no ending. (The language of Scripture bears this out, as well.)

So where might we place the beginning of everything? Is there a beginning of everything? The answer is a resounding YES!

Scripturally speaking, the earliest beginning point of *anything created* would be *the beginning of the ages*. And before this beginning point, God had an eternal plan. This verse reveals this fact:

I Corinthians 2

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory...

What was ordained *before the ages*?

And *who* was in God's mind *before the ages*?

And yes, His is an *eternal* plan, in the very same sense that God is *eternal*. (Wouldn't that *have to* be the case?) There are several passages which reveal that determinations were made by the *eternal* God before the ages began, but that verse seems to suffice for our purpose today.

Another thing we may want to consider is that the Universe was created at the point that the ages began. This point is clearly made in the first verse of the Bible:

Genesis 1

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

Again, we need to be technical here. You can take your pen and literally cross out the definite article 'the' between the words "In" and "beginning", as the word is *not* in the original language. It literally should read: "**In beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**"

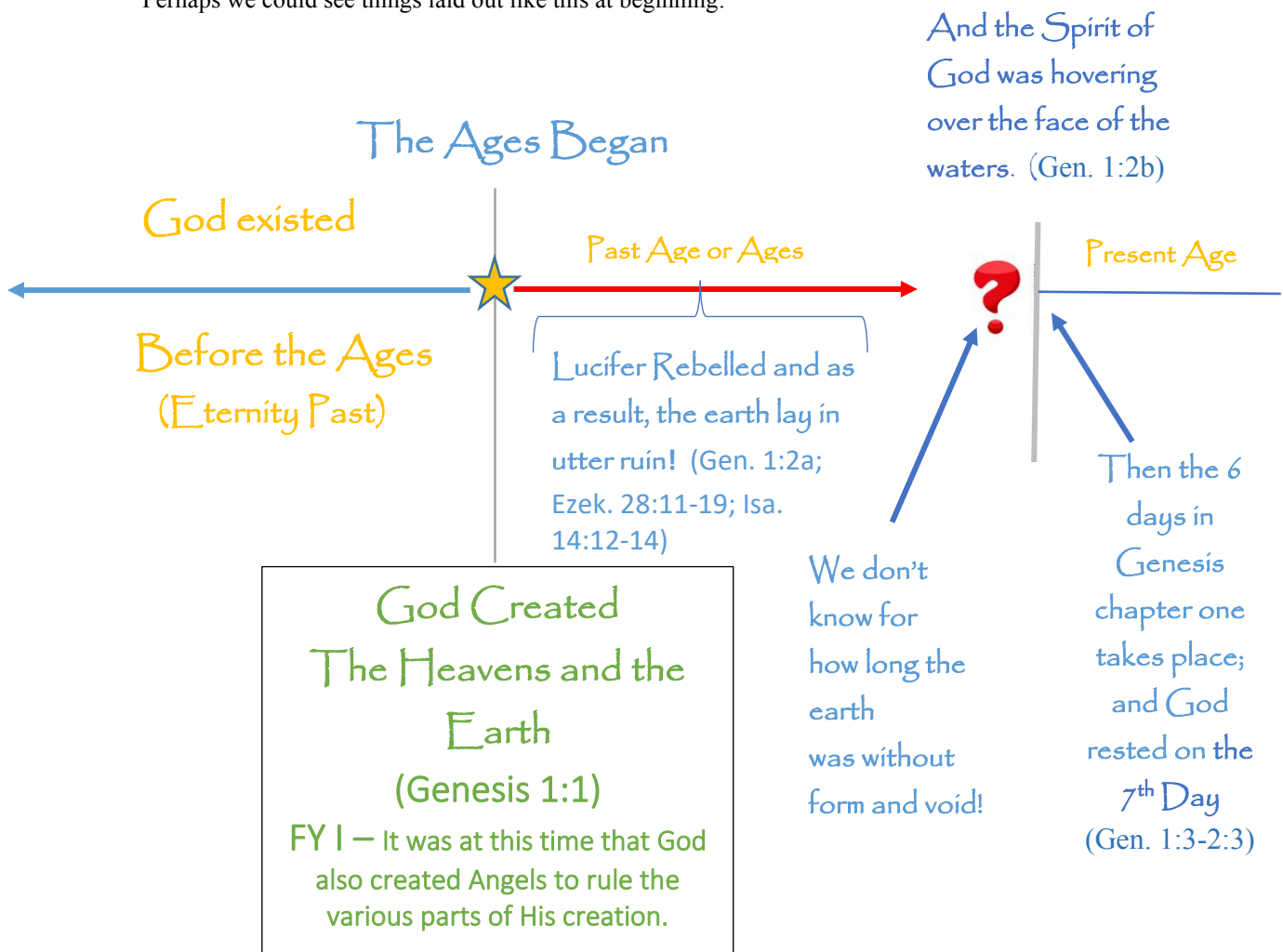
But why would this be important? It is because *this* beginning – the *beginning* of the ages – is different from the beginning of each subsequent age, as they also have an ending; but the beginning of the Ages will never have an ending. In this respect, there is only one true beginning of everything – everything other than God. This point is instructive for us. If the article 'the' was present in the original language, it could indicate that there are other beginnings similar to this beginning. But such is not the case. Hence, God simply stated, "In beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

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The Book of Acts: Part 1 Lesson Eleven

So, the question is: What began at “beginning”? Yes! That is the point! EVERYTHING began then! The whole creation and organization of the Universe, and the hosts of angels throughout the Universe. It all began then. And one of the most important things for us to see in understanding this, is that the AGES began then too. And from that point on, there will be ongoing, perhaps innumerable ages, each with a beginning and an ending.

Perhaps we could see things laid out like this at beginning:



Please spend a bit of time studying over this timeline. (Hopefully this “picture” is worth a thousand words.) Once you have a good handle on this, then continue in your day’s study.

So, what you have just seen is the distinction between eternity past (with no beginning) and the beginning of the ages (with no end of ages, though each age will have a beginning and an end). Eternity past and the beginning of the ages is separated by the creation. From that point on, there will only be ongoing, unending AGES. What we have all previously understood as “eternity future” is, in one sense, a misnomer! Literally, the word “eternal” or “eternity” is a concept that can truly only be applied to God Himself.

For more clarity, here is another verse that shows there was a beginning of the ages:

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The Book of Acts: Part 1 Lesson Eleven

Ephesians 3

9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;

For further study on Ages, check out this link: <http://lampbroadcast.org/plots/ppdf3/Ages.pdf>

Day Two — Dispensations

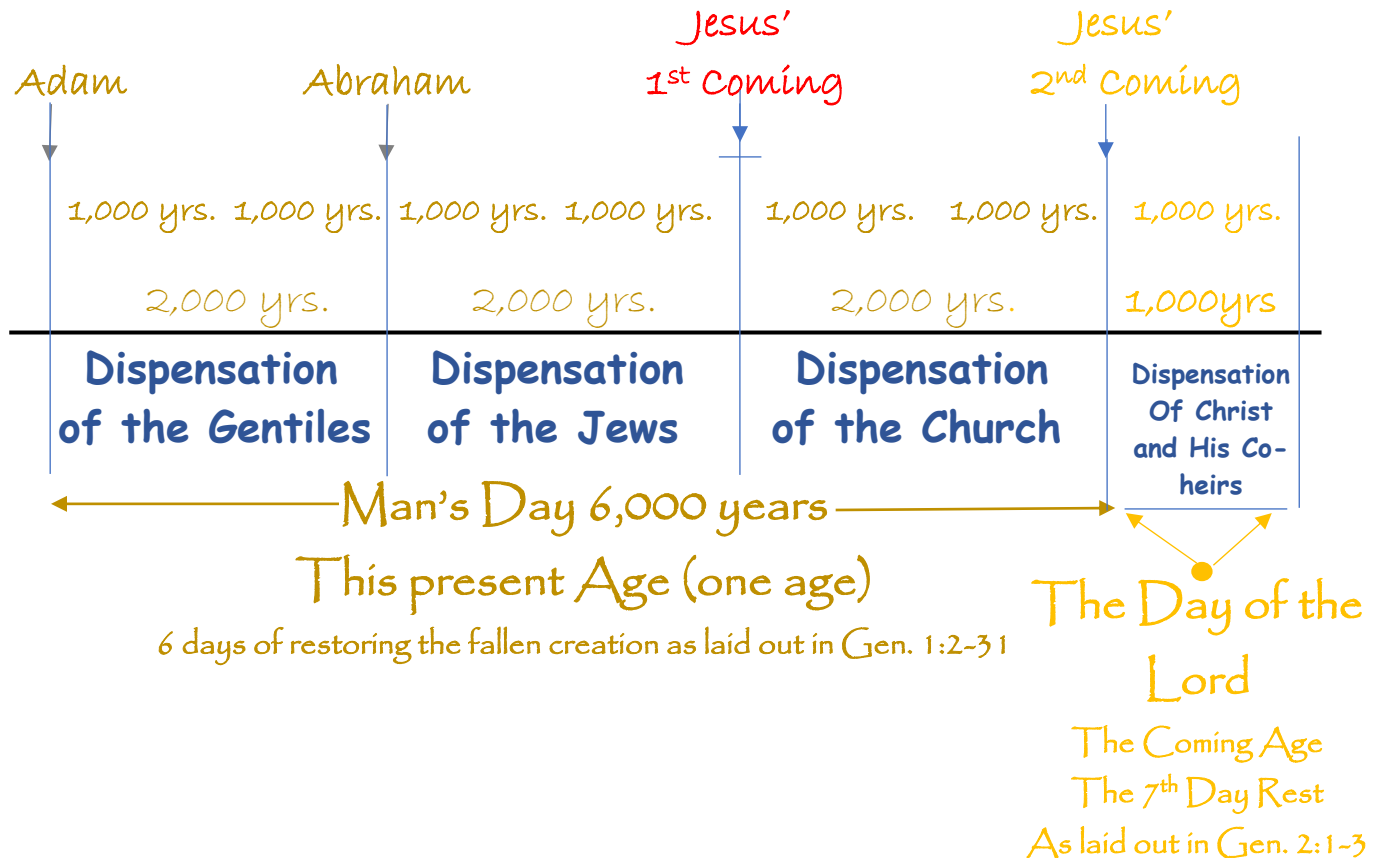
Now that we have some grasp on the distinctions between “Eternity” and the “Ages,” let’s tackle another concept that will be important to understand before we get into the transition that is in the Book of Acts. This is the *dispensational framework of Scripture*. Dispensations do not have to do with a period of time, per se. Rather, dispensations fit into time periods, as we shall soon see.

The word *dispensation* is translated of the Greek word *oikonomia*, which is made up of two words – *house* and *management*. Therefore, the word has to do with the *management of a house*, which is to say from a Scriptural standpoint, God has placed managers (or stewards) in charge of His household.

There are a couple of things that need to be stated here about dispensations:

- First, as we will see, the concept of dispensation has its basis in Scripture (and not just in the history of man’s ideology, as some would teach), and
- Second, a dispensation in and of itself does not denote any specific length of time, although a dispensation or several dispensations can fit into an age.

Perhaps we can grasp it better by studying through another timeline.



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The Book of Acts: Part 1

Lesson Eleven

The Bible reveals overall that there are three groups of people within the history of mankind: Gentile, Jew and Christian. We can see it clearly stated in

I Corinthians 10

32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks [Gentiles] or to the church of God [Christians]...

With a brief exception – the time covered by the complete Book of Acts – God deals separately with each individual group during Man’s Day (see previous timeline) providing a 2,000-year cycle for each dispensation, which then culminates in God dealing with all three groups together during the Lord’s Day, the Coming Age.

There is something that should be noted during the Jewish dispensation. While it is a 2,000-year cycle as the others are, there is an interruption in the chronology (so to speak). Daniel deals with this in the prophecy he received in

Daniel 9

25 “Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

You may recognize this as Daniel’s 70-week prophecy. God sent the Angel Gabriel to give Daniel the timeframe for the final 490 years of the dispensation of the Jews. A ‘week’ here simply means a “7”, and contextually, this reveals that the word “week” is referring to a 7-year period of time². So, 70-sevens (seventy 7-year periods = 490 years) had been declared for Daniel and his people, the Jews. But, as seen in this passage, even that period has been divided into “seven weeks and sixty-two weeks” (v. 25) and “one week” (v. 27). It is easy to see from vv. 25, 26 that *from the going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince... and the Messiah being cut off* [Lit., dies], there will be a total of 69 weeks (or 7+62=69 sevens = 483 years). And then the reference to 1 week (or one 7-year period) in v. 27.

The command mentioned in v. 25a was given by Artaxerxes around 444 or 445 BC (see Nehemiah chs. 1, 2). And from the time of this command being issued until the crucifixion of Christ there were *exactly* 483 years, when counting from 444 BC to 33 AD using a 360 day calendar, which is what God uses in Scripture. (See the article mentioned in the footnote.) It is at this point (the point of Christ’s crucifixion when “Messiah was cut off”) that God stopped the clock, so to speak, on the Jewish dispensation and ushered in a new dispensation, the dispensation of the Church. This pushed the last 7 years of Daniel’s prophecy forward another 2,000 years. So, the last 7-year period, which will conclude the Jewish dispensation, has yet to play out. This is the 7-year Tribulation, the Time of Jacob’s Trouble (Jer. 30:7), which will precede the ushering in of the Messianic Kingdom of the Christ, bringing to a full close the Jewish dispensation.

One way that is helpful to see this is to look at v.26 again, with the break in time noted:

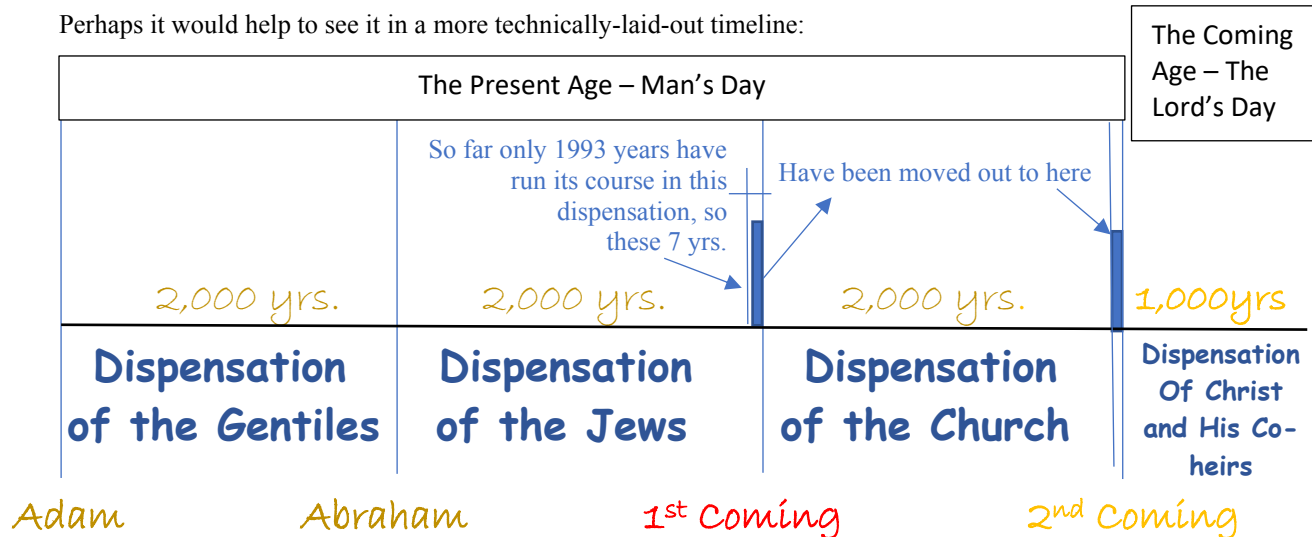
² For more detailed information on Daniel’s 70-week prophecy, go to:
<http://lampbroadcast.org/plots/ppdf11/Daniel%E2%80%99s%20Seventy%20Weeks.pdf>

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26 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; [insert the 2,000-year dispensation of the church which began on Pentecost (53 days after the crucifixion); then once the church is resurrected/raptured, God will turn His attention back to Israel to conclude His dealings with them, bringing them to full repentance through the events of the 70th week – the 7-year Tribulation, which will bring their dispensation to a close.] **And the people of the prince who is to come** [referring to the antichrist] **shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.** [Of course the actions of the antichrist destroying the city are all future from now.] Resurrection/Rapture of the Church to the JSOC

Perhaps it would help to see it in a more technically-laid-out timeline:



This timeline shows that each dispensation is a 2,000-year period. (The last 7 years of the Jewish Dispensation is pushed out to follow the Dispensation of the Church. (This 7-year period is the Tribulation that is yet for Israel.) But overall, we can see that each dispensation has a 2,000-year cycle. And so, we can see that there are three dispensations in the present age – Man’s Day, and that we are very near the end of the last of the three.

But let’s consider the Coming Age for a moment. AH! This Age is at the center of ALL things. The writer of Hebrews refers to the fact that God has framed the ages. And of course, we would know that the ages have been framed within the overall *eternal* plan of God:

Hebrews 11

3 By faith we understand that the worlds [Lit., ages] were framed by the word of God...

In referring to this verse in Part 5 of his Hebrews Series, Pastor John Herbert writes:

“The word ‘framed’ has to do with setting in place in an orderly arrangement, and as we see this was done by ‘the word of God’ – the audible utterance of Deity. In other words, “God said”, just as we see in Gen.1:3 Then God said.... God said and instantly the ages of eternity past, the present age, the age to come and the endless ages of eternity future were set in place, were structured, in order and perfection in accordance with the Divine plan and purpose for these ages.”

Then here are a few passages we need to consider when contemplating the Day of the Lord, which is the Coming Age, with its own Dispensation:

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Ephesians 1

9 having made known to us the mystery of His 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.

How does v. 10 refer to this future dispensation?

And what is it that God is going to do in that dispensation?

This is God's eternal purpose as we see a couple of chapters later:

Ephesians 3

11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

We'll remember that God alone is eternal! He is the only One Who has no beginning and no ending. Then technically speaking, we can see that because He is eternal (in the most literal sense of the word), His *purpose* would also have to be seen as eternal (in the literal sense of the word). So, putting these two passages from Ephesians together, we can see God's "good pleasure", which He "purposed in Himself" is that in the "dispensation of the fullness of time" (the Coming Age), He would "bring all things together in Christ, which is "according to his *eternal* purpose which He accomplished in Christ." That's amazing to think about! And perhaps the most amazing thing from our perspective may be the idea that you and I can have a part in this truly eternal plan. In fact, it is amazing to think that we were part of His eternal plan, a plan which literally has no beginning and no ending. Amazing!

Then before we close for today, there is one more thing we need to realize. Let's see what His Word says about this Coming Age. We will read it from the Young's Literal Translation:

Ephesian 3

21 to Him is the glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus, to all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen. (YLT)

Daniel 7

18 and receive the kingdom do the saints of the Most High, and they strengthen the kingdom unto the age, even unto the age of the ages. (YLT)

In your own words, what implication do the underlined phrases have in both the Old and New Testaments?

The Coming Age is considered by God to be "*the* age of the ages". But is *this* all *that* important? Well...if God considers the Coming Age to be THE *age of all the ages*, then what importance should that be to us? What should our view on it be?

You may want to go back to the previous timeline of the Dispensations and circle the last one, and mark it as "The Ages of the Ages", giving it its proper due.

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Day Three — The Day of Pentecost

With what we have seen now on dispensations, it will be easy to see that there was a change in “household manager” at some point after the rejection of Christ by the Nation of Israel. And the point in time when this change was made is easy to see. Jesus had already stated that He was going to withdraw the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens away from the Jews, and would extend the offer to a new nation (Mt. 12:32; 21:41). This “new nation” is the Church, a nation not to be counted among the nations of the earth (just as the Jew are not to be counted among the Gentiles), but this nation would be a nation wherein citizenship is in heaven.

(To grasp the uniqueness of our *heavenly* citizenship as a Christian is a paradigm shift in one’s thinking, to be sure. Once a person becomes a Christian, they no longer have citizenship within an earthly nation, their citizenship has been elevated to a *heavenly* one. Now they are considered by God to be His ambassadors to within the various nations of the earth.)

But back to Pentecost. As we will see, initially there was a *reoffer of the Kingdom* made to Israel, through the new nation, the Church. In other words, the Jews were being offered the Kingdom of the Heavens once again, only now it was the Church (the New Nation) making the offer. Now God was going to use His disciples (sent as Apostles) to give the message of repentance and the offer of the Kingdom of God to His people, the Jews, for one more period of time. The “keys of the Kingdom of the Heavens” were given to Peter when he made the statement that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of Living God, to which Jesus responded that upon that rock He would build His Church (Mt. 16:13-19). It would be through this new entity — the Church, initially headed by Peter — that a reoffer of the Kingdom would be made to the Jews. This reoffer began on the day of Pentecost, and continued to be made to the Jews for about 30 years. The idea of this reoffer can be seen in the parable which Jesus gave to a group of Jewish people who came to Him on one occasion. Read the parable in Luke chapter thirteen.

Luke 13

6 He also spoke this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ 8 But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 ‘And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.’”

Here a certain man owned a vineyard (a piece of real estate) which had a fig tree planted in it. Of course, the owner of the vineyard expected fruit from the fig tree, but when it produced no fruit after a certain period of time, the owner told the vineyard-keeper to cut the fig tree down.

For how many years had the fig tree not produce fruit before the command was given to cut it down?

What did the vineyard-keeper ask of the owner?

What was the vineyard-keeper planning on doing to the fig tree for an additional year?

And if the fig tree then produced no fruit, what would be the result for the fig tree?

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With this parable, Jesus was prophesying that which was about to take place in Israel. The fig tree represents Israel (Joel 1:6, 7; Hosea 9:10). With the ministry of John the Baptist and the public ministry of Jesus Christ, the call for repentance with an expectation of fruit-bearing had gone forth throughout Israel for a period of *three years*. These three years ended with the crucifixion of Christ. Now the offer of the kingdom was to be withdrawn from the Nation of Israel, for lack of fruitfulness. But, as we shall see in these opening chapters in Acts, God's plan for Israel was that a reoffer would be made to the Jews through the ministry of the Church. Then, as seen in the parable of the fruitless fig tree, if the Jews did not respond to the offer once again, depicted through the symbolism in this parable, the Jews would be set aside, as represented by the fig tree finally being cut down for its continual lack of fruit-bearing.

We will see the symbolism of the work of the vineyard-keeper in this parable play out throughout the majority of the Book of Acts. So, let's get begin in this book by reading what happened during the 40 days which followed Christ's resurrection, and then what happened ten days following His ascension.

As you know, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day and spent forty days ministering to His disciples before He ascended to heaven. Luke, the author of the Book of Acts, briefly mentions Jesus' post-resurrection ministry preceding his account of the inception of the Church and the things that took place in the early years of the Church. Luke gives a summary of Christ's post-resurrection ministry in the following verse.

Acts 1

3 To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

According to this verse, during the 40 days in which He presented Himself alive to the disciples, what did Jesus speak about?

Exactly prior to His being taken up, Jesus told His disciples to wait for that which had been promised. (Just before His death, Jesus had promised to send the Spirit of Truth, Who would guide them into all Truth [John 16:13-15].) This promise was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, ten days after Christ's ascension. The disciples began to speak boldly, and a miraculous thing happened. As they spoke, individual Jews present "out of every nation under heaven" heard them speaking in their own tongues! This caused quite a stir within the city, and Peter stood with the other eleven and gave his first message to the Jews in the re-offer of the kingdom. After quoting the Old Testament prophet Joel (wherein Joel prophesied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in connection with the coming Day of the Lord [Joel 2:28-32a]), Peter brings to the forefront a few words of King David concerning Jesus Christ. Study this portion of the message. (Remember Jesus had been crucified 53 days prior.)

Acts 2

22 "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 in Hades, 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,

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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 was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”’ 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

What does Peter say the Israelites did in v. 23?

What is the essence of the quote from David, which Peter quoted (vv. 25-28)?

From what we have learned in prior lessons, what is v. 30 about?

What do vv. 34 and 35 say Jesus’ position is now?

The obvious outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and Peter making reference to this outpouring through quoting the prophet Joel at the outset of his message (vv. 16-21), *is inextricably linked to the coming of the kingdom*. The words which Peter continued to address to the Jews concerned what David had prophesied, and his bold accusation of their having crucified the Messiah (vv. 23b, and 36b), brought about a very intense reaction on the part of *some* Jews. Read their response.

Acts 2

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” 38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

Before we close for today, take a minute to think through their question in v. 37 and Peter’s response, keeping it all in the context of the setting. Jesus had offered the Kingdom of the Heavens to this group of people, who previously, instead of accepting the King and His offer, had crucified Him. (This offer can only be given to people who are already eternally saved. Remember how people prior to Christ’s death were saved – faith in the death and shed blood of the provision God gave – the Passover lambs.) Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter gave a message that pierced their hearts. Some of them responded in repentance (repentance being the message John had brought to them three years prior, and the message Jesus had been

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bringing to them after John – *Repent* for the Kingdom of the heavens is at hand). The baptism Peter spoke of in v. 38 was the baptism for the forgiveness of their sins *subsequent* to their initial salvation, with specific reference in Peter’s message to the sin of their having crucified the Messiah. This was Peter’s message to the Jewish people after they had crucified the Lord. Through repentance and baptism, they would “be saved” (lit. *delivered* [Joel 2:32a; cf. Acts 2:21]) from their own generation of leadership who had perverted the truth about these things. Three thousand souls were saved (delivered) that day! Three thousand Jews had come to believe that Jesus Christ was their Messiah.

There you have it – the beginning of the reoffer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to the Jews, something that remained on offer to them until about 62 AD, which we shall see later.

Do you have any thoughts at this point?

Day Four — The Days Following Pentecost

In the days that followed Pentecost, Peter gave more messages along the same lines as the one given on the Day of Pentecost. As we read these messages, we can ascertain more clearly the obvious focus and direction of the Spirit’s leadership as He continued to speak through Peter *to the Jewish people*.

As we read the next recorded message Peter gave, listen to the tenor of his words. See what he was emphasizing to the Jews and what their different responses were. In Acts chapter three, Peter and John healed a lame man. This miraculous *sign* (which was a *sign* for the Jews [I Cor. 1:22], that if they would repent, they too, could be healed) caused some commotion. Peter seized the opportunity to give credit where credit was due, bringing forth once again the accusation of their crucifying their Messiah and the message of repentance with a view toward healing. Here is what he said to the people:

Acts 3

12 ... So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ 26 To you first, God, having

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raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

List all that Peter told the people they had done (vv. 13-15).

What does he tell them to do in v. 19a?

And *why* does he tell them to do this (v. 19b-21)?

How does Peter then show that Jesus was the One prophesied in the Old Testament?

The result of this message brought another 5,000 Jews to repentance:

Acts 4

1 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

It also brought about Peter and John being thrown into jail for the night. The next day the leaders brought the two men into their midst and asked by what power or by what name had they done this miraculous sign. Peter seized the opportunity again. Here is what he said to *the leaders of Israel*.

Acts 4

8 ... “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, 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. 11 This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

So, what was the accusation brought by Peter against the rulers and elders (v. 10)?

Reread v. 11. Do the words sound familiar to you? Jesus quoted these words the week prior to His death to the leaders after He had given them the parable of the vineyard, at which time He said that He would withdraw the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens from the Nation (Mt. 21:42-43).

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Again, let's note that Peter was speaking to *the rulers of Israel!* This generation of Jews was unique in all of history in that they had been saved under the Law (their faith in the provision God had given through the Passover lambs), but now, with Christ's death on the cross, the Law of sacrifices for the removal of their ongoing sins was no longer efficacious! These Jews *had to be given an opportunity to repent of their ongoing sins on an entirely new basis* because, like all saved individuals, there must be a provision for the cleansing of the sin of redeemed people. And once Christ had gone to the cross, the old system of priestly sacrifices was null and void. And hence Peter's words in v. 12. At this point, Peter was NOT referring to eternal salvation – the free gift – as these Jewish leaders had already been eternally saved previously through God's provision within Law – the Passover. Rather, Peter was speaking with respect to their ongoing process of salvation with a view towards the Kingdom. They had rejected the 'Chief Cornerstone' – Jesus Christ. And now, there was no other way to be "saved" with respect to the Kingdom, except through Him.

Can you see that?

The leaders feared to do any harm to Peter and John at this point because all the people esteemed them. But they warned Peter and John not to speak in this Name (the Name of Jesus) anymore, to which they replied, *"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."* (Acts 4:19b, 20)

The disciples continued to speak out boldly in the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:31). And the few fishermen whom Jesus had called three years prior were beginning to turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). Many signs and wonders were taking place in Israel among the people; multitudes of men and women were constantly being added to their numbers (Acts 5:12, 14). Even a good number of the priests were beginning to believe (Acts 6:7). This brought about great jealousy on the part of the leadership of the Jews, and the apostles were seized and placed in a public jail (5:17, 18). But an angel appeared to them that night, and spoke to them saying, **"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life (Acts 5:20)"** They were miraculously released from prison and they obeyed the words of the angel.

The following day when the leadership sent for the apostles to be brought from the prison in order to be questioned by them, they were told that the prison was locked up tight, but that the prisoners were all gone from the prison, and in fact, they were standing in the temple teaching the people (just as they had been told to do by the angel)! The apostles were brought to the Council, and the Council said to them: **"Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"** (Acts 5:28)

Now catch what the Council had just said! What did they say that the apostles intended to do? (*cf.* Mt. 27:25)

It is as if they didn't want to admit the fact that they were indeed the ones responsible for crucifying Jesus Christ! They were obviously nowhere close to repenting from that sin.

Read Peter's response to them –

Acts 5

29 ..."We ought to obey God rather than men. **30** The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. **31** Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. **32** And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

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What had the leadership demanded them not to do (Acts 4:19b, 20)?

But what did the angel tell them to do?

Once again, for what actions had the leadership admonished them?

What Peter say to the Council in Acts 5: 29-32.

Here is the response of the Council –

33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.

But Gamaliel, a respected leader of the Jews, strongly urged them to take a wait-and-see posture, cautioning them to proceed slowly just in case their message was indeed from God:

38 “And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to fight against God.”

40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

There is an interesting pattern of behavior developing here between the obvious message that God desires to be brought to His people and the reaction of the leadership to this message. What is the pattern you see?

And one last thing to consider before we close for today. Look at v. 42. At this point in the Book of Acts, where were they preaching and teaching their message?

Up to this point, have we yet seen the message taken to any Gentile person?

Interesting, isn't it?

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Day Five — Miraculous Signs Among the People

In the past two days of study we have begun to look at the transitory nature of the Book of Acts. Acts is the book which sits between the gospels and the epistles, and opens with a brief description of Jesus' 40-day post-resurrection ministry, and His ascension into glory (Acts 1). Ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, the Church was instituted (Acts 2).

Although Jesus had withdrawn His offer of the Heavenly Kingdom from the Jews in the week leading up to His death (Mt. 21:33-44), we have seen that Jesus had previously given a parable which revealed that *there was going to be a re-offer made to the Jews* after His death (Luke 13:6-9), only in the reoffer, God would use the newly instituted Church to make the reoffer of the Heavenly Kingdom to Israel. Again, this period of the re-offer to Israel is covered throughout the Book of Acts – from 33AD through about 62AD.

During the early years of the dispensation, Peter and the Apostles' ministry was abounding with *miraculous signs* among the people, and then also Stephen's. Let's read about it:

Acts 2

43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Acts 5

12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.

Acts 6

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders among the people.

In thinking about these individuals called and empowered by God to perform these signs among the people, let's note a few things about the early Church. During the very early years of the dispensation, the Church was solely located in and around Jerusalem. According to these verses, describe what was happening at this time.

With the Church located only in Jerusalem during these early years, who were the people among whom the signs were being done?

So, let's realize a few things about *miraculous signs* by going back to where they are first mentioned in Scripture. (We'll remember what we learned about the First Mention Principle in Part I of our Survey: When anything is mentioned for the first time in God's Word, its foundation is laid, upon which we are to build our understanding of that topic. The foundation then will remain unchanged and unalterable throughout Scripture.) The first mention of miraculous signs being performed by individuals was during Moses' day, followed by Joshua (some 2,500 years into mankind's history), and then forefront again during the days of the Prophet Elijah followed by Elisha. At both times, both *Israel and the Kingdom were in view*, laying the foundation for proper understanding of signs, wonders, and miracles. *Israel and the Kingdom* must be in view *together* in order for signs, wonders, and miracles to be present.

During Moses' day, God had redeemed the Children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt for the purpose of taking them into the Promised Land with the view to setting up the Theocratic Kingdom. Moses and Aaron, and then later Joshua, had been empowered by God to do various *miraculous signs*, which would not only be

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their credentials to Israel showing that they had been sent by God with a message about the kingdom, but also the signs themselves would point to the message being given. (Prior to this time, of course, miracles had been done, but only by God. God empowering individuals to do miraculous signs was first seen here, and not before.) Now, miraculous signs performed by individuals called by God would be the credentials for the messengers showing that God had sent them to His people, Israel:

Exodus 4

1 Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you.’” 2 So the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A rod.” 3 And He said, “Cast it on the ground.” So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail” (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), 5 “that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.” 6 Furthermore the LORD said to him, “Now put your hand in your bosom.” And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. 7 And He said, “Put your hand in your bosom again.” So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh. 8 “Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. 9 And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. And the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.”

Do you see how God explained to Moses that the signs would validate to the people that He had in fact sent Moses? God was sending Moses and Aaron with a message to the Jews and empowered the two to perform miracles as a sign so that the people would believe. And to see that the Kingdom was in view in all of this, just a few verses down in Exodus chapter four, we read this:

Exodus 4

22 "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.

Here is God telling Pharaoh that *the Nation of Israel is His firstborn son*. This absolutely shows Pharaoh that Israel is to be the ruling nation. Firstborn sons rule. God was showing Pharaoh that His plan was to establish this nation as the head nation over all the world, which of course was God's plan.

Then here is the result of the signs performed before Israel, as recorded at the end of the same chapter:

Exodus 4

29 Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. 30 And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

What was the result of the signs performed before Israel?

The other time in the Old Testament where God empowered individuals to perform miraculous signs was during Elijah and Elisha's ministry. It was a time long after the Theocracy had been set up, but due to the Nation's ongoing disobedience, God sent Elijah, and then later Elisha, to call the Nation to repentance. Signs and wonders accompanied these two prophets' ministry in order to show the Jews that they had, in fact, been

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sent by God with a message of repentance. *The Kingdom* and *Israel* were both in view again, which had to be the case, as two that had been the prerequisites laid in the foundation in the first mention of signs and wonders in Scripture. At this time, *if Israel did not repent*, the Kingdom would cease to exist (only to be established later in fulfillment of God's promises), and Israel would be scattered among the nations. This is exactly what happened. Israel didn't repent, the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities ensued, the kingdom within Israel ceased, and the Time of the Gentiles was ushered in.

There is no other record in the Old Testament of any individual being empowered to perform miraculous signs. Again, God Himself performed miracles, but as far as individuals being empowered to perform signs, these are the only ones. And it was when *Israel* and *the Kingdom* were in view, as must be the case due to the foundation laid out at the first.

Now, fast-forward to the days of Christ's ministry. Signs were an integral part of His ministry. Jews were back in the Land, and the Kingdom of the Heavens was in view. And the Jews understood that signs, wonders, and miracles would accompany the Messiah. (See John 2:18; Mt. 16:1.)

John 21

25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

Jesus' healing of so many sick within the Nation was to reveal that Israel as a Nation was sick! (Read Isa. 1:4-6.) The miraculous signs of healing pointed to the fact that the One Who is able to save them from their sin-sick condition and deliver them into the Kingdom was the One performing the miracles. But alas! Most within the Nation would not believe.

So, it would only make sense that in the re-offer of the Kingdom to the Jews, the messengers coming with the same message as Jesus and His Disciples would be empowered to deliver the message accompanied by signs, wonders, and miracles. After all, both the Jews and the Kingdom were in view. And so, we can see that Peter, the Apostles and Stephen were all empowered by God to perform miraculous signs, and later others during the reoffer of the Kingdom to the Jews, including Paul. For it is:

I Corinthians 1

22 For Jews request [require] a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

Next week, we'll continue to see how all this plays out throughout the remainder of the re-offer of *the Kingdom* to the *Jews*. But for now, we will close our study for this week. You are doing a great job! Keep it up.

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Lesson Twelve — The Book of Acts: Part 2

Day One — Stephen’s Message

Day Two — More on Stephen’s Message

Day Three — The Conclusion of Stephen’s Message

Day Four — Paul’s Ministry

Day Five — The Epistles

Last week we began to consider the Book of Acts, and the transition this book makes between the gospels and the epistles. There are several reasons that the understanding of the things we are studying in Acts is so important. One thing that must be understood is that a new dispensation began on the Day of Pentecost – the Dispensation of the Church. And along with this, a new group of ‘household stewards’ comes into view. But remember, *initially* the Church was made up solely of Jews and was centered in and around Jerusalem. Eventually the Jews – who wanted nothing to do with the Church – began persecuting those Jews who made up the Church, which brought about some changes within the landscape of the early Church. So let’s begin our study this week looking at what was happening.

Days One — Stephen’s Message

After Pentecost, the basic message of the day to the Jews in Jerusalem was – Repent from crucifying the Messiah so that the times of refreshing could come from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19, 20). Though numerous individuals within the Nation did repent, the Nation as a whole (led by the Pharisees and Sadducees) was called upon to repent in order for Jesus to return and set up His kingdom. (Notice that once again, the Jews and the Kingdom are both in view here.) God used Peter, as the major spokesman, during this time throughout Jerusalem to give this message. Though many Jews, including many priests were responding to the message of repentance (Acts 6:7), we come to a place now where we will see God bringing this message in Jerusalem to a climax.

Remembering what we learned in last week’s study about what was going on in Jerusalem in the days following Pentecost, we can know that things were heating up. Signs, wonders and miracles were being performed by the Apostles, and many Jews were joining the ranks of the Church. This did not sit well with leadership within the Nation, and some severe persecution began.

This was about the time Stephen came to the forefront (Acts chps. 6, 7). There is much we can learn in Scripture from the message Stephen gave just prior to his martyrdom. So we’ll spend some time looking at it.

In order to correctly understand the power with which Stephen’s message went forth, and to correctly understand the effect it had on those who heard his message, we would have to know that Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit to give a very *purposeful* message to the leadership. We are going to spend a bit of time on his message because in seeing it correctly we will learn even more as to how God gives His Word! Otherwise, Stephen’s message might appear to be simply a history lesson of the Jews.

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But it is much, much more than just a lesson to the Jews about their history. The Jews knew what Stephen meant by what he was saying. His words had the potential of either bringing about such a *strong positive response* that it could bring about national repentance bringing about the times of refreshing about which Peter spoke, or his words had the potential of bringing about *such a strong negative response* that they would kill him for it. We know the outcome, but let's look at the details of it. The first part of his message reminds them of what God had done for Abraham. (As you read through this, try to hear Stephen's words with Jewish ears, so to speak.)

Acts 7

2 And he said, “Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3 and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’ 4 Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. 5 And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. 6 But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them four hundred years. 7 ‘And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,’ said God, ‘and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.’ 8 Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs.

Of what did Stephen remind the leadership? Do you remember the details of what you have previously learned concerning the promises given to Abraham? (The Jews of Stephen's day would have understood exactly what Stephen was saying to them through this reminder.) Write out what you understand Stephen to be saying.

Now Stephen jumps ahead to a time in the history of the Jews where brothers came against a brother due to jealousy of their father's favor upon this one son. Stephen reminds these leaders about the actions of Joseph's brothers and what God brought about as a result. Continuing in Acts 7 —

8b ... “and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs. 9 And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him 10 and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. 11 Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. 13 And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh. 14 Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people. 15 So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. 16 And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem...”

Do you remember what the sons of Jacob did to Joseph, their brother (see Gen. 37) ? What was it?

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Why did they do it (v. 9)?

What did God do with Joseph? (Remember, Egypt is a picture of the world.)

After Joseph had been mistreated by his brothers, what happened in the land, both in Egypt and Canaan?

With Joseph apart from his brothers, a great famine hit the land, and great affliction with it. God granted Joseph the ability to translate a dream that the Pharaoh had, giving the Pharaoh knowledge of the upcoming famine, resulting in Egypt storing enough grain to cover the years of the famine. But Jacob and his family had no knowledge of the upcoming famine, and therefore suffered the affliction of it. Finally, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to see if they could buy grain. The *first time* the brothers were before Joseph, does it appear they recognized him?

What happened on their *second visit*?

Stephen, as directed by the Holy Spirit, points out to the Council that Joseph appeared before them and revealed his identity to his brothers *the second time* (v. 13), and the Jews listening to Stephen would have known that upon the brothers' realization of this, the family of Jacob was well cared for.

What could this portion of their history have revealed to these Jews listening to Stephen about themselves?

We'll pick it up tomorrow.

Days Two — More on Stephen's Message

Stephen continues with the details of the nation's history, as the Holy Spirit directed him to speak for a specific purpose. He mentions again the promises given to Abraham (v. 17), reminding them that God's plan was unfolding. Continuing —

Acts 7

17 “But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt 18 till another king arose who did not know Joseph. 19 This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. 20 At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. 21 But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. 22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. 23 Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the

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children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. 25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. 26 And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?’ 27 But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?’ 29 Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons...

Stephen points out a time in their history wherein the Jews were under the authority of a harsh ruler – an Egyptian Pharaoh. Stephen brings Moses into the picture, but watch Stephen’s comments carefully. He knew that these Jews who were before him thought of themselves as disciples of Moses (John 9:28). And remember, too, what Jesus had told the Jews earlier – **“For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”** (John 5:46, 47).

Stephen points out that Moses supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him. But instead, what was the case (v. 25b)?

The day after this event took place, Moses came upon two Hebrew brothers who were fighting, and he interrupted them. What was their response to Moses (vv. 27, 28)?

Yes, Stephen points out how their fathers treated Moses, even mockingly asking, “Who made you to be ruler and judge over us?”

(This is interesting! Stephen points out something that happened to Moses, which was very similar to that which had happened to Joseph. Joseph had had a dream and told the dream to his brothers saying, **“Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.”** And his brothers said to him, **“Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?”** So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. [Gen. 37:6-8].)

What is the pattern Stephen is pointing out to the Jews about their history?

Stephen continues –

29b “ ... Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons. 30 And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. 31 When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, 32 saying, ‘I am the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses trembled and dared not look. 33 ‘Then the LORD said to him, “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. 34 I have surely seen the oppression of my

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people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.”⁴⁰

What did God see and hear in Egypt?

What was God going to do for His people?

As Stephen points out, after these two Hebrew men mocked and rejected Moses, he fled the country. After Moses had departed, the Israelites began being more oppressed than ever and they groaned under the weight of the slavery. God heard their groans and finally sent *the very one who had been rejected* to deliver them. Are you seeing that that which Stephen is telling them is more than just a history lesson?

Now watch how many times Stephen points out “this Moses,” or “this man,” or “this is the one” —

35 “This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. 37 This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’ 38 This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us,

List the things Stephen reminds the Jews about Moses:

Then Stephen tells them something they already knew —

39 “whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, ‘Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ 41 And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42 Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: ‘Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? 43 You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’...

What does Stephen remind the Jews that their fathers had done?

As a result, what did God do?

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After reminding the Jews of what God did with the generation of Jews who disowned Moses, he reminds them of the following generation, those who were taken into the land by Joshua –

44 “Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, 45 “which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David,

What did God do for the second generation through Joshua?

Then Stephen mentions King David, drawing attention to *regal* issues surrounding Israel. Again this is with a purpose!

Continuing —

46 “who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. 47 “But Solomon built Him a house. 48 However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 49 ‘Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest? 50 Has My hand not made all these things?’...

Any knowledgeable Jew would have been immediately mindful of God’s dealings with David, especially the promises made to David in II Samuel chapter seven concerning one of his descendants Who would sit on his (David’s) throne, and Whose Kingdom would be an Everlasting Kingdom.

Look at the first half of v. 49. What two realms does Stephen mention here, quoting from the prophet Isaiah?

Now look at the last half of v. 49. What is the question God asks?

(The word for *rest* (v. 49) is the same word for *rest* in Isa. 66:1. Do you remember in Genesis 2:1-3, that God rested on the seventh day and set aside the seventh day [the day of rest] as holy? Later, God gave the Sabbath day as a sign for the Jews, something to which they were to look forward. Even now there is a Sabbath rest yet future for the people of God [Heb. 4:9]. It is a day set aside, a day of rest, a Sabbath rest. We’ll study more on that in upcoming weeks.)

Remembering that Jesus offered the heavenly realm of the kingdom to the Jews, what is the implication in what Stephen says in vv. 48 and 49?

Days Three — The Conclusion of Stephen’s Message

This is the climax of the historical portion of Stephen’s message, ending with the mention of the dual realms of the kingdom. This would certainly have reminded the Jews of the message which they had rejected and

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in the process of rejecting and crucifying the Messenger. All the parts leading up to this part of Stephen's message, along with the reminder of the dual realm of God's throne would have served to remind the Jews of the message Jesus had brought to them – "Repent, for *the Kingdom of the Heavens* is at hand."

Look closely for a moment at all the elements of Stephen's "history lesson" for the Jews.

- First Stephen mentions the call of Abraham and the promises God gave to him – promises that include a land (v. 3), an inheritance in that land (v. 5), and descendants (vv. 5b, 6).
- Then he reminds them of Joseph, the favored son, who had been rejected by his brothers, sold into slavery and later elevated to the second highest position in all of Egypt, pointing out to them that trouble came upon them after they sold Joseph – trouble in the form of a severe famine in the land.
- Then he mentions the fact that years later, in the first visit, the brothers didn't recognize Joseph, but upon their *second visit* with him, his identity is revealed to them, and they are blessed through him.
- Then Stephen gives a fairly lengthy account of Moses and how their fathers had repudiated Moses, the one who "was lovely in the sight of God" and chosen by Him to lead the Children of Israel out of bondage. This same Moses is the one their fathers – those of the first generation – had disowned and disobeyed, and as a result, their fathers had been laid low in the wilderness – they died before receiving their inheritance.
- Then he mentions *regality*, bringing King David into the forefront. It is at this point that Stephen packs the final punch...
- All of these historical reminders have a purpose in view — bringing the nation to repentance for crucifying the Messiah, *the very One to Whom all these pictures point!*

Stephen says –

51 "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."

Stephen draws a comparison between what their fathers had done, and what they had done. Put into your own words what the comparison is.

This message, given by Stephen, was under the specific guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit (v. 55). It was a powerful message, designed to bring about recognition and repentance on the part of those listening to it. The nation of Israel, as directed by their leadership, needed to repent from their rebellious, sinful ways (particularly that of rejecting and crucifying the Messiah) so that the Messiah could usher in His kingdom, and bring about the blessings connected with the promises given to Abraham. In particular, they needed to repent from rejecting and crucifying the Messiah. And *if the leadership would lead Israel in national repentance for their sin*, then Jesus, the Holy and Righteous One, would come a *second time* (they had rejected Him the first time), bringing in the period of restoration and times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, restoring the kingdom to Israel (Acts 3:19-21; cf. 1:6).

What would be the leadership's response to this powerful message?

54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

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Apparently, so ready was the Father to send Jesus back (upon their repentance) that Stephen was allowed to witness something taking place in the heavens. He was allowed to witness Jesus standing, as if ready to return.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

What position is Jesus in at this moment?

Prior to Stephen seeing Jesus standing, it had already been mentioned by Peter on the day of Pentecost that Jesus *had taken His seat* at the right hand of the Father, which would be His position until the Father sends Him back, at which time His enemies would be made a footstool for His feet (Mk. 16:19; Acts 2:34, 35). And now Stephen looks into heaven, sees the glory of God, and *Jesus standing!* What an awesome sight! What an awesome thought! Standing, ready to be sent back a second time, if the leadership responded in repentance to this Spirit-directed message. What would be their response?

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The heavens closed up and, evidently, Jesus took His seat once again at the right hand of the Father, and is presently waiting (Ps. 110:1)! It is important to see that this is a major turning point in the New Testament. Of course this event did not catch God by surprise. A way had to be made for the Gentiles to be grafted in. We will see the beginning of this in Day Five, and then throughout the remainder of this workbook.

(**There is a chart on the last page of this lesson that compares what Stephen lays out in his message.)

Days Four — Paul’s Ministry

With the martyrdom of Stephen, it had become clear that the Nation of Israel, as a whole — led by the Pharisees, Chief Priests and Sadducees — was not going to repent. Through the messages given to them by both Peter and Stephen, they had had several opportunities to do so, but the rejection at the conclusion of Stephen’s message seems to be somewhat of a climactic rejection, bringing about a change in direction in the Book of Acts. In His eternal plan, God had prepared a way for the Gentiles to be grafted into the family of Abraham, and this plan will begin to emerge now.

There is a person who now comes to the forefront. Did you notice toward the end of the Acts chapter seven a man named Saul was mentioned (v. 58)? Saul (his Hebrew name), better known as Paul (his Greek name), was zealous for his Hebrew tradition. He had been “circumcised the eighth day, was of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless” (Phil. 3:5, 6). But something happened to him one day subsequent to Stephen’s death that changed the direction of his whole life and he was never the same again.

After Stephen’s martyrdom, many Jews who had become followers of Christ fled from Jerusalem into the neighboring cities and countryside. Saul was going into these different cities in order to bring these Christians

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back to Jerusalem to be punished. It was on one of these trips that the Lord appeared to him, striking him blind. A dialogue ensued between Saul and the Lord Jesus Christ which forever changed him.

Saul was ‘converted’ on that day (Acts 9:3-6), that is to say that Saul changed his mind about Jesus Christ. His blindness remained for three days; but as soon as his sight was restored, he immediately and boldly began proclaiming in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God (9:20). It was some time later once Saul began his ministry, he became known more as Paul, than Saul (Acts 13:9).

Initially, Paul spent as many as three years in the Arabian desert, being divinely taught the revelation of Jesus Christ, by Jesus Himself, and was shown that he was to take the message of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:11-18).

In short, God raised up Paul to take the Gospel into the whole world. In the years that followed, Paul made three different journeys into different parts of the known world, establishing the Church in the various areas. Upon arriving in a particular city, he would first go to the synagogue and speak to the Jews about Jesus Christ. Then, when that fellowship of Jews rejected the message (which they did time after time), he would go into the streets and by-ways of that area, giving the message to the Gentiles.

He brought a two-fold message to the Gentiles.

- Firstly, he brought the *gospel of the grace of God* to the unsaved people, giving them the good news concerning the death and shed blood of Jesus, and the fact that, through faith in Jesus, they could be saved from their sins (e.g. Acts 16:30, 31).
- Secondly, he brought the *gospel of the glories of Christ* to saved people, giving them the good news concerning the purpose for their salvation, instructing them that they have been saved for a purpose, telling them what that purpose is.
- Finally, in the end, he gave the *complete* message, strongly establishing the Church in the Word of God. This is exemplified in what Paul told the elders of Ephesus at Miletus after his third journey, having spent three years ministering to the people in Asia –

Acts 20

18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. ...

24 “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. 25 And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God....

According to what Paul says in vv. 24 and 25, what would make up *the whole council of God*?

As Paul continued to travel from city to city, he continued to go first to the synagogues before going to the Gentiles. But time after time the Jews rejected him and plotted against him. He suffered many things at the hands of his foes, Jews and Gentiles alike.

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Several different times, Paul verbalized a judgment against the Jews. The first was in Antioch, a city in the region of Pisidian (not Syria). Paul gave a message to the Jews, which, interestingly enough, was actually very similar to the message which he had heard Stephen give just prior to Stephen's stoning. (You can read what Paul said to the Jews of this city in Acts 13:16-41.) His message ended with this warning —

Acts 13

38 “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; 39 and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: 41 ‘Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.’”

The following week, a great number of Jews came to hear Paul speak to them in the synagogue. The Jewish leaders of the city became jealous and began contradicting the things Paul said (v. 45). But Paul was not deterred and spoke these condemning words —

Acts 13

46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Another time, when Paul was in Corinth, Paul brought a verbal judgment against the Jews, explaining that he would take this message to the Gentiles. Upon his arrival in Corinth (where he ended up staying for a year and a half), the Scripture says that Paul spent every Sabbath in the synagogue trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks concerning Jesus Christ.

Acts 18

... 6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, “Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

Paul had fulfilled his responsibility before the Lord in warning his brethren!

Shortly after this incident in Corinth, at the beginning of his stay there, the Lord spoke to Paul in a night vision saying, **“Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”**

Paul had many more travels and many more converts. Along the way, he brought the light of the Gospel to the Gentiles across the known world. The Book of Acts closes with the Jews imprisoning Paul in Jerusalem and his asking to go to Rome, having appealed to Caesar. While in Rome, Paul called together the leading men of the Jews. When he had them together, he basically explained the essence of his ministry (see Acts 28:16ff), ultimately expounding the kingdom to them (v. 23). Read carefully this last passage from the Book of Acts, looking to see his emphasis on the Coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Acts 28

24 And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. 25 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

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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!” 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.

30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

Did you notice that last verse? And he preached *the kingdom of God* and taught things *concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered!* Thus ends the Book and Acts! And along with this ending, the fig tree from the parable in Luke 13:6-9, which we considered at the beginning of *last* week’s study, was cut down.

The prayer which he asked the Church at Ephesus to pray for him was being answered —

Ephesians 6

19 and [pray] for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

In conclusion, the Book of Acts is the historical account of the transition made between the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to the Jews through the ministry of John the Baptist, Jesus and His disciples (in the gospels) to the reoffer being made to the Jews through the ministry of the newly formed Church, with the offer eventually being completely withdrawn from the Nation of Israel and their being completely set aside at the end of the Book of Acts.

With the continual rejection on the part of Israel as a whole, Israel was set aside. The remainder of the New Testament – the epistles – is given over to the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens being made to the Church, the *ekklesia*, with the Book of the Revelation culminating all things.

Days Five — The Epistles

As one begins to study any of the epistles, he/she would have to realize that the main subject of the epistles is no different than the main subject of the entirety of God’s Word. The central theme of the epistles would be no different than the central theme of the OT, which would be no different than the central theme of the gospels and the Book of Acts! It would all be one and the same. The only difference would be the recipients! The epistles are letters written to the Church; letters that contain the offer of the kingdom to His people – the “one new man in Christ” (Eph. 2:15). Not one of the epistles is written to an un-saved people group – not even one! And while there may be passages that might lead an unsaved person to understand what it takes to become saved, every single epistle is written for the edification and growth of the new man in Christ.

We have seen over and over again what God’s purpose has been for man since the beginning. It all has to do with the Coming Kingdom, when a new order of rulers will be placed over the earth and the present rulers will be put down. Now consider what Jesus said about the New Nation when He mentioned it, saying

Matthew 21

43 “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.”

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According to this verse, what would Jesus expect from the Church that He did not get from Israel?

With that in mind, what do you think the focus of any and all the epistles would be?

Then there are a couple more things that need to be considered when studying the epistles – one is the timeframe in which a particular epistle was written. Any epistle that was written *during* the period covered in the Book of Acts, or even shortly after the close of Acts, would be written to a Church that would have had many Jewish believers within – Jews who would have to reconsider what their view had been concerning the OT Law, as well as God opening the way of salvation to the Gentiles through Christ. Here is a list of the epistles written before Acts 28 (while the reoffer to the Nation of Israel was still open):

James wrote:	James 45-48 AD	
Paul wrote:	I Thessalonians 52AD	II Corinthians 58AD
	II Thessalonians 53AD	Romans 58AD
	I Corinthians 57AD	Anonymous: Hebrews 63AD??
	Galatians 57AD	

Romans and Galatians have been somewhat notoriously difficult to understand because both of these books have so much about the OT Law within them. Christians might wonder what the Law has to do with the Church. Then there is I Corinthians which has also been somewhat difficult due to things written therein that deal with some of the spiritual gifts – particularly the gifts which include miraculous signs (e.g., the gifts of tongues and healings). Christians might wonder if miraculous signs would still be for today.

Now, as far as the Law is concerned, we can understand why there is so much in Romans and Galatians about the OT Law, as Paul was revealing to the *believing* Jews (saved Jews who now believed in Jesus as Messiah) the fact that the OT Law had been *fulfilled* in Christ Jesus, and the mindset of these Jews needed to reflect this. Paul was also showing the Jews that it had always been God’s plan to allow Gentiles to become part of the household of God (cf., Is.9:2; 42:6; 49:6; 60:1-3; Lk.2:30-32). This was being fulfilled right before their very eyes. And though portions of these epistles were written to *believing* Jews helping them to understand these things, these epistles are also very beneficial to the Church today as they show us what the OT had to say about the Coming Redeemer/Messiah, and how Jesus fulfilled the entire Law. Even now, it is a very good thing for us to have these epistles to study so that we, too, might grasp the significance as to how and why God gave the Law in the first place, showing us that the Law was a tutor to bring individuals to Christ; the Law was a copy and shadow of the good things to come (cf. Heb. 8:5). We can learn more about the work of Jesus through an understanding of the Law and what it pointed to. Also, concerning the Gentiles, even now we would need to understand how Gentiles are grafted in to *the commonwealth of Israel*, through faith in the Christ. Apart from studying the OT, we wouldn’t know what it means that we have been grafted into the Promises.

Then too, there is the issue of the miraculous signs being performed during this period of the reoffer. The need for these signs being performed during the time of the reoffer to Israel can be seen in what Paul wrote in his first letter to the Church at Corinth. I Corinthians was written during the time of the reoffer of the Kingdom to Israel.

1 Corinthians 1

22 For Jews request [Lit., require] a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom...

Miraculous signs can only be present when two things are present together: The Jews and the Kingdom. So, signs have always had to do with the Nation of Israel in conjunction with the Kingdom, as shown here in

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what Paul so succinctly states. Paul states that *it is the Jew who requires a sign*. As we have seen, miraculous signs were necessary for Israel *revealing to them that they were in need of spiritual healing*. If they would repent, God would heal them as a nation, and would bring in the Kingdom. But Greeks (i.e. Gentiles) on the other hand, do not need a sign to validate the offer of the kingdom, nor do Gentiles need healing through repentance; they would simply need to *seek wisdom to understand the Word of God*. Paul continues to explain this:

I Corinthians 14

18 I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; 19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. 20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

21 In the law it is written [see Isa. 28:11]: “With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,” says the Lord. 22 Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers...

We can clearly see here that the gift of tongues was given as a sign for unbelieving Jews – eternally saved Jews who did not yet believe that Christ was their Messiah – Jews who require a miraculous sign to prove the validity of the offer made to them so that they might believe in both Christ as Messiah and in the offer being presented to them. *This can hardly be stated any more clearly!* During this period, Gentiles speaking in other tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit was *to provoke unbelieving Jews to jealousy (for the purpose of moving them to belief in Christ)*. We can see reference to this in Paul writing to his letter to the Romans:

Romans 11

11 I say then, have they [the Jews] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! 13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.

But once the reoffer was completely withdrawn from Israel (Acts 28:28), there was no more need for the miraculous signs. No more need to show Israel their need for healing, and no more need to provoke them to jealousy, as they had been completely set aside for the remainder of the dispensation. So, the performing of these things ceased. Therefore, you do not see the mention of miraculous signs in any of the epistles written after the close of the Book of Acts. (These miraculous signs will come back into the picture during the Tribulation when both Israel and kingdom are back in view.)

Romans, Galatians and I Corinthians are three of the seven epistles written during a time when Israel was still in view with respect to the reoffer of the kingdom, and a very Jewish audience was still in view. And these epistles would reflect that! Early in 62AD, Paul arrived in Rome as a prisoner, and shortly thereafter the re-offer of the Kingdom to the Jews was withdrawn (Acts 28:16-31).

Here is a list of the epistles written *after* Acts 28 – *after* the reoffer of the kingdom was closed to Israel as a Nation, *after* the Nation set aside for the remainder of the Dispensation of the Church:

Paul wrote:	Ephesians 62AD	Paul wrote:	I Timothy 63AD
	Philippians 62AD		Titus 63AD
	Colossians 62AD	Peter wrote:	II Peter 65AD
	Philemon 62AD	Paul wrote:	II Timothy 66AD
Peter wrote:	I Peter 63AD	Jude wrote:	Jude 75AD
Anonymous:	Hebrews 63AD (??)	John wrote:	I, II, III John 90AD
			Revelation 97AD

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After the close of Acts, these epistles were written *without* the reoffer of the Kingdom to Israel being in view; and with this being the case, there was no longer a need to deal with the Law and the miraculous signs. Hence, nothing is said about either. While many more things can be said about the epistles, for our purposes in this study, we will leave it here.

Does this all make more sense to you now? As a result of understanding these things in this lesson, how will you read and study the epistles now?

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JOSEPH	MOSES	CHRIST
Rejected by his Brothers	Rejected by his Brethren	Rejected by His Brethren
Goes to a Far Country: Egypt	Goes to a Far Country: Midian	Goes to a Far Country: Heaven
Exalted to 2 nd only to Pharaoh where he takes a Gentile Bride	Exalted at the Burning Bush which is Holy Ground. Whilst in Midian he takes a Gentile Bride	Exalted to the Right Hand of the Father where He takes a Gentile Bride
In the dealing with his Brothers they experience: <u>Famine</u>	In the dealing with his Brethren they experience: <u>Persecution</u>	In the dealing with His Brethren they experience: <u>Tribulation</u>
<u>As a result they</u> : reach out to Joseph for deliverance	<u>As a result they</u> : cry out to God for deliverance	<u>As a result they</u> : cry out to God for deliverance
It is at their 2nd meeting that Joseph reveals to his brothers that their deliverer is their brother who was 'dead'.	When Moses returns a 2nd time to Egypt he will be recognized by his brothers as their deliverer from the hardships of Egypt.	At Christ's 2nd Coming He will be recognized by His Brethren as 'Him whom they pierced' and deliver them from Gentile world powers.
Israel (Jacob and his 12 sons) move to Egypt where they are given land .	Under Moses' (and Joshua's) leadership they are taken into The Promised Land .	Following Israel's repentance and deliverance Christ will return them to the Land of their Inheritance and through them all the Nations of the earth will be blessed.
Israel is blessed.	Israel is blessed.	Israel is blessed.

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Lesson Thirteen — The Full Scope of Salvation: Part 1 – Our Spiritual Birth

Day One — God’s Purpose for Salvation

Day Two — The Children of Israel, Our Example

Day Three — The Free Gift vs. the Reward

Day Four — The Reward of the Inheritance

Day Five — The Salvation of the Soul

We have come to a place where we will be able to see more sections of the puzzle joined together. The full scope of salvation is one large section of the puzzle, and a proper Scriptural understanding of salvation allows many sections of the puzzle to fit together with ease. The topic of study for this week should be the most basic of all topics in Scripture, yet the teaching of salvation is filled with confusion and misunderstanding throughout the Church today. People are all over the board, so to speak, in their belief and understanding of something so basic as *salvation*. It should not be so.

The present confusion surrounding issues concerning salvation has mainly to do with two different areas — the issue of faith and works, and the issue of eternal security. Questions surrounding these two issues can be stated as follows:

- Is a person saved through faith and faith alone? Or
- Are works involved in a person’s salvation?

And then,

- Once a person is saved, is he/she eternally secure? Or
- Can a person lose his salvation?

We’ll deal with these issues this week. Be sure to begin your week in prayer.

Day One — God’s Purpose for Salvation

The Bible opens with the very Scriptural foundation upon which the remainder of Scripture rests. We can learn much from the first verses of the Bible. In fact, God saw fit to explain something about Himself in *the very first verse* in the Bible. The Name of God in Genesis 1:1 is *Elohim* — “In [the] beginning, Elohim...” *El* is a Hebrew word for God, and *him* is a plural suffix, which in the Hebrew language indicates *two or more*. Subsequent Scriptures reveal that “Elohim” is a Trinity, existing in *three parts* — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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The first thing that can be known about *man* is that God made him *in His Own image and in His Own likeness*. (This is no small bit of information! And it is interesting that God saw fit to mention that first about man!) Therefore, at the onset of Scripture, we see that man, being created in God's image, was created a *three-part* being. Man was created spirit, soul and body.

The first chapter of Genesis also reveals that God created man to rule over the earth (Gen. 1:26, 27), and the second chapter reveals that He tested man for obedience *prior* to his stepping into that position of rulership (Gen. 2:16, 17). The test for obedience was given to the Man in his *unfallen state* and had to do with choosing between one of two trees — the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

God told Adam that he should not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the day that he ate from that tree *he would die*. Of course, we know that he ate from the forbidden tree — and he died — with death affecting all three parts of his being:

- 1) He died spiritually, being separated from God, Who is Spirit;
- 2) his soul became corrupted (now knowing evil), and
- 3) his body lost the covering of glory.

Subsequently, every descendant of Adam has been born after Adam's image rather than after God's image (compare Gen. 5:1 with 5:3). Every descendant of Adam is born:

- 1) dead spiritually, separated from God,
- 2) with a corrupted soul having a propensity toward evil, and
- 3) a body devoid of glory.

In this state, mankind is disqualified to fulfill his created position. And in order to be placed back in that position, all three parts of man must be dealt with. Herein is the importance of seeing that man was created a three-part being (not a two-part being as so many teach), the importance of which cannot be over emphasized! Man exists in three parts, and *salvation must deal with all three parts of man* —

- 1) the spiritual birth (John 3:5-7), which happens at the moment of faith;
- 2) the salvation of the soul (I Pet. 1:9; Jas. 1:21), which is the ongoing process after the spiritual birth;
- 3) the redemption of the body (I Cor. 15:21, 22), which is the end result of the salvation of the soul.

If this were recognized and understood, the ongoing confusion surrounding salvation would not exist.

It is only through the work of the Holy Spirit that an individual can even begin to come into an understanding of his spiritually dead state, along with an understanding of what Jesus has done for him. And it is only through faith in the death and shed blood, the finished work of Christ, that an individual can be redeemed from the bondage of sin, bringing him out of his spiritually dead state into a spiritually alive state. When faith is exercised, light and life are brought into a place where only darkness and death had previously existed. Through faith, the *spirit* of an individual is *fully and completely redeemed*. This is a spiritual birth, a birth from above. And nothing can be added to or taken away from this spiritual birth. And this life is eternally secure due to Jesus' death and shed blood, His finished work on the cross.

We can see a perfect example of this redemption-through-the-blood in the Old Testament. As we have previously seen, the best overall picture of *the means* and *the purpose* of our salvation in all of Scripture is the picture of *the redemption of the Children of Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt for the purpose of their being led into the Promised Land*. This picture not only presents the *means of redemption out of bondage*, but also gives the *purpose for that redemption*. It is very important to understand and study both facets of this picture — the *means* and the *purpose* — otherwise the picture falls far short of what God

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intended. (If you need a review of this Old Testament example, please take a few minutes to peruse pages of Part I of the Survey Study, pgs. 86-89.)

It is only after the Children of Israel has passed from death to life, through the blood of the Passover lambs, that they are then led by the Spirit towards the Land of their inheritance. Even when they wanted to go back to Egypt, which is a picture of the world and their bondage, God did not even countenance the thought of their return to bondage. It was a moot point.

This is THE foundational picture of the eternally secure state of an individual who, like Israel, has passed from death to life through faith in the death and shed blood of our Passover Lamb.

John 1

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!...”

I Corinthians 5

7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

And before we close for today, let us consider one more important point concerning the *purpose* for our salvation. Just as Israel was redeemed for a specific purpose, even so, we have been. And it is imperative for us to know what our purpose is if we are to accomplish it. So, let’s think about this – since Man was created for the purpose of rulership over the earth, and death (through sin) prohibited him from fulfilling his created purpose, and since salvation is the ‘antidote’ to death, then can we see that salvation is for the same purpose as creation? Spiritual birth (the free gift of salvation) places Man in the position once again wherein he can prove himself worthy to rule. This will become more and more clear as we move through this week’s study and beyond, but it is important to consider this thought now. *Creation and salvation are for one and the same purpose.*

Day Two — The Children of Israel, Our Example

The picture of the Children of Israel coming out of bondage in Egypt *and* their being taken into the Promised Land *must* be seen *in its complete scope* in order for Christians to understand *all* that God intends concerning the issue of our own salvation. In I Corinthians, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, uses the overall picture of the Children of Israel as an “example” (lit. *a type*) for us. In chapter nine, he reveals that when an individual becomes saved, he is placed in a race – the ultimate outcome of which is dependent *upon our actions during the present time*. As you study the passage below understand that Paul is writing to saved people, people who have already experienced spiritual birth.

I Corinthians 9

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate <75> in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified <96>.

NOTES:

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temperate <75>

disqualified <96>

The end of v. 24 indicates that the only one who wins the prize is the one who runs in such a way as to win! According to v. 25a, what does it take to win the prize?

According to v. 25b, why should a person do such a thing?

In vv. 26 and 27, Paul says he does something. What does he do and why does he do it?

Herein are some things we should seriously consider —

Does Paul *know* what the goal is? How can you tell?

Is Paul aware of the possibility of a negative outcome? What is possible for Paul?

Being in the race itself is not the prize! Some have erroneously taught that *Paul's ministry* is the thing he could lose. Paul's ministry was the vehicle through which he could run his race. He knew the prize was to be awarded to him *at the end* of the race (II Tim. 4:7-8), and that it was the prize which could be lost, not his placement in the race. Think about it.

Can it be inferred from this passage (vv. 26, 27) that it might be difficult for one to gain the prize if the individual didn't know: 1) that he/she is in a race, and 2) what the goal is?

How would the prize be lost?

Let's continue with the text, which immediately follows. (Too bad for a chapter break here, as the following passage is inseparably connected to the previous one.)

I Corinthians 10

1 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 <907> into Moses in the cloud and in the

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sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual <4152> food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual <4152> drink. For they drank of that spiritual <4152> Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

NOTES:

The Greek word Paul used for the word *baptized* is an interesting one. Paul had the choice to use either this Greek word *baptizo* <907>, or another Greek word *bapto* <911>. He used *baptizo* for a purpose. Look up both words in the Appendix and briefly write out the comparison.

baptizo <907>

bapto <911>

What was Paul inferring in choosing to use the word *baptizo* in order to describe what had taken place in their baptism?

Paul states that they were baptized into *three* different things. What were the three things they were baptized into?

How many of them were “baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea”?

How many ate *spiritual* food?

How many drank *spiritual* water?

What did they drink the spiritual water?

Who was the Rock?

Continuing —

...5 But with most of them God was not well pleased <2106>, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

NOTES:

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not well pleased <2106>

Had all of these individuals been redeemed?

With how many was God not well-pleased?

So, what happened to them?

The answers to these questions give clear indication that Paul is speaking to saved individuals concerning their future inheritance, giving warning about their potential loss of that inheritance.

As Paul continues, he states why these things were written down in such detail (i.e., the whole panorama of events from Ex. 12 through Num. 14). This is also the reason why we studied these things in such detail!

Continuing —

6 Now these things became our examples <5179>, 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 <5179>, and they were written for our admonition <3559>, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall <4098>.

NOTES (be sure to look up the definitions):

examples <5179>

admonition <3559>

fall <4098>.

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According to vv. 6, 11, why were these things written down?

According to v. 12, what is the possibility for us?

What relationship can be seen between I Corinthians 9:27 and 10:12?

We have one final question for the day, one that you shouldn't rush through. It is this: Why is it important that we see the full scope of the redemption of the Children of Israel (from the Passover to Kadesh Barnea), as having been written down for our instruction? Write your answer with as much detail as you can. Don't be brief, as this is important to understand.

Day Three — The Free Gift vs. the Reward

One of the major problems as to the confusion in the Church today surrounding the most basic of all Scriptural doctrines — the doctrine of salvation — is the lack of understanding of the distinctions between *the free gift* and *the reward of the inheritance*, and how each is attained. Here are some questions that must be dealt with concerning these distinctions:

- Exactly how does one receive the free gift and what does it entail? And,
- How does one receive the reward, and what does the reward entail?

First, let's look at a few passages that deal with the free gift and see that it is just that — a free gift!

Romans 3

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...

A Philippian jailer asked a most succinct question to Paul and Silas; it is followed by a most succinct answer.

Acts 16

30 ... "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

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Ephesians 2

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.

From the general consensus of these passages, what does it take to be saved?

According to these passages, do the works of an individual come into the picture of the free gift?

It is faith and faith alone! Nothing more and nothing less. Jesus died on the cross to pay the eternal penalty for our sin. There is no other way! And there is nothing that can be added to or subtracted from the work of Jesus Christ. A person need only believe!

So, what does *having been saved* mean for a person? Observe what you can from these verses.

John 5

24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

John 3

18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

What do you learn from these verses about *the state* of one who has been saved?

We see that salvation is a free gift, based upon faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ – allowing one to pass out of death into life. As we are learning, this salvation has to do with our spirit. It is our spiritual birth, our being born from above, being born again.

But because Adam’s death affected all three parts of man – spirit, soul and body – then, within *the full scope of salvation*, there is more to be dealt with than simply our spiritual birth. Our spiritual birth is the beginning point, not the climax! There is much to learn about that which goes beyond the moment we were saved, and, this can be seen through the examples given to us in the Scriptures concerning the Children of Israel.

The Children of Israel, having been redeemed out of bondage by the blood of the paschal lambs, were redeemed for the purpose of their being taken out of one land (the land of their bondage), and into another (the land of their inheritance). It was in this new land wherein they would to become a kingdom of priests and enter their rest. But due to their unbelief and disobedience along the way, they fell short of the intended inheritance and rest. Hence, they wandered in the wilderness until their death, short of entering the Land.

Some questions should be asked here:

- Have we been redeemed for the same purpose, that of being taken out of one land (the world) in order to be brought into another land (the Heavenly City) wherein a theocracy will be set up, wherein

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- we will be a kingdom of priests?
- Is the heavenly land to be our inheritance, and are we to strive to enter a rest within this heavenly land?
- If so, is it possible that we could fall short of this intended goal, just as the Children of Israel did?

This is the very thing of which Paul warns us not to fall short, using the Children of Israel as our example (I Cor. 10:12). It is also the very thing about which the author of Hebrews warns us in Hebrews chapters three and four using the same example. (We will study more on these two chapters from the Book of Hebrews in Lessons Sixteen and Seventeen.) Here is the example:

- *Just as* the Children of Israel had been redeemed for a purpose (Deut. 6:23), *even so* we have been redeemed for a purpose (Eph. 1:3-14).
- *Just as* the Children of Israel were taken out of one land in order to be taken into another, *even so* are we being taken out of one land in order to be taken into another.
- *Just as* the Children of Israel were redeemed with a view to an inheritance, *even so* have we been redeemed with a view to an inheritance.

This *redemption* is a free gift; the *inheritance* is the reward. Theirs was an earthly inheritance – an earthly kingdom; ours is a heavenly inheritance — a Heavenly Kingdom (*cf.* I Pet. 1:4-7).

This word *inheritance* is an important word to notice in Scripture. What about this inheritance? Read what Paul said to the Church at Colossae.

Colossians 3

23 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.

According to v. 23, what are Christians supposed to do?

Why are Christians supposed to do this (v. 24)?

Verse 24 is the positive side of the matter. But, as much as some Christians don't like to admit it, Scripture does give a negative side of the matter. Paul states it very clearly in v. 25. What additional incentive is given for Christians who do these things (v. 25)?

It is important to remember that the full scope of salvation has to do with more than simply being redeemed from the bondage of slavery; it has to do with more than simply being delivered out of eternal damnation into eternal life. So it was for the Children of Israel; so it is for us. The Children of Israel were fully redeemed out of bondage through God's actions. But they were redeemed for a purpose; that purpose had to do with an inheritance in a land wherein they would become a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:4-6). The same is true for us. This is important beyond measure to understand.

Tomorrow we will strive to understand the inheritance. Continue to pray for your understanding.

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Day Four — The Reward of the Inheritance

So far this week we have seen that *the means* of the free gift of salvation is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Yesterday we began to glimpse *the means* of the reward of the inheritance — our working heartily as unto the Lord (Col. 3:23-25).

First, it is important to know that whenever the word *inheritance* is used, it is used in the sense of a “family.” Inheritance is a family term. If an individual is not in the family, he is not in a position to receive the family’s inheritance. Paul states the idea of the necessity of a family connection before the inheritance is even in view. In the following verse underline the words *and if*.

Romans 8

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God...

From this portion of the passage, what does it take to be *an heir of God*?

17b ...and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Paul makes a distinction in this passage. The spiritual birth places an individual into the family of God. It takes being a child of God in order for one to be an heir (inheritance is a family term). Yet, it takes something more to be a joint heir with Christ, sharing with Him the position of the first-born, and rights thereof. According to v. 17b, what does it take to be a joint heir with Christ?

According to the end of v. 17, what will be *the result* of being a joint heir with Christ?

Obviously, there is a distinction to be made between being *an heir of God* and *a joint-heir with Christ*. It is the distinction of *the first-born*. The first-born son had three distinguishing characteristics in the Hebrew culture:

- 1) he was to be the priest of the family,
- 2) he was to be the ruler over the father’s estate, and
- 3) he was to receive a double portion of the inheritance.

These are the rights of the first-born. It was a very desirable position in the family. And, as we will see later, it was a position that could be forfeited. And though the positional standing as first-born could be forfeited, the standing as a child within the family could never be forfeited (e.g., Esau forfeited his right as first-born, yet was still blessed as a son).

Now that we see that inheritance is a family term, we have also previously seen that the inheritance is a reward for having worked heartily unto the Lord (Col. 3:23-25). We will look at a passage that deals with the foundation which must be laid in order to build works, and how the works are rewarded. Study through this passage carefully.

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I Corinthians 3

11 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.

What/Who does Paul say the foundation is?

Can any other foundation enter into this picture? How do you know?

What are the six building materials mentioned in this passage that can be built upon the foundation? (Group the materials into two separate groups – good and bad.)

Good



Bad

Will all Christians have something for which to be rewarded? Give evidence for your answer.

According to this passage, *how* will the quality of an individual's work be revealed?

When will the quality of his work be revealed?

Who will receive the reward?

Who will suffer loss?

What will happen to the one who suffers loss?

According to this passage, is Paul speaking only to Christians? (Give evidence for your answer.)

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In other words, a person who has the foundation of Jesus Christ in place (having put faith in Him) can, in the end, be found to have his work burned — to the extent of having nothing left for which to be rewarded! Even to the extent of his only being able to escape through the fire! (Isn't that what the passage says? Interesting!)

FYI — The passage we have just dealt with begins with Paul reprimanding the Christians in Corinth for acting as “babes in Christ” (I Cor. 3:1ff) through the action of aligning themselves with various teachers (e.g., “I am of Apollos” or “I am of Paul”) rather than realizing that God uses different people to do various jobs in ministry. The Christians at Corinth weren't focusing on the fact that it is God Who causes growth. This is an interesting thing to think about today! We need to be careful not to do this! “I am a Calvinist.” “I am Armenian.” “I follow so and so!” Evidently, God sees these types of statements as extremely immature!

Following his rebuke for this type of thinking, Paul makes this statement about each man's work –

I Corinthians 3

8b ... and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

What will be the measuring stick to determine an individual's reward?

Are you beginning to see that the reward is connected to ones work? I hope you are!

We've already seen that the inheritance is the reward, not a gift (Col. 3:23-25). Before we close for the day, let's see what the inheritance has to do with. We will look at this idea more closely tomorrow, but there is something I want you to see today. Read the following passages and underline the phrase '*inherit the kingdom of God.*' Then we will consider some questions.

I Corinthians 6

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5

19 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.

Many people believe that both passages deal with sin in the life of *an unsaved individual*, and that *inheriting the kingdom* is the same as our spiritual birth (i.e. our being eternally saved). But is it?

Go back through each passage and as you read, replace the phrases “inherit the kingdom of God” with “be saved” and see if it is true.

Does it make sense that these passages would be dealing with the free gift (which is based upon faith apart from our works)?

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On the other hand, can believers commit such sins? Do believers commit such sins?

Of course believers can and do commit such sins! And, accordingly, these two passages are dealing with Christians and an inheritance which has to do with the kingdom. You see, the inheritance is the reward for right living! The reward for obedience! So it was for the Children of Israel, so it is for us. Yet, God is a forgiving God and He has made a way for sin in a believer's life to be cleansed. It is called *repentance* and *confession*. If you confess your sins, He is faithful to forgive you and cleanse you (I Jo. 1:9).

We will continue to study along these lines, so be patient as you begin to grasp these concepts.

Day Five — The Salvation of the Soul

As mentioned at the beginning of this week's study, this large piece of the puzzle is necessary for clearing up the confusion that exists in the Church concerning salvation. Today's study is a major key. Remember the questions we are considering throughout this week's study:

- Is a person saved through faith and faith alone? Or
- Are works involved in a person's salvation? And,
- Once a person is saved, are they eternally secure? Or
- Can a person lose their salvation?

Have you ever noticed that no matter which position one takes on these issues concerning salvation, it seems that they come up with verses that back up their belief on the matter? Of course, we know that Scripture does not contradict itself.

Really, the confusion is easy to set straight. The problem is that usually people too narrowly consider *the scope of salvation*. That is to say, people don't usually consider that salvation *covers a much broader scope* than the simple free gift of eternal life. All too often people relate *all the verses* that deal with "salvation" to the free gift and in doing so, confuse the issue.

Again, the free gift is only the beginning point. The scope of salvation for Christians is pictured in the scope of salvation for the Children of Israel, *which covers the panorama of their being redeemed from bondage through faith in what God said about the death of the substitutionary lambs* (resulting in their being released from bondage). The panorama of salvation continues *all the way through to obedience or disobedience* (resulting in a reception or loss of their inheritance in the land). This is all *with a view to the theocracy* (a kingdom wherein God rules). The panorama of our salvation will continue to be developed in upcoming lessons. This paragraph is key!

Simply stated, there are some "salvation" verses which deal with the free gift, and there are some "salvation" verses which deal with the reward (or loss) of the inheritance. Whether the passage is dealing with the free gift of eternal life *or* the inheritance in the kingdom, the subject may be referred to as *salvation*. The secret to a proper understanding and a correct interpretation of that passage is a critical look at the *context*. The key question that should be asked is this:

- Is the passage on salvation dealing with faith alone (in the work of Christ) with the gift in view?
- Or is the passage dealing with works and/or obedience with the inheritance in the kingdom in view?

The context makes the distinction.

If the passage is dealing with faith alone, then it is dealing with the free gift — the spiritual birth. But if it is dealing with works, obedience, and/or gain vs. loss, then it is dealing with the reward of the inheritance in

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the kingdom. In the case of the latter, the passage would be referring to the “salvation of the soul” where it may be expressed as the “salvation of the soul”, or is implied in the context.

We’ll look at a few passages which deal explicitly with the phrase “the salvation of the soul” in a moment, but first look back at I Corinthians 6:9, 10 and Galatians 5:19-21 at the end of yesterday’s homework. What do these passages have to do with — faith and the free gift *or* life style and inheritance in the kingdom?

It becomes obvious, doesn’t it?

Let’s look at another passage that exemplifies *salvation* as it is connected with *the inheritance*.

Hebrews 1

14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

What do you see as the key word that would identify whether the passage is dealing with the free gift, or the inheritance?

It is clearly stated, isn’t it?

Our spiritual birth affords us the choice to either walk in the spirit or in the flesh. Prior to our spiritual birth, we did not have the choice to walk in the spirit, we could only walk in the flesh for we were dead spiritually. But once we are born spiritually, we can choose!

With the ability to choose, one can begin to work out his “own salvation in fear and trembling” (as Paul commands in Phil. 2:12). The salvation that we are to “work out” is the salvation having to do with the soul, which has to do with the inheritance in the kingdom. It has to do with our choosing to walk in the spirit so as not to carry out the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

It is *faith and faith alone* that has to do with our spiritual birth, something which cannot be lost. It is *faithful obedience* that has to do with a reception of the inheritance in the kingdom, something that can be lost. The first is the spiritual birth (having to do with our spirit); the second is the salvation of the soul (having to do with our soul). This is what is pictured for us through the example of the Children of Israel (*cf.* Ex. 19:4-6).

Following are some of the passages that *explicitly* deal with *the salvation of the soul* (the phrase itself is expressed in the original language), although there are many, many other passages that *implicitly* deal with the salvation of the soul (the phrase, though not expressed is implied [i.e., passages which deal with obedience, works, gain (profit) or loss with a view to the inheritance in the kingdom]).

Let’s look at those verses which explicitly mention the phrase *the salvation of the soul*. In the Book of James, James is writing to the Church that had been scattered due to the stoning of Stephen and the impending persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem. He writes to them concerning the reason for suffering, and why Christians should consider suffering with joy (1:2ff). James connects this exhortation to the salvation of the soul, encouraging his readers to “*with meekness receive the implanted Word which is able to save [the] soul.*” Read it below.

James 1

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

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Is this passage dealing with faith and faith alone as related to one's spiritual birth, or is it dealing with works beyond faith? What is the evidence?

As you can see, James deals with the salvation of the soul. Then another epistle writer, Peter, deals with the same salvation, only from a different aspect. Both deal with trials as a means of refining faith, connecting *this process* to the salvation of the soul. This salvation (the salvation of the soul) is a process! Study carefully the following passage written by Peter.

I Peter 1

3 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 <5056> of your faith – the salvation of your souls.

end <5056>

According to this passage, describe the inheritance.

Verse 5 deals with salvation. When is this salvation to be revealed?

Peter states the desired *end* of one's faith. What is it?

The Greek word *telos* <5056> translated *end* could have been translated *goal*. The salvation of the soul is the goal of our faith; the salvation of the soul is our faith being brought to its completion or end; the salvation of the soul is the thing toward which we are to strive in our Christian walk.

Remember again, that Paul told the Church in Philippi to “work out your own salvation in fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). This salvation, with which Paul is dealing, has to do with the prize toward which we are to strive (2:14-16; 3:12).

We'll cover one more passage on the salvation of the soul, and then deal with it more thoroughly in the lecture this week.

Hebrews 10

35 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

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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 to the saving of the soul.

The writer of Hebrews was encouraging Christians to remain steadfast in their confidence in the face of trials and persecution for a reason (see vv. 32-34). What was the reason?

What are the two possibilities for one who is righteous?

If the one who is righteous continues to live by faith (faithful obedience) what is the outcome?

In the way of a quick review, remember that man was created in God’s image as a three-part being — spirit, soul and body. When man fell, sin affected all three parts of man; and salvation must deal with all three parts. The first to be dealt with in salvation is the spirit of man. This salvation is brought about through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, and is the free gift of eternal life. This salvation is eternally secure because of the One Who completed the work, and grants the saved individual passing out of eternal judgment (out of death) into eternal life.

The salvation of the soul is brought about through one’s faithfulness to his/her calling, and has to do with the inheritance in the kingdom during the Coming Age. This salvation is based upon one’s faithful obedience and is shown in Scripture as gain (profit) or loss having to do with an inheritance in the Millennial Kingdom.

The third part of salvation deals with the body. The redemption of the body is inextricably linked to the salvation of the soul. This is the topic of next week’s study. And it is SO exciting to see it presented in Scripture correctly. Keep up the good work.

See you in class.

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Lesson Fourteen — The Full Scope of Salvation: Part 2 – The Salvation of the Soul

Day One — Back to the Beginning...Again

Day Two — Life and Death in Foundation

Day Three — Dead to the Flesh; Alive to the Spirit

Day Four — Resurrection to Life

Day Five — The Redemption of the Body

We have seen that God's eternal plan in creating man in His own image and likeness was for man to rule over the earth. We have also seen that death through sin prohibits man from fulfilling his created purpose. So, we have come to realize that salvation is God's way of bringing man back to the position wherein he is able to fulfill his purpose. (Be sure to understand that this whole picture of salvation is not God's Plan A *or* B, as this was always His ETERNAL PLAN.)

Since death through sin affected all three parts of man, salvation must affect all three parts of man as well. Hence, we need to understand that salvation – in its full scope – has to do with our spirit and soul and body, respectively.

Last week we looked at how salvation is effected in our spirit and our soul. We know that it is through faith in Jesus' death on the cross that our spirit is made alive. This is the first aspect of salvation which must be in place in order for anything else to happen. Remember God is Spirit, and as such, it is only through our being spiritually alive that we can be in union with Him.

Then, once our spirit is alive, we have the ability – through the inworking of the Holy Spirit – to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). This refers to the salvation of our soul, and it is a life-long process to be realized at the JSOC.

But again, what about the body? How is salvation effected in our body? This will be the subject of this week's study. Study well.

Day One — Back to the Beginning...Again

Before we begin today, let's be technical about the terminology used in Scripture referring to the various aspects of salvation. Besides the generic terms often used “salvation” or “saved” (context would reveal with which aspect of salvation the passage is dealing):

- when referring to the spirit, the Scriptural terminology is “spiritual birth;”
- when referring to the soul, the Scriptural terminology is the “salvation of the soul;”

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- when referring to the body, the Scriptural terminology is the “redemption of the body,” as we see stated in...

Romans 8

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

Then we see Paul dealing with all three parts of man being “preserved complete...at the coming of the Lord” here:

I Thessalonians 5 (NASB³)

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your *spirit* and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To more clearly understand how Scripture deals with the redemption of the body, we would first have to understand what it means that we have been *created in God’s image and likeness*, which takes us back to beginning again – back to foundation.

The Hebrew word naming God in Genesis 1:1 is Elohim (or Elohym) which indicates the Almighty One is more than one, as this word is written in a plural form. Subsequent Scripture, of course, reveals He is Three parts – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And so, when He created Man in His own image and likeness, He created him a three-part being – spirit, and soul, and body.

And then in this passage we can get further description:

Psalm 104 (the Psalmist speaking of God)

1 ... You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, 2 Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment...

And then in this passage, we can see that this very description portends His Rulership...

I Chronicles 16

23 Sing to the LORD, all the earth; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. 24 Declare His glory among the nations... 25 For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised... . . .27 Honor and majesty are before Him; Strength and gladness are in His place. 28 ...Give to the LORD glory and strength. 29 Give to the LORD the glory due His name; ...31 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; And let them say among the nations, “The LORD reigns.”

Using phrases from these two passages, will you describe God?

³ I used the NASB translation for this verse as this translation maintains the original use of the word “and” in *both* places in the text as it was in the original language, denoting that the spirit and soul are separate, not one and the same. This is essential to understand when trying to grasp the full scope of salvation.

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So we see that God:

- is covered in light as with a garment (i.e., glory)
- is clothed in splendor and majesty
- honor and majesty are before Him

The thing to note about God's image as portrayed is that His very image demonstrates rulership. God the Father is enthroned in the heavens, *covered in glory (as with a garment) and clothed in splendor and majesty*, executing sovereign rule over all of creation. And presently, Jesus sits at His Father's right hand, Himself glorified, as He awaits His return to the earth when the Father will send Him back. (The passage in I Chronicles is a description of the time when Jesus comes back to the earth to reign supreme over all the earth).

Now... since man was created in God's image and likeness for the stated purpose of rulership, it is evident that glory, splendor and majesty were to be his as well. The Psalmist wrote in

Psalm 8

4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen-Even the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.

Speaking about man in this passage, how does the last half of v. 5 reflect what we have learned about God's image and likeness?

But even though we know God created man to have dominion over the earth, for the present we can clearly understand that man is not yet in that position of rulership. In speaking of man, the author of Hebrews says:

Hebrews 2

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." 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.

And so, we do not presently see man *glorified, clothed in splendor and majesty*, fulfilling his created purpose, do we? And we know why, don't we? Death, brought about through Adam's sin, affected all of mankind. But we need to go back to the Garden, 6,000 years ago to see what happened, because here is where our understanding of how salvation must affect *the body* as well as the spirit and soul. It is quite exciting how this all fits together!

We've become quite familiar with God creating man in Genesis chapter one, and even how Genesis chapter two drops back into the 6th day of chapter one and fills in the detail of *how* God created the Man and Woman. But we need to review this process in order to shed a little different perspective on that which we have yet to consider:

Genesis 2

7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

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From what did God create the man?

And once He formed the man, what did God do?

Then we read:

Genesis 2

18 And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”

What does God say He is going to do now?

Why do you think the Man would need *a helper comparable to him*? A helper to do what? (Your answer needs to be derived from the information given so far in Scripture.)

So, let’s read about God making this helper:

Genesis 2

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. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Name the steps which God used to form Adam’s helper:

How did Adam describe his helper?

Then in vv. 24, 25, how does God refer to the Woman?

And so, within the context of this foundational information given by God in the first two chapters of the Bible, God establishes the institution of marriage, and it is all with the idea of the Woman helping the Man to fulfill their God-given purpose. Can you see that?

And then, how does God describe the two of them in v. 25?

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Keep these things in mind as we continue our study this week as these things are *foundational*. If these concepts are not in place, then much will be missed in our understanding of how God works through what He lays out in these early and very important chapters. We'll end today with this from Psalms:

Psalm 11

3 If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?

See you tomorrow.

Day Two — Life and Death in Foundation

Yesterday we saw that God created Man from the dust of the earth and breathed the breath of life into him. We also saw that Man was to have a comparable helper, and how God made that helper from a part of his body. Then God called the one taken from the Man's body, his wife. Hence, God instituted the marriage relationship within the context of Man's created purpose, with the Woman being formed out of his body to be his helper. (That last sentence is important to remember as we move forward in our understanding the scope of our salvation.)

Today we want to consider a couple of other things that transpired in the Garden. We'll begin by looking at the last verse of Genesis chapter two. In speaking of the man and woman, God said:

Genesis 2

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The Hebrew word used here for naked is the word *arowm* and can indicate a *partial nakedness*. So how would the man and the woman be partially naked, and why does God state that they were not ashamed?

In order to answer that question, and in order to understand that salvation, in its full scope, restores what Adam lost in the Garden, wouldn't we really need to understand what both LIFE *and* DEATH looked like at the beginning? This is the topic we will consider today. Let's look at life (before the fall), and death (after the fall) with respect to all three parts of man.

- **His spirit**
Before the fall, Adam had spiritual union with God. After the fall, he became *separated* from God, and in that sense, *he died spiritually*.
- **His soul**
Before the fall, Adam's soul was pure, being one with his own spirit in union with God. After the fall, his soul became corrupted, separated from God's purity – his mind, will and emotions were no longer pure, and in that sense, *his soul died*.
- **His body — the physical entity which housed his spirit and soul**
Before the fall, Adam's body had been covered in glory. After the fall, he became *separated* from the covering of God's glory, and in that sense, *his body died*.

In understanding all of this, we have to remember that death – with respect to man – never means annihilation; death only ever means separation. And if you run that out into both the Coming Age and the eternal ages

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future, death would mean not being able to participate in (being separated from) the purposes of God with respect to the created purpose of man.

- Though Adam's *spirit* died that day, it still existed, but *had become separated* from God.
- Though Adam's *soul* died that day, it still existed, but *had become separated* from the purity of God.
- Though Adam's *body* died that day, it still existed, but it *had become separated* from the glory with which it was once covered (and would now, at some point, return to dust).

And so, just as God said they would, the Man and the Woman died that day! They died spiritually, soulically, and physically. And since death is presented this way in foundation, we would need to understand death in this way throughout the remainder of Scripture. Remember Psalm 11:3!

In this respect, one could even say that the very essence of LIFE, as seen in the foundation, is really being in God's image and likeness *and* in the place of being able to step into the purpose for which Man was created; and DEATH, in foundation, is *no longer* being in God's image and likeness and not able to participate in the purposes of God.

If man would ever be able to fulfill the position for which he had been created, he would have to be in the image and likeness of God. This is what salvation, *in its full scope does* – it brings man back into the image and likeness of God, allowing him to fulfill his created purpose. Man's spirit *and* soul *and* body would have to be brought back to the original state as in foundation, as well as in our opening passage today: **I Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.** (NASB)

Then Paul deals with all three aspects of salvation in Romans chapter five:

Romans 5

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us [the Gospel of Grace]. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

From this passage in Romans, we can see that we have been *saved* by Christ's death — referring to our spiritual birth (v. 8)! But as Paul states it, "*much more then... we shall be saved by His life*" (v. 9). And it is the "much more then..." that deals with things beyond our spiritual birth.

One thing that needs to be mentioned here is that the soul and body are inextricably linked. This can be seen in this passage:

Leviticus 17

11 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'

In the same way then, the salvation of the soul and the redemption of the body are inextricably linked as well. If an individual receives the salvation of his soul, he will also receive the redemption of the body as well. And as we can see in the Romans 5 passage, referring to a salvation/redemption that is yet future, which is brought about through the power of Christ's *life* – His resurrection.

This *future* salvation is also mentioned in Hebrews chapter nine in this way:

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Hebrews 9

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. (NASB)

Why will Christ appear a second time?

Unlike the first coming, this coming is without reference to sin. According to v. 28, how was His first coming with reference to sin?

According to this passage, for whom will He come this next time?

As we will see at the end of our lesson this week, this *future* salvation has to do with an inheritance in the coming Kingdom of Christ as a firstborn son of God.

Day Three — Dead to the Flesh; Alive to the Spirit

Today we will strive to grasp a clearer understanding of the what *working out of our own salvation* would look like. That which Baptism points to will give us further understanding of ‘working out our own salvation.’

Baptism is to follow our having died with Christ through faith in His finished work on the cross. It pictures for us *our burial and resurrection with Christ*. We can see this in the Children of Israel having “died” in Egypt (via the substitution of the paschal lambs) the night of the Passover. Then God brought them out of Egypt and put them on a path to the Promised Land. But between Egypt and the Promise Land lay the Red Sea, through which they were taken. In Scripture, the sea often refers to a place of the dead. So, we see the Children of Israel being “buried” in the Red Sea, but then were brought up out of the sea on the eastern bank. This being *brought up* pictures our resurrection with Christ, in order to walk in newness of life. Paul lays it out like this:

Romans 6

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

What are vv. 5-7 saying?

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And then vv. 8-9 explains what happens when we die with Christ. What is it?

And then Paul explains what this should mean to us, and how we are to live with this in mind. What can we learn from vv. 11-13? What are we to do and not do?

Paul also taught Timothy about this dying and living with Christ with respect to rulership in the kingdom, shedding more light on the complete picture.

II Timothy 2

11 This is a faithful saying: 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; He cannot deny Himself.

If we have died with Christ, what shall we also do? (v. 11)

Having died with Him, we must endure. What happens if we endure? (v. 12a)

If we don't endure; if we deny Him that, what happens? (v. 12b)

In all of this, if we do not have faith in things beyond our having died with Him, then what happens? (v. 12)

This “faithful saying” as Paul calls it, really encapsulates the complete picture of *the whole purpose of God*. A person who has died with Christ, through faith in the death of Jesus, **and** who reckons his old nature to have *died with Him* [see Rom. 6:11 above] can live in the power of His resurrected life, and in so doing, *he will endure* (he will continue reckoning his old nature dead and buried and continue to walk in the Spirit), then that person will reign with Jesus.

But the passage does not stop there! If we *deny Him* (i.e., deny Him our endurance), then what will Christ do?

What do you think the word *faithless* means in v. 13?

If we are faithless, what will God do, and why would He do that?

The person who puts faith in the death of Jesus thereby coming into spiritual *life* now possesses a *new nature* – a spiritual nature which is in union with God's Spirit. However, this person still possesses his *old nature*, which is inherited from Adam in that his soul is still corrupted and his body is still devoid of glory. And in that condition – possessing two natures – the person has very moment-to-moment choices to make. He can either choose to

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- Walk according to the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, or
- Walk according to the Spirit, fulfilling the desires of the spirit.

Of course, we'll remember that a person *not* possessing the new nature through spiritual birth through faith in Jesus Christ cannot make this choice, since he only possesses the old nature inherited from Adam, and can only live under the law of sin and death. He cannot walk according to the Spirit until he has come into union with God through spiritual birth.

Paul tells us that there are two distinctive outcomes for believers in making either choice!

Romans 8

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death... ..5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Paul begins chapter 8 of Romans explaining that *there is now no condemnation* (Lit., no negative judgement) *for those who are in Christ Jesus*. But there is caveat connected to not receiving negative judgment.⁴ According to the last half of verse 1, what does this person *not* do, and what does he do?

From this passage, make a list the two choices put before a believer and the result of either choice:

Choice and Result living one way

Choice and Result living the other way



The Lord Jesus offered His disciples (and by extension, He offers us) the same choice:

Matthew 16

24 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 will lose it, but whoever loses his life 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

⁴ One might notice that a few English translations do not have the last half of verse 1 contained within. The reason for this is that the Greek manuscripts used for those translations did not have that phrase. But really whether or not that particular phrase is included in v. 1 is of no moment, as the following text of Rom. 8 expounds on the thought regardless.

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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...”

Jesus says that if any one desires to become His disciple, there are certain qualifications to be met. You and I must:

- *Deny ourselves.* That would mean that we would stop thinking that we are entitled to be weak in our flesh. If God says to stop complaining, we stop complaining. If God says to stop lying or cheating or slandering or gossiping, etc., etc., we stop lying and cheating and slandering and gossiping, etc., etc. If God says to stop indulging the flesh in...whatever, we STOP! And in doing these things, actually we...
- *Take up our own cross.* Taking up our own cross is a metaphor for dying to our fleshly desires. **Christ died in the flesh leaving us an example as to how we are to die to the flesh.** (Peter succinctly explains the example we have in Jesus: **1 Peter 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.)**

And then denying ourselves and taking up our own cross would put us in the position to

- *Follow Christ in discipleship.* While spiritual birth is a free gift, our becoming His disciple costs a great deal! *The cost is our reckoning ourselves dead in Him, buried with Him and raised with Him in order to walk in His resurrection power.* And it is well worth the cost; well worth the exchange of our fleshly life here and now, for life that is truly life in the Coming Age.

The choices we make on a day to day basis will have direct bearing on our future life or death when the Son of Man comes in the glory of His Father with His angels, in order to recompense every man according to his deeds. The choice is really up to us!

As we close for today, will you write out what you have learned in today’s lesson?

Day Four — Resurrection to Life

After what we learned yesterday, we may ask the question – How would walking in the spirit be done on a day-to-day basis? The answer really is fairly basic: We would need to study to know and understand God’s Word, and strive to obey it! Paul, knowing what is at stake, gives insight into how he strove to do this. The preceding context of the passage we are about to read shows that Paul was willing to lay aside all that he had previously striven for in order to “gain Christ.” When you read this passage, ignore the verse separation between 8 and 9, so that you can see that gaining Christ was not striving to do good works in the flesh, but rather striving to do it through faith. Remember that faith is not passive; faith is very active! So then through that active faith, Paul strives to do v. 10, so that v. 11 can become a reality. (Just work through this passage with these things in mind...you’ll see what I mean.)

Philippians 3

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

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What has Paul done that he might gain Christ?

And because these are things that Paul DOES (i.e., things beyond simple faith in Christ's death), we can know that he is doing this POST his spiritual birth. Can you see that?

Verse 10 explains why Paul does these things. Why is it?

Then in v. 11, Paul summarizes the goal of doing all these things. To what does he want to attain?

Now the question is: Why would Paul *strive to attain to the resurrection from the dead*, when he knows that every person who has been born and dies will be resurrected from death?

The nuance of his statement is not seen in the English translation, as it is in the Greek. When he says: "if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead," he literally said, "...if by any means I may attain to the *out*-resurrection from the dead." The Greek word *anastasis* means *to stand up* in the way we would understand resurrected – a standing up from death. But in v. 11, Paul uses a prefix before the word *anastasis*. He uses the word *exanastasis*. The prefix *ex* would show a *standing up out of*.

By the power of God, Jesus *stood up* from physical death (v. 10). And because of His resurrection, so will all of mankind *stand up* from physical death. Whether saved or unsaved, everyone who has ever lived and died will be resurrected (will stand up) and come into judgment before Jesus as Judge. Everyone!

- Christians will be resurrected to the JSOC;
- Jews will be resurrected to judgment upon the earth in the wilderness at the end of the Tribulation;
- Saved Gentiles (Gentiles who were saved during the Tribulation) will stand at the Sheep and Goat Judgment; and then,
- The unsaved will be resurrected to stand before Jesus after the Millennium at the Great White Throne Judgment.

And Paul knows that! So, what is Paul saying here?

Paul is revealing his desire to attain to something that not all Christians will attain to. In v.11, Paul is dealing with the time when the Church will stand before the JSOC. There, judgments and determinations will be meted out to all individuals making up the Body of Christ, and as a result of these judgments and determinations, a part of Christ's Body will *stand up out of* the remainder of His Body. Those within the Body of Christ, who attain to this out-resurrection, will have done so because they chose to follow Paul's example of *suffering the loss of all things in order to gain Christ*. They will be those who have striven to

- Know Christ, and
- The power of His resurrection, and
- The fellowship of His suffering – being conformed to His death.

To KNOW CHRIST:

We can only come to **know Christ** through the WORD, since Jesus is the Word made flesh. There is transforming power in this Word – the Word transforms us from the inside out, bringing about the metamorphosis of becoming like Christ, which is the process of the salvation of the soul. It is in knowing Him (His Word) that we can know –

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The Power of His Resurrection:

Based upon what we can know from His Word (which can only be understood through an alive spirit), then we are to *consider/reckon* our fleshly nature as having died with Christ. But not only that, we also need to consider/reckon our old nature *buried with Him*, as it is only through death and burial, that we have the ability to walk in **the power of His resurrection** (through our redeemed spirit working in conjunction with the Holy Spirit). This is what is pictured for us in Baptism. And it is only through walking in His resurrection power that we can *continually* join Him in –

The Fellowship of His suffering, being Conformed to His Death:

Remember, Jesus died *in* the flesh leaving us an example of how we are to die *to* the flesh. And it is the continual dying to the flesh – keeping our old nature in the place of death, that is the working out of our salvation in fear and trembling, the salvation of the soul. And it is this aspect of salvation which allows us to be part of those out-resurrected from the dead – those who will *stand up out of* those within the Church who had not desired such things. Those who had not desired such things, and adjusted their lives accordingly will suffer the loss of their soul, and a result will be *separated from the Christ and His glory* during the 1,000-year reign of Christ over the earth. This separation is seen as death for the Millennium.

This death is millennial in scope, not eternal, and is brought about by the lack of one's willingness to die to the flesh and walk by the spirit during this pilgrim journey. (Remember *death* is seen as being separated from God's purpose for man's creation.)

So, with all of that in mind, will you go back and reread the previous passage, then continue with the passage below. Please do that now.

Philippians 3

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected <5048>; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. 17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Verse 12 must be connected back to v. 11. What has Paul not yet attained?

He also states that he is not yet perfected <5048>. Look up that word in the Appendix and write out what he is saying about himself.

perfected <5048>

Through the use of this word, what is Paul saying about himself?

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And because he has not yet accomplished his goal, he goes on to say what he does (vv. 12b-14). What does he do?

Then what does Paul encourage his readers to do in vv. 15-17? Be specific.

In vv. 18-19, Paul describes Christians who do not follow his example. How does he describe them?

What does he say in v. 20?

Compare v. 19 with v. 20. Do you see that, as a Christian, we can either set our minds on *earthly* things, **or** realize that our citizenship is in heaven, thereby setting our minds on heavenly things? And if we follow Paul's example, v. 21 tells us what the result will be. What is the result of setting our minds on heavenly things as opposed to earthly things? (And this is related back to the out-resurrection in v. 11.)

This is all part of the process of the salvation of our soul, as we “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). And, as stated previously, the salvation of the soul is inextricably linked to the redemption of the body. If you attain to one, you will have attained to both; if you do not attain to one you will not attain to the other. But

Remember, suffering (i.e., dying to the flesh) always precedes glory, which brings us to the redemption of the body. We'll look at that more closely tomorrow. See you then.

Day Five — The Redemption of the Body

We'll begin today by reading this simple verse:

Romans 7

24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

What does Paul desire to be delivered from here?

To understand what Paul is saying in these middle chapters in the Book of Romans we would have to understand life and death in the way it is laid out at the foundation of Scripture. We looked at this in Day Two of this week's lesson. Do you remember what happened *to the bodies* of the Man and the Woman at the moment they died – the moment they ate from the forbidden tree? Write it out:

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Let's consider a few questions: When you received the free gift of eternal life (your spiritual birth), did anything change in/with your body?

Do you still have a corrupted soul – a soul with a propensity to sin? (You may also want to review what happened to their souls once Adam and the Woman ate the forbidden fruit. See Day Two.)

So, the only part of our being that has been redeemed even at *this point* is our spirit, right? The birth of our spirit is what gives us the new nature. Now we no longer have a dead (separated) spirit; we have an alive spirit, which is in union with God. And THAT is life eternal from the moment you believed.

Presently, every Christian has an alive spirit, housed alongside a corrupted soul within a body that is devoid of glory, a body that is in the process of aging and which will eventually return to dust (unless we are part of the group to be raptured). As we have seen, the salvation of the soul is the life-long process, which began the moment we received our spiritual birth, the process which allows us to be changed from the inside out through the metamorphosis brought about by the renewing of our minds through the Word of God. But this process does not *just happen* as a result of our being spiritually alive. It is a process which is brought to completion *through our working in conjunction with the Holy Spirit*, as we allow Him to change us. THIS is what Paul refers to when writes:

Philippians 2

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

What did Paul say that Christians are to do?

And according to v. 13, HOW will this working out be accomplished?

To see that the salvation of the soul is connected with the redemption of the body, let's observe the following passage. But while observing it, please do not forget what you learned yesterday about Paul's striving...

Romans 8

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

What does Paul say about the body in the first part of v. 10?

And *if we allow the Spirit of God to dwell in us*, then according to v. 11, what will God do for our mortal bodies?

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Again, this deals with our walking in Christ's resurrection power through making choices in line with the Spirit (which is why the picture of Baptism is so important), and if we do that then God *will give life to our mortal bodies*. But what would THAT life look like? This is why we began week's Lesson by going back to the beginning. We have to understand what LIFE looked like in foundation. At the beginning, LIFE was not just an individual who could breathe, move, feel and communicate. Life was much more!

LIFE was being in God's image and likeness in a place of preparedness to rule, thereby fulfilling God's created purpose! Please make sure you understand that sentence.

Yes, in the end, our mortal bodies will put on immortality (either through resurrection or rapture), but we must understand that the resurrection/rapture of the body is **not** the redemption of our bodies; immortality is not the "salvation" of the body! Again, all people, both saved and unsaved, will receive immortal bodies in the end.

And so we will remember that *the death of the body* – as it is presented in foundation – *is the loss of the covering of glory*. And so we can know that the "salvation" with respect to our body has to do with *the reception of glory*, and it linked to the salvation of the soul. If one aspect is realized, the other will be as well. That is why Paul deals so extensively in Romans chapter eight with walking according to the Spirit and experiencing life, *or* walking according to the flesh (being carnally minded), and experiencing death.

In these middle chapters of Romans, Paul is dealing with life and death in the Coming Age, not life and death in Eternity. (We have learned about the distinctions between the Coming Age, and the future Ages of Ages.) So, Paul is dealing with truths having to do with the Coming Age, and not the Eternal Ages beyond the Coming Age. And since the salvation of the soul and the redemption of the body are inextricably linked, Paul goes on to clearly state what the redemption of the body is in the following passage:

Romans 8

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

The redemption of our body is the aspect of salvation that deals with the death of our body – its lack of glory, as seen in foundation. The *redemption of our body* will bring about the covering of glory and the reception of the royal garments of splendor and majesty, which portend rulership.

This glory will be granted only to those who shared in the suffering of Christ – shared in His death, just as we read in the previous passage – *if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him*. Through following Christ's example of dying, we will have denied ourselves, have taken up our cross and followed Christ (Mt. 16:24). Figuratively, we would have died with Him, been buried with Him, and been raised with Him in resurrection **in order to** walk in newness of life – to walk in the Spirit, having the power to continue to do so – on and on. All of which will result in the salvation of the soul at the JSOC, which in turn brings about *the redemption of our body, our adoption as a son* (v. 23). See also Eph. 1:5.

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The Greek word for *adoption* comes from a compound Greek word that literally means *son-placing*; it is taking a son within the family (v. 16 above) and placing him as a firstborn (seen in v. 17b above). *That* is the adoption, which is yet future; *that* is the redemption of the body! (Doesn't it say just that?) And within the Kingdom of the SON, it will only be *firstborn sons* who will rule with Christ, only joint-heirs with Him who are glorified, having suffered with Him by continually dying to the flesh during this pilgrim journey.

That is why the full scope of salvation is so important to understand. Salvation is more than just our spiritual birth, as so many in the Church today believe it to be. Salvation must bring the whole of man back to the place he was in foundation, having been made in the image and likeness of God, ready to step into the position for which God created him.

Can you grasp the magnitude of how important this is? Oh! I HOPE you can!

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Lesson Fifteen — Full Scope of Salvation: Part 3 – Faith, Works, and the Reward

Day One — Justification by Faith

Day Two — Justification by Works

Day Three — The Rich Young Ruler

Day Four — Works and the Reward in the Gospels

Day Five — Works and the Reward in the Epistles

In the past two week we learned about the full scope of salvation. We realized the importance of identifying the three-part nature of man and how redemption must deal with all three parts. We saw that the free gift of eternal life is based upon faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Period. We saw that this salvation is related to one's spirit; it is one's spiritual birth, which cannot be gained through one's own works. Nothing can be added to or taken away from this salvation. It is fully secure, for it is fully based upon Christ's finished work, not upon man's work. And this is the salvation which *takes place in a moment of time (the moment the person exercises faith) and has to do with life for eternity.*

We also learned that the salvation of the soul has to do with the reward of the inheritance, which will be realized during the Millennial Era — the Coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The reward is given as a result of faithful work on the part of the individual who had previously put faith in Jesus Christ. This salvation is based upon one's continual walk of faith – faithful obedience to the commands of Christ. *Thus, this salvation is a process, which takes place during one's Christian life, as one strives to obediently complete the work that God had foreordained for him and has to do with the inheritance being realized in the Coming Age.*

At the resurrection/rapture of the Church, all Christians will receive their incorruptible bodies (I Cor. 15:52-54). Those Christians who have realized the salvation of their souls will then receive the redemption of their bodies which will be the reception of the Glory, and the adoption as sons.

With these distinctions in mind, this week we are going to continue examining the relationship between the salvation of the soul with works and the reward, as these relate to the Coming Age. Please pray for a clearer understanding.

Day One — Justification by Faith

Remember we have learned that once a person is *spiritually* alive, then and only then, is he in a position wherein he can operate *in the spiritual realm*. A person who is dead spiritually cannot operate in the spiritual realm, just as a person who is dead physically cannot operate in the physical realm.

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This week we will see more clearly how both faith and works come into the picture subsequent to the initial moment of faith and the spiritual birth, having to do with the salvation of the soul and the redemption of the body. Anything done in the spiritual realm (by one who is spiritually alive) falls into either of two categories — on the one hand, a saved individual can perform *works according to faith*, and in the end be rewarded for their work; or on the other hand, he can perform *works according to the flesh*, and in the end suffer loss for those works. Judgments and distinctions are made at The Judgment Seat of Christ at which time a believer's work will be tested by fire (I Cor. 3:11-15). The goal is to accomplish works according to faith!

But how does a *saved individual* perform works *according to faith*? Paul gives us insight into the answer to this questions in two of his letters, revealing something of interest concerning a life of faith. He quotes the prophet Habakkuk when he writes —

Romans 1

17 For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Notice the phrase “from faith to faith.” A person is initially justified (saved) by faith! But that is just a beginning point! The person who has been *justified by faith* should continue to *live by faith*. It is “from faith to faith.”

Then Paul uses the quote again in his letter to the Church in Galatia.

Galatians 3

11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.”

The Law was given to Israel with a view to receiving one's inheritance (Deut. 4:21). It is the same for the commands of Christ. The commands given in the New Testament are given with a view to receiving one's inheritance. Neither had/has anything to do with one's eternal salvation. Keeping the Law was *never* given as a means of salvation (of the soul). In fact, the Law was given *after* the people had been redeemed, and it was given with a view to entering the land (Lev. 26; Deut. 28). Abraham's descendants were redeemed in Exodus chapter twelve; the Law was given in Exodus chapter nineteen forward. Knowing this, Paul expresses that this fact should not be overlooked!

That there are points of justification in an individual's life after salvation is made clear as Paul writes to the believers in Galatia. Paul tells them that the Law never justified *anyone at any time*. Justification only comes through faith — both initially and thereafter.

Just as the Law was to be *faithfully* kept in the Old Testament in order for one to enter the land of promise (an earthly land), so the commands of Christ are to be *faithfully* kept in the Epistles in order to enter our land of promise (a heavenly land).

In the Books of Romans and Galatians, Paul explains the fact that the Old Testament Law had its place prior to the coming of Christ. Though no one has been justified through works of the Law *apart from faith*, yet, through the Law came the knowledge of sin (Ro. 3:20). Paul writes that the Law was given as a tutor for *right living* (cf. Gal. 3:24, 25). But when Jesus came, He fulfilled the Law (He did not nullify the Law) and now, rather than a written Law, God gives His Spirit as the means for *right living* through the Word. Through walking in the Spirit, Christians are now to keep the commandments of Christ with a view to the inheritance in the kingdom. Obedience comes subsequent to the initial act of faith and obedience is a matter of the heart. In order to please God, the commandments of Christ must be kept through faith, rather than through a legalistic attitude. *Faithful obedience to what God said* is what pleases Him (Heb. 11:6). It is through an

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individual's actions based upon their *belief in God's Word concerning the inheritance and the kingdom* that will please God and allow one to be granted the inheritance.

Actually the Bible reveals that there are two ways in which an individual can receive justification *after he is saved*. On the one hand, when a person *believes* what God says about something, he receives justification from God. On the other hand, when a person *acts upon that belief*, he also receives justification from God. Thus, there should be many points of justification in a person's life, which are *subsequent* to his initial justification through faith in Christ's work on Calvary. *Subsequent to one's initial justification* (one's spiritual birth), justification can come in two ways:

- 1) through faith alone, and
- 2) through work that emanates out of faith.

And those subsequent points of justification are illustrated in Scripture in several ways.

Since Paul and James both used Abraham as an example of both types of justification *subsequent* to Abraham's initial justification, we will study what they both have written about him. Today we will see how Paul explains justification *by faith alone* in Abraham's life; then tomorrow we will see how James takes exactly the same picture in Abraham's life and shows how he was justified by works that emanated out of his faith. Thus we will see how both faith and works fit together into the whole picture *after a person is saved*.

Neither in Romans chapter four, nor in James chapter two, does the author deal with Abraham's *initial justification*. Both Paul and James deal with a point of justification *subsequent* to his reception of the free gift. Study carefully, and you will see. (Remember that Abraham had been initially saved in Ur, details of which we are not privy to, and consequently he could act by faith in obeying God's command to call him to another country.)

In Romans chapter four, Paul deals with the fact that the Law cannot justify anyone.

Romans 4

**1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?
2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."
4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.
5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness...
...13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.**

Again, no part of the passage is dealing with Abraham's initial justification! In Romans 4:3 Paul is dealing with an event which took place in Genesis chapter fifteen. Abraham was initially justified by faith unto eternal life at some point **prior** to Genesis chapter twelve. His initial justification would have had to have happened in Ur **prior** to His leaving Mesopotamia, for in Hebrews chapter eleven God commends his faith for leaving Ur, connecting this *act of obedience* to his looking forward to the inheritance (Heb. 11:8, 9)! Any action (work) on the part of an individual would not be (could not be) commended by God, *prior* to God initially justifying that individual through his faith in God's provision of death and shed blood. Therefore, Abraham's justification unto eternal life had to have taken place in Ur, and we are simply not privy to the details of the event because God did not see fit to record it in Scripture. God cannot/will not commend work done *prior* to salvation. Therefore, when Paul deals with an event having taken place — a work on the part of Abraham — subsequent to his leaving Ur, he would have to be dealing with a post-salvation action.

So what is Paul dealing with in showing that "Abraham believed God" and it being "counted to him as righteousness"? Notice in Romans 4:13, Paul connects Abraham's belief with the inheritance. Paul

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recognized that it was the inheritance that was being dealt with in Genesis chapter fifteen. Abraham believed what God said about his heir and the inheritance. (You may want to check the context in Gen. 15 and Rom. 4 to see if what is being said here is factual!)

In Romans chapter four, Paul is dealing with an event (subsequent to Abraham displaying previous faith when he left Ur, and was commended by God [Heb. 11:8]) wherein God reckoned (or accounted) righteousness to Abraham due *to his belief in what God had just revealed*. This refers to events in Genesis chapter fifteen (which immediately follow events in chapter fourteen), wherein God reveals to Abraham that *his reward would be very great!* In the text of Genesis 15:1-5, Abraham immediately related the reward with an inheritance (an inheritance which would be very great!) asking who would be his heir since he was childless. God told him his heir would come from his own body, and in fact, he would have as many descendants as the stars of the heavens. *And Abraham believed what God said!* And God counted it to him as righteousness. Simple, isn't it?

Nothing in the entire scene in Genesis chapter fifteen has anything to do with death and shed blood. In no way does this have anything to do with Abraham's initial salvation. It has all to do with his being blessed for simply believing what God was revealing to him at that moment – about the reward (Gen. 15:1), which is the inheritance (15:4). Abraham's faith (believing what God had just said) became a point of justification for Abraham (*subsequent* to his initial justification), apart from any action taken on the part of Abraham (15:6). Herein he was justified apart from works. He *simply believed* what God said concerning his reward (v. 1) and what God said concerning his descendants (vv. 4, 5), and God counted his faith as righteousness (v.6). (Doesn't the text say just that?)

It was later that Abraham was called to act upon this faith! And that is what we will deal with tomorrow in the Book of James. Before we close for today, go back to the passage printed from Romans, and reread the passage with these thoughts in mind. You will need a good grasp on this in order for our continuing study tomorrow.

Day Two — Justification by Works

Yesterday we saw that the one who has been justified through faith must continue to live by faith. We also learned that a person can be justified through faith even *subsequent* to his initial salvation. And if one continues to live by faith, he should have many points of justification credited to him throughout his walk of faith.

Yesterday we studied an event in Abraham's life wherein he believed exactly what God told him, and God counted that to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6; cf. Rom. 4:1-5, 13). Today we are going to study this same event in Abraham's life, and with further study, we will see how Abraham later *acted upon that faith* and was additionally *justified through that action/work*. In fact, the faith displayed in Genesis chapter fifteen was later *perfected* or *brought to its end* (its goal) through his action in Genesis chapter twenty-two. While Paul deals with Abraham's faith, James goes further and deals with Abraham's *work as a result of his faith*.

James shows how our good *works will bring our faith to its end — its goal* (Jas. 2:22; cf. I Pet. 1:9). In demonstrating this, James writes –

James 2

**14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have?
Can faith save him?**

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Immediately you should ask yourself—“What salvation is James dealing with in this text?” If the text itself doesn’t give any clues, check the context surrounding it. In this case, James has specifically stated in previous text which salvation his epistle is dealing with. Read it in chapter one.

James 1

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

Just because there is a chapter break between this statement in chapter one and what James is dealing with in chapter two is no reason to think that James has changed his focus. He deals with the *salvation of the soul* throughout his entire epistle. If this is understood, the Book of James is a very easy epistle to grasp. *Works done in faith have to do with the saving of the soul.*

Now let’s pick it up again in chapter two, and see what we can learn from the example James gives us.

James 2

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead <3498>...

dead <3498> (Especially note the definition 2b.)

He points out that faith, if it has no works, is dead in the sense that *it is useless toward accomplishing its goal*. Remember the goal of faith is the salvation of the soul (I Pet. 1:9). This is key to understand. And the salvation of the soul (Jas. 1:21) has to do with works, which emanate out of faithfulness. (As we continue, notice James uses the <3498> word again in vv. 20 and 26.)

Continuing

...20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead <3498>? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect <5048>? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only...

...26 For as the body without the spirit is dead <3498>, so faith without works is dead <3498> also.

dead <3498>

perfect <5048>

According to v. 21, was Abraham justified by works?

How could he be justified by works? Verse 22 explains how. How is it?

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Write out the first five words of v. 23:

What is the result of faith being brought to its end (v. 23b)?

Here, James uses Abraham as an example to show how works will justify an individual, *if the work is done according to faith*. James deals with God allowing Abraham to bring that which he believed in Genesis chapter fifteen to its end (or its goal), depicted through his action in Genesis chapter twenty-two, wherein he offered up the son who had been promised to him in Genesis chapter fifteen. And in doing this, the Holy Spirit uses the pen of James to show Abraham as an example of an individual's *faith reaching its goal through a work that emanated out of his faith*. Thus, Abraham was *justified by a work* – this work emanated out of the faith which had been expressed previously.

James is dealing with things beyond the simple faith message. He is dealing with works. Therefore, it is easy to see that the whole book of James is dealing with the salvation we are to work out – the salvation of our souls!

Thus, the faith Abraham had in Genesis chapter fifteen concerning a descendant coming from his own body was brought to its goal through his work in Genesis chapter twenty-two, when he was called on by God to offer his son (the son of the promise) on an altar. He could act in this way (preparing to obediently offer his son, Isaac, on the altar) because he believed that which God had previously and specifically told him concerning this son. Abraham could act, believing that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:19)! So both the faith (Gen. 15), as well as the work borne out of faith (Gen. 22) were counted to him as righteousness. Through Abraham's example, James is simply showing the importance of works bringing faith to its intended goal. And he uses very strong words in showing this. (Excuse my straightforwardness here, but this is not just some "pie-in-the-sky" theology that can be accepted or denied by someone's personal preference. In the long run, it is very important to understand these things!)

Think through the statement James makes in 2:26. What do you think that statement means?

James compares the physical body and the spirit (*lit.*, breath), to faith and works. Just as the body without breath would be dead in the physical realm, so would faith without works be dead in the spiritual realm. Without works, faith does not come to its goal! Therefore, faith becomes dead with respect to the salvation of the soul — the salvation with which James is dealing.

So, you see — there is a place for works *subsequent* to the gift of eternal life. And both *faith alone, and works that emanate out of faith* are counted as righteousness.

We'll end with the following passage today. Underline the phrase "work of faith" in v. 3 and notice its context –

I Thessalonians 1

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, 4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God....

Think on these things. See you tomorrow.

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Day Three — The Rich Young Ruler

Whew! We have covered a lot of material in the past two days! Are you hanging in there? I trust that you are.

Today we want to continue making distinctions between faith and works, as this relates to the salvation of the soul. We will look at a dialogue that Jesus had with a young rich man. As you study through this passage, keep in mind all that you have learned in the past weeks. Remember too, that a passage dealing with the salvation of the soul may not specifically use the phrase “the salvation of the soul.” It may only use the word “salvation” or “save.” The context will make it clear as to which salvation it is dealing with. And sometimes, as we shall see in the next passage, the salvation of the soul is referred to as the *inheritance*.

Mark 10

17 Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal <165> life?”

Before we go any further in the passage, let me ask you a question. What is the man asking about — the free gift or the salvation of the soul? And what makes you think so?

At first glance, it may be a little confusing because of the use of the English word *eternal*. The confusion comes as a result of the English translation of the Greek word *aiōnios*. Look up the definition:

<166>

(See also the root word <165>)

There is an article in the Appendix entitled [ETERNITY – Is It Eternal or is it Age-Lasting?](#) It would be extremely helpful if you would take a moment and read that now.

With what you just learned, write in your own words the question the rich man asked of Jesus in Mark 10:17.

Having grasped the intent of the question, the remainder of the passage will make more sense to you than perhaps it ever has before. Remember, during Jesus’ public ministry, He was offering the Kingdom of the Heavens to the Jews. Here in Mark chapter ten, both the question and the answer had to do with this offer. Prior to Jesus fulfilling the Law through the sacrifice of His death, *faithful* obedience to the Law was required in order to receive the inheritance, but as we have seen, it had to be more than just outward obedience. Notice how Jesus addressed the heart issue with this rich man.

Mark 10

17 ...”Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” 18 So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. 19 “You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’”

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According to what you have learned in the previous two days, why would Jesus answer his question like this?

As we have seen, keeping the Law was a heart issue. It always has been, always will be! So Jesus addresses the heart issue for this particular man —

20 And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.” 21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” 22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. 23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” 24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 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.”

26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, “Who then can be saved?” 27 But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.” 28 Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.” 29 So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time <2540>, -- houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age <165> to come, eternal <166> life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

NOTES:

time <2540>

age <165>

eternal <166>

What was the heart problem with this young man?

What would have allowed this man to receive the reward?

Think for a moment. Why would it be difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom? (To develop your answer, a hint can be found in v. 21.)

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Notice the connection Jesus makes between “inheriting eternal <aionios> life” (v. 17) and “entering into the kingdom” (vv. 23, 24, 25). They are one and the same! The disciples understood the connection between the question concerning the inheritance to Jesus’ answer concerning entering into the kingdom, by connecting both issues to the idea of “being saved” (v. 26). All three phrases are speaking of the same thing – the salvation of the soul – and Jesus connects it all to life in the age <165> to come (v. 30).

According to v. 30, for a person who leaves his home, brothers, sisters, mother or father or children or farms for the sake of Christ, what will be theirs “now in this time” <2540>? (List all the things mentioned in v. 30.)

What about the use of the word “age” – *aion* <165>? In this text the word is singular in the Greek, not plural. By Jesus’ own explanation, the rich man’s question had to do with life in the Coming Age (singular) as it is connected with the inheritance in the Coming Age (v. 30) rather than eternal life in the ages (plural) to come. Relate the question that the man asked Jesus in v. 17 to the statement Jesus made in v. 30. What relationship do you see?

What will that person receive in the Coming Age?

Now reread v. 31. As it is used in this passage, what does that statement mean?

OPTIONAL STUDY–

As you have time today, you may want to read the article in the Appendix entitled THE RICH YOUNG RULER by Arlen Chitwood. It should prove to be extremely helpful.

Day Four — Works and the Reward in the Gospels

In today’s lesson you will have to draw heavily from what you have previously learned in Lessons Eight through Twelve. Remember the message Christ brought to Israel – “Repent for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand.” In the scope of that message, He spoke to them much about works and the reward, but in the end they rejected the message, wanting nothing to do with it or the Messenger. Jesus withdrew the offer of the kingdom shortly before they crucified Him (Mt.21:43) .

In the Book of Acts, the re-offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens was made to Israel by the newly instituted Church, simultaneous with the gospel of grace being given to the Gentiles, which was followed by the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens. Ultimately, the Nation of Israel rejected the re-offer and the Nation was completely set aside. With that being the case, the question must be considered: How does one now read the Gospels? How does one read the portions of Scripture wherein the message of the Kingdom of the Heavens had to do with God’s chosen people, Israel?

With the offer of the Kingdom having been withdrawn from Israel and their having been set aside, the things about which Christ had spoken to the Jews concerning the Kingdom of the Heavens, now no longer apply to Israel. The heavenly realm of the Kingdom was now being offered to the New Nation – the Church. Though Israel as a Nation will yet be reestablished, the Nation will reside on the earth during the Coming Age (emphasis on the Coming Age), rather than in the heavenly city.

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We must understand these things in order to properly read and understand the gospels. Now the words of Christ concerning the heavenly portion of the Kingdom can *only be applied* to the Church, not to Israel. With that in mind, let's work through several large portions of Scripture from the gospels. *Keep in mind that the issues of works and the reward have to do with the inheritance in the Kingdom, not the free gift.* We'll study a few of the parables.

Luke 19

11 Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' 25 (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26 For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me."

What was the nobleman going to do? And who would the nobleman represent in the parable?

What did the nobleman give to his servants? And what did he tell them to do?

Are there any distinctions made in v. 13 amongst the nobleman's servants?

What did the nobleman's citizens say in v. 14? Who do the citizens represent?

When does the nobleman return? And what does he do upon his return?

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Upon the nobleman's return, when he calls them into account, are there any distinctions made amongst the nobleman's servants? What are the distinctions?

Who do these three servants represent?

Were all the servants of the same master? Did they all receive the same thing; and were they all told to do the same thing?

How was the outcome of the servants different from each other?

Now we'll work through another parable.

Matthew 25

14 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. **15** And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. **16** Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. **17** And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. **18** But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. **19** After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. **20** So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ **21** His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ **22** He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ **23** His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ **24** Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. **25** And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’ **26** But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. **27** So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. **28** Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. **29** For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. **30** And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Before the man left, whom did he call and what did he do?

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How did he divide up his possessions, and why did he do it this way?

What accountability was he going to require of his servants?

What/how did the first two do with what they had been given to do?

What was the response of the lord to these two servants?

What did the servant who was only given one talent do with what he was given?

What did the servant say to his lord that was similar to what the unfaithful servant said to the nobleman in the previous parable?

What was the response of the lord with this servant?

How was the lord's response to this servant similar to the response of the nobleman to the servant in the previous parable?

How was the lord's response different than that in the previous parable?

We'll work through a third parable today.

Luke 13

23 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them,

(Your initial question should be, "OK. Which salvation is being dealt with in this passage?" Remember, check the context and see if faith and faith alone is the crux of the issue, or if works are involved. The answer Jesus gives will tell you, even in His first statement [v. 24].)

23 ... And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' 27 But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart <868> from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. 29 They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the

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south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”

Be sure to look up the word “depart <868>“ and write out what you find.

When asked if there are just a few who will be saved (v. 23), what does Jesus say (v. 24)?

Jesus said, “Strive to enter...” This is a clue to what is being dealt with. *Striving to enter* does not have anything to do with the gospel of grace – nothing to do with the free gift of eternal life. It cannot, because more than faith is involved. But *striving to enter* would be striving to enter the Kingdom. There is work that must be done on the part of a saved individual to enter the kingdom. (In fact the word for *strive* in the Greek is *agonizomai*, from which we get our English word *agonize*.) Do you see that in the text of this parable?

Finally notice v. 30 again. Do you see how this thought fits into the whole picture of the Kingdom?

As we close today, do you have any thoughts?

Day Five — Works and the Reward in the Epistles

Yesterday we looked at a few of the parables in the gospels. It has already been noted that during the time the parables were given, Jesus was offering the Kingdom of the Heavens to the Jews. But they rejected the offer of the Kingdom. Due to that fact, the Nation of Israel, as a whole, no longer has the ability to receive *the Kingdom of the Heavens*. Presently the kingdom is being offered to the Church. The epistles are letters written to Christians, each one revealing some aspect about the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to the Church, with the total combination of the epistles giving the complete picture. In order to understand the epistles correctly, one has to understand these things.

Today we will spend time perusing a compilation of passages that will give us insight into *why* Christians should do good works. As you read through these passages, write out what you learn in the margins. You might note the *reason* or *result* of the good work/works of faithfulness. You might see the *incentive* spelled out. Think through these passages. Look to see what *God is saying* through them. *Learn* what He wants you to learn. *See* what He wants you to see. (I am having you do this because all too many times people don't *see* or *hear* what is in these passages. It seems that Satan has blinded our eyes or stopped up our ears. Don't let that happen this time! Learn what is within these passages and hold onto what you learn.) I will not be asking questions at the end of each passage. I trust you to critically study through the passages on your own. Begin your study time today in prayer, asking God to open your eyes and ears.

Hebrews 10

34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 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

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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 to the saving of the soul.

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

...26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

1 Corinthians 3

8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor...

...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.

Ephesians 6

8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

Colossians 1

10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

2 Corinthians 9

6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

2 Timothy 3

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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. good work.

Titus 3

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 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.

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...14 And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

I Corinthians 15:58

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

II John 1

8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

Colossians 3

23 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.

Having studied through these passages, write out what you have learned.

From a Scriptural perspective, how should we view works in the life of a believer?

We have seen what works do for the individual performing the work; now we will glimpse a couple of passages that reveal what good works/works of faithfulness do within the Body of Christ. Make notes in the margins as to what you learn.

1 Corinthians 12 (Remember that I and II Corinthians were two of the epistles written during the time of the re-offer to the Jews with the Kingdom and Israel in view. Hence, you will see miraculous signs herein.)

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of

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tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Ephesians 4

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

What do good works/works of faithfulness do within the Body of Christ?

Jesus' last recorded words in the entire Bible are printed below.

Revelation 22

12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

Evidently, what does it appear that Jesus thinks of works and the reward?

Write out your overall impression of this week's lesson.

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Lesson Sixteen — The Book of Hebrews: Part 1

Day One — The Foundation

Day Two — The World to Come

Day Three — The Rest

Day Four — Going on to Perfection

Day Five — The Hope of Our Salvation

Last week we studied passages about works and the reward in order to better understand the role of works in the life of a believer. The big picture of the Bible should really be coming together for you by now. I hope you are excited at the possibilities this holds for you! I know I am.

This week and next we are going to take a very brief glance at the Book of Hebrews.⁵ The reason why we will spend two weeks looking at this book is because it lays out the Bible's overall picture in a very succinct, yet brief format. So we will spend some time looking into it. Please pray for your week's study.

Day One — The Foundation

In order to understand the Bible as a whole, a person must begin where God began — with the foundation which has been laid at the beginning. Then, in understanding this foundational material, one will be able to build upon the foundation correctly. This arrangement of material can be clearly seen in the Book of Hebrews. And accordingly, in order for a person to understand this great book, he must begin in chapter one to lay the foundation there, and then begin to build a proper understanding based upon that foundation. This is the way one can correctly understand the Book of Hebrews, otherwise it may be next to impossible. (The whole Bible is laid out the same way.)

The best way to begin our study this week is to read the entire first chapter. Why don't you do that now, seeing what you can glean on your own.

Having only read this chapter one time through, it may not have made much sense to you. (I struggled with it for some time.) If so, with study it will progressively become clearer. This chapter contains seven Old Testament passages, each having to do with a particular facet of the kingdom. And the author didn't just put these passages at this place in the epistle randomly. He had very specific purposes for choosing these passages. It then becomes important to understand his intentions.

⁵ There is a comprehensive study on the Book of Hebrews given by Pastor John Herbert on our Church's website: www.cornerstonejacksonville.com

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That each of these seven passages has something to do with the Coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ can easily be seen if you were to look up the original context of each of the seven passages and study them in their original setting. But for our purposes today (due to time constraints), we will only glimpse Hebrews chapter one. As we work our way through this chapter, remember the portions in quotation marks reveal that these words are quoted from the Old Testament. Study through this first section of chapter one.

Hebrews 1

1 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; 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.

List all that you learn about the Son in these opening verses, while not forgetting what you have previously learned about the implications of Sonship. (Sonship implies rulership [II Sam. 7:12-14]. You may want to go back and read the indented parenthetical paragraph on pg. 155 for a quick synopsis of this idea concerning sonship. This is crucial. In fact, the author quotes from II Samuel chapter seven in the next verse. We'll get to it in a minute.)

According to this passage, of what is Jesus heir?

Also, He has *inherited* a name better than whom?

With that in mind, continuing reading –

5 For to which of the angels 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”?

6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”

The first quote is from Psalm 2; the next quote is from II Samuel 7; the third is from Psalm 97.

Keep vv. 5 and 6 in context with the opening verses of the book. What emphasis do you think the author is trying to get across, as he lays the foundation for the book?

Did you notice the beginning phrase in v. 6? What is this speaking about?

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These next two quotes are from Psalms 104 and 45 respectively.

7 And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.”

The quote in v. 7 comes from Psalm 104 wherein the Psalmist praises God for His creative and restorative powers. The quote he uses reveals that angels are God’s ministers (or messengers), showing that they do His bidding. The entire Psalm gives some of the detail of what God has done to (and for) the earth and those that dwell on the earth. The Psalm portrays the *panorama of time* extending from the restoration of the earth to the time when sinners will be consumed from the earth and the wicked will be no more.

8 But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.”

Then in this quote from in vv. 8, 9 (taken from Ps. 45), the Psalmist reveals that the Father refers to the Son as “God.” This quote is obviously referring to the Son’s Kingly reign. Putting these two verses together, what comparison is being made between the angels and the Son?

The author of Hebrews seems caught up with the idea of the *panorama of time* when he refers to it again in this quote from Psalm 102. In this quote, he deals very specifically with the period of time extending from the beginning of Genesis chapter one — all the way to the Messianic Era and beyond — to the endless Ages of Ages. Read it.

10 And: “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 11 They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; 12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.”

The last quote is from Psalm 110 and is fully Messianic in scope.

13 But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?

Compare v. 13 with the end of v. 3. What comparison do you see?

When will God make Jesus’ enemies a footstool for His feet?

Who are His enemies and where are they now?

What time frame does the author emphasize in these OT passages?

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And finally we come to the last verse in chapter one. The author speaks of “ministering spirits” (angels who are in heaven serving God, who do His bidding [not the angels who are Christ’s enemies]), and who have been sent out for a specific purpose.

14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

What do these angels do? To whom do they offer this service?

It should now be plain to see what the topic is that the author of Hebrews is dealing with. From all that you have seen so far in chapter one, what is the topic he is dealing with?

Verse 14 confirms beyond a doubt that the author is dealing with the kingdom in the Coming Age, because he is dealing with the salvation that has to do with the inheritance. Too bad for a chapter break here, because the next verse begins with the word “Therefore...” We’ll pick it up tomorrow, but we’ll need to remember where we left off today because chapters one and two are inextricably linked.

Day Two — The World to Come

Did you notice in yesterday’s study of chapter one that the author of Hebrews continually drew comparisons between Jesus and the angels? If we do not realize what he is saying in these comparisons, then the comparisons would hardly make any sense, because Jesus *is* better than the angels, isn’t He? And He has a better name than any and all of the angels, doesn’t He? Of course He does! Then why does the author make such comparisons? And why is it stated that He is the *heir of all things*? Being Creator God, doesn’t He *own all things* already? These are questions which need to be answered if one is to understand what the Book of Hebrews is all about.

The statement in 1:2 that Jesus is *heir of all things* (things related to the earth as it is the earth which is Christ’s inheritance [Ps. 2:8]) implies that He *does not* own all things yet (the things related to the earth). But the Day is fast approaching when He will receive His inheritance! All of these statements must be kept in the context of chapters one and two. So let’s see if we can understand these things more clearly.

Since chapter two begins with the word ‘Therefore’, the author must be getting ready to connect what he is about to say with what he has just said. Before you continue, go back over yesterday’s homework quickly reviewing what we learned, then read what follows in chapter two. (Again, too bad for a chapter break here.) Do that now.

Hebrews 2

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

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“We *must give the more earnest heed* to what we have heard.” Let’s grasp this! (The answers to the following questions are all found in chapter one.)

First, what have we heard?

According to Hebrews 1:1, from whom have we heard?

According to Hebrews 1:2, from Whom have we heard?

To what must we give the more earnest heed?

And now from chapter two, if we don’t give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, what will happen?

Now the author brings the Children of Israel into the picture as an example of what could happen if we drift away from the things we have heard. Study what he says.

Hebrews 2

1 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?

Make a connection between 2:3 and 1:14. What connection do you make?

Now you have to think this through. The author refers to the covenant made on Mt. Sinai through the mediation of angels and through Moses (*cf.* Gal. 3:19). The Children of Israel promised God that they would obey every word which He spoke to them through Moses (Ex. 24:7). How is the author using the Children of Israel as an example? What is he saying?

According to the implication of 2:2, 3, what happens if we do not give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard from God as He spoke through the prophets and by His Son (the things reiterated within the quotes of the OT passages in the first chapter)?

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And, just in case the reader misses the point of where all this is leading, the author spells it out clearly in verse 5.

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

In the author's own words, what does he say he is writing about?

We should note here that Hebrews 2:5 encapsulates what the Book of Hebrews is ALL about! Please don't miss that, as it is crucial to your understanding of this book.

Basing the answer to the next question from what you have previously learned concerning the present rulership over the earth, how does the author describe *the world to come*?

That the author is speaking about the Coming Age is confirmed in the next Old Testament quote. He quotes David expressing awe of God's divine plan.

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." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. ...

Verse 6 begins quoting from Psalm 8. Go to the Appendix and spend a few minutes studying through Psalm 8. What is David speaking about?

Connect what David is speaking about in this Psalm with the words God said prior to creating man in Genesis 1:26-28. How do they compare?

But there seems to be a problem. We know that due to man's fall, all things have not yet been subjected to man (as it was to be so). And the author of Hebrews obviously recognizes this fact. As you continue to read, underline the phrase "But now..."

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.

Comparing Psalm 8 with Hebrews 2:8, it is easy to see that v. 8 is speaking of created man (not the Man, Jesus). It is not until v. 9 that the author speaks of the Man, Jesus. List all the things it says about Jesus.

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Remember the comparisons the author made earlier between Jesus and the angels. Now see what he says about Jesus in v. 9. Why and how was Jesus *made for a little while lower than the angels*? At this point, what do you think?

Let's put it all together. Jesus is the creator of the heavens and the earth. Angels were created to rule over the earth. In seeking to usurp the authority and power of God, Satan led one-third of the angels over this domain in a rebellion against God. The fallen angels, though, remain the present rulers over the earth. Man, having been created to rule over the earth in Satan's stead, was tested for worthiness. But Satan brought about the fall of man through deceiving the woman, which disqualified them from the position they were created to fill. Through Jesus' blood, He reconciled all these things to God, things on the earth and in the heavens (Col. 1:16, 20). But at the present time we do not see everything reconciled (Heb. 2:8). The fallen angels still rule from the heavens over the earth. But the Day is coming when the world will no longer be subjected to the fallen angels, which is exactly what the Book of Hebrews is dealing with — the world to come (Heb. 2:5).

With all of this in mind, go back and reread Hebrews 2:5-9. See if it doesn't make more sense now.

The author of Hebrews is showing us that there is coming a time when all of this will take place. God spoke about these things through the prophets and by His Son (Heb. 1:1, 2). And we need to *give the more earnest heed* to the things that we have heard, so that we *do not drift away* (as the Children of Israel did) from this *so great salvation* (the salvation to be inherited) and incur a stricter judgment than did the Children of Israel (falling short of their inheritance).

Presently, Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, waiting until the Father makes His enemies a footstool for His feet — until the Father binds the fallen angels in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Isaiah 66:1 tells us that heaven is His throne and earth is His footstool. Praise the Lord for all He has done! For all He will yet do!

So what do you think about all these things?

Day Three — The Rest

With all that we have learned from the first two chapters of the Book of Hebrews, we have much, much more to learn. Throughout the book, the author of Hebrews gives five very serious warnings that we all need to heed today, in light of the Coming Age. These five major warnings are precipitated by the foundational truth laid out in chapter one.

We've seen the first major warning in the first part of chapter two, where we are warned not to drift away from the things we have heard, the things that God wants us to know and understand about the Coming

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Kingdom. The second warning is what we will see today. This warning is found in the third and fourth chapters, and has to do with our *striving to enter the rest*. Remember, the inheritance for the Children of Israel had to do with their rest in the Promised Land (eg., Deut. 3:18-20; 4:21, 38; 6:23; 12:9; 25:19; Josh. 1:13; 11:23). And the author focuses on the picture of the Children of Israel and their loss of the rest through their lack of faith and obedience. (This isn't the only place we have seen where the Children of Israel are given as examples for us. Obviously, God is trying to get our attention concerning these things.)

Spend your study time today carefully studying chapters three and four. I have printed them here for you to make study notes in the margins and between the lines. Use as much time as you can in critically reading and studying these passages. These two chapters are full of interest for us. (I am not going to ask many questions on these chapters, because I want you to critically think through them yourself. You should be able to see what you need to see in them.)

Hebrews 3

1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. 3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

7 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.

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Hebrews 4

1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have 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 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, 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 for the people of God. **10** For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. **12** For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. **13** And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. **14** Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. **15** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The first warning had to do with not drifting away from what we have heard in the prophets and in the Lord. What is this second warning in the Book of Hebrews all about? Write out how you would explain it to someone else.

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What is the progression from the 1st warning to the 2nd warning, as they do not stand apart from each other.

See you tomorrow.

Day Four — Going on to Perfection

So far this week we have seen that the author of Hebrews has warned us *to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard* from God through the prophets and through the Lord, speaking specifically of the inheritance in the Coming Kingdom, referring to this inheritance as *so great salvation* (2:3). We have also seen that he warns us about striving to enter the rest, using the Children of Israel as an example and a warning for us. He shows us that they missed the rest due to *unbelief and disobedience*. On the one hand, he has told us *not to drift away* from coming into an understanding of these things, thereby neglecting the *so great salvation*; on the other hand, he has told us *to be diligent to enter, lest we come short of entering*. In a positive approach, the two warnings are: 1) give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, and 2) be diligent to enter the rest. In a negative approach the two are: 1) don't drift away, and 2) don't fall short. Both the negative and positive aspects are given.

The third of the five major warnings given in the Book of Hebrews is found in chapter six, which we will consider today. But first we must understand some things about a man from Abraham's day – the man, Melchizedek.

Melchizedek was a king/priest of God Most High during Abraham's day. Notice – a *king/priest*. He is a type of Christ pointing to the time when Jesus will come into His Kingdom as the King/Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. It is interesting to note that this man is only mentioned in two places in the Bible prior to his being mentioned in Hebrews. Yet the author of Hebrews says that he has *“much to say about him”* (5:11). What could it be that is so important? Let's look at it.

The first place in Scripture where Melchizedek is mentioned is in Genesis chapter fourteen. This is also the first time war is mentioned in the Bible. Several kings from various city-states in Canaan entered into a war, during which time Abraham's nephew, Lot, had been taken captive. Upon Abraham's victorious return from rescuing Lot, the king of Salem — Melchizedek, a king/priest of God Most High — greets him, serves him bread and wine and reveals more of God's plan to him (Gen. 14:5ff).

The second place Melchizedek is mentioned in Scripture is in Psalm 110. The entire Psalm is Messianic in scope and is printed in its entirety below for your study. (In fact, this Psalm was quoted in Hebrews 1:13. Do you remember?)

Psalm 110

1 <<A Psalm of David.>> **The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”** **2** **The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!** **3** **Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.** **4** **The LORD has sworn And will not relent, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”**

5 **The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. 6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. 7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore He shall lift up the head.**

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Make a list of the things in Psalm 110 that make it obviously Messianic.

It is necessary to understand that Jesus is presently ministering in the heavens as our High Priest after the order of Aaron, effecting a cleansing from sin for God's redeemed people (just as the high priests in Israel did in OT days). But when Jesus comes in glory (after the last war between the kings of the earth), He will come as King/Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Read what he says.

Hebrews 5

8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected <5048>, He became the author of eternal <166> salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,” 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil

Verse 8 gives Christ as an example of a Son who obeyed. What does it say of His obedience?

The word *perfected* <5048> (v. 9) means “brought to the goal.” Because He perfected, through obedience by the things He suffered, what did He become?

We should note here that Jesus didn't need to “learn” to obey, but rather He simply obeyed, even to point of death, allowing Him to become the author of salvation. And as the example of obedience through the things suffered, if others would follow His example, they too, would be brought to the end of their goal.

Now you surely are asking yourself the question, “What salvation (v.9) would the author of Hebrews be referring to?” I hope you are! You should be! So what salvation is the author referring to here? And what makes you think so?

You should notice that the text reveals that it is the facet of salvation having to do with *obedience*, which leaves it without question that the passage is dealing with *the salvation of the soul*. The salvation of the soul

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is our end goal, and is realized through suffering – the suffering of dying to the flesh! We can easily see that in this next verse:

1 Peter 1

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials... . . .9 receiving the end <5046> of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

Now note: The word *end* used in I Peter 1:9 is taken from the same word from which the word *perfected* is taken in Hebrews 5:9. Both words have to do with an *end goal*. It is ultimately reaching the *purpose for* and *conclusion of* something. And we see in I Peter that *the salvation of our soul is the end goal of our faith*. Contextually, in both passages, the goal of our faith is brought about through sufferings – the suffering of dying to the flesh. Christ died *in the flesh*, leaving us the example of how we are to die *to the flesh*. And this type of suffering brings us to the *end goal* of our faith – the salvation of our soul.

The author uses Melchizedek as a type of Christ saying, “. . .of him [Melchizedek] we have much to say.” How can he say that? If the Scriptures only mention Melchizedek two times previous to this, how can the author of Hebrews say that he has *much to say about him*?

He has much to say about Melchizedek *because of Who it is that Melchizedek represents*. We can learn much from Melchizedek related to Christ’s coming role as King/Priest. Melchizedek represents Christ in the Coming Age. And in this respect, there is *much to say about him*.

Now go back and read Hebrews 5:8-14. According to the passage, why had these things become hard to explain?

Explain in detail the condition of the believers at the time of this writing. (See 5:11-14.)

Is the author of Hebrews addressing this epistle to *believers*? From this text, how do you know?

According to the text, describe the differences between the immature believer and the mature believer. What would be some characteristics of both?

Immature Believer

Mature Believer

Now we come to what some people believe to be one of the most confusing and/or controversial passages in all of Scripture — Hebrews 6:4-6. It becomes seemingly confusing and controversial when people take this passage out of the context of the chapter (and the book) and try to make it say something it is not saying.

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This passage has *nothing* to do with the free gift of eternal salvation! In fact, this passage lays out the third major warning in the Book of Hebrews, which is written to believers. But trying to see these verses as referring to our free gift does nothing but make it become controversial and confusing! It needn't be so. And it wouldn't be so if one keeps this passage within the context of the chapter and the book. That this is not speaking of one's eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ is evident, not only in the preceding text as well, it is also evident in the text that follows. Here again, it is too bad for a chapter break, because chapter six is inseparably linked to chapter five. As you study through this, keep it in context!

Hebrews 6

1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

In verse 1, what is the author wanting his readers to leave something, and move on to something. What is it he is asking his readers to do?

List the six elementary teachings about Christ mentioned in vv. 1, 2.

This may well be one critical piece of evidence that reveals this epistle was most likely written during the re-offer of the Kingdom to Jews during the Book of Acts. These elementary principles were very much related to OT Law, which the author deals with further in Hebrews 9:6-12. And these things, the Jews in the early Church were to lay these things aside, if they were to go on to *perfection...to the end goal*. But even now, there are traditional actions that we may find ourselves bound to that do not lead us to *perfection* – traditions of men that really have no value. These things must be laid aside in favor of faithful acts of obedience to God's Word that would lead on to the salvation of their soul. In fact, the phrase 'let us go on to perfection' is written in passive voice in the Greek, which indicates that this should be understood in the sense of something being done to us rather than our doing the work. It is our 'being carried along to perfection.' This would be perfectly consistent with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, as we allow the Word to bring about our inward transformation, making it possible for us *to be carried along to perfection*.

And, as evidenced in the text (vv. 3-6 above), if a Christian does not lay aside the elementary principles (the traditions of men), then how can he go on to perfection? How can he reach his goal? The remainder of the text makes it evident that he cannot. This then forms the third major warning laid out in the Book of Hebrews. It's really a choice each of us has to make: Are we going to *lay aside* the elemental things that really don't matter and strive to enter into the Kingdom through faithful obedience to God's Word, *or* are we going to cling to the traditions we are comfortable with and ignore what God's Word lays out about striving to enter the Kingdom? So very much hinges on this decision.

Think about it.

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Day Five — The Hope of Our Salvation

Today we will complete Hebrews chapter six. Next week we will glimpse the last half of Hebrews chapter ten and most of chapter eleven, thereby touching on the fourth and fifth major warnings in the Book of Hebrews.

Before we tackle the last half of chapter six, briefly review your homework from yesterday. You will need a firm grasp on it in order to continue. Do that now.

We will pick up our reading in Hebrews chapter six. Yesterday we realized that verses 4-6 reveal why God may not allow some Christians to go on to perfection (i.e., reach the end goal of their faith, the salvation of their soul). Today we will continue to see that the reason God may not allow them to reach their end goal is because *if* they continue to cling to elementary things, *then* they will not have produced the fruit that is necessary to reach that end – the fruit necessary to bring them to “perfection”. It really is their choice, and God simply allows for the result to play out.

The author of Hebrews continues to explain. He goes on to say —

Hebrews 6

7 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8 but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.

The author describes ground that drinks in the rain. But there are two different crops and two different outcomes. Describe both crops — the conditions of the crops and the outcome.

Is it the *same ground* that has the possibility of producing different crops? How do you know?

Really, when it comes down to it, we must realize that our good works (our fruit production) must be solidly based upon what God’s Word says! Faith come by hearing, hearing God’s Word (correctly), and acting in accord. We cannot continue to rely on what makes us feel good. We must check what we do with what He has said. See if it lines up.

Continuing —

9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

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Write out what you learn from this passage, but keep it in context of what we have learned.

Continuing —

16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Verse 18 mentions two immutable things from which we might have strong consolation. Reading again from verses 13 to 17 what are the two immutable things that God did with respect to Abraham? (Hint: It is specifically stated in v. 13 and 17.)

What is the anchor of our soul?

Based on the last half of chapter six, what does our hope have to do with?

Apparently, how important is *this hope* to God? What makes you think so?

So, how important should it be to you?

One more thing before we end for this week's study. We have seen the author beginning to deal quite a bit with Melchizedek. In fact, the final verse of Hebrews chapter 6 concerning Christ having become a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek is really an introduction to what follows in the whole of chapter 7, which deals with the superiority of this priesthood over the Aaronic priesthood. Without going into too much detail here, the fact that the author mentions Melchizedek (who was a type of Christ in the Millennium) so much in these middle chapters confirms, yet again, his purpose in writing this epistle. We saw his stated topic for this letter back in

Hebrews 2

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

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And that the author now speaks quite a bit about this OT king/priest, reveals that his focus is Messianic in scope; his focus is Christ coming as King/Priest after the order of Melchizedek in the Coming Age. This epistle offers Christians five major warnings about our entrance into or exclusion from the Kingdom as a co-heir with Christ. Warnings we need to heed if we are to “go on to perfection.”

With what you have learned this week, what are things you may need to change in your life? Are you willing to make those changes?

If you would like to read more detail concerning the third warning in Hebrews, you can go to the Church website and search for John Herbert’s series on Hebrews, then look for Parts 17 and 18.
Church website: www.cornerstonejacksonville.com

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Lesson Seventeen — The Book of Hebrews: Part 2

Day One — The Fourth Warning

Day Two — Willful Sin

Day Three — Words of Encouragement

Day Four — Our Role Models

Day Five — The Fifth Warning

Last week we began to peruse the Book of Hebrews. We covered the first three of the five warnings found in this epistle. Here is the essence of the three warnings we looked at last week:

- The essence of the first warning is — don't drift away from what the prophets and the Lord Jesus spoke about the Coming Kingdom, because for all Christians there will be a just recompense. (A recompense that is exactly commensurate with the work done.)
- The essence of the second warning is this — don't harden your hearts so as to miss out on *the Rest*, as the Children of Israel did. Rather, strive to enter the Rest.
- The essence of the third warning is this — We are to press on, through the work of the Holy Spirit, Who will carry us along to *perfection*, which is our end goal – the salvation of our soul, *if* we allow the process. This process will enable us to come into a mature knowledge and understanding of the priesthood of Melchizedek, a type of the future ministry of Christ in His Coming Kingdom.

But beware! If we begin to drift away, harden our hearts, and not allow the Holy Spirit to carry us along to this perfection, then we will receive a just recompense when we stand at the JSOC. God will simply not allow the goal to be reached. And we will begin to see why as we get into the fourth and fifth warnings.

Day One — The Fourth Warning

As we draw closer to this fourth warning, let's be sure we remember where we are and where we have been in the Book of Hebrews. Notice all the foreword-looking we are to do throughout the Book of Hebrews.

Chapter one lays the foundation for the book, presenting seven Old Testament passages, all of which have to do with some facet of the Coming Kingdom. This foundation must be in place in order to understand this epistle. Note that chapter one ends by calling attention *to an inherited salvation* — a salvation to be realized at a *future time* (1:14).

Chapter two contains the first warning. We are warned to *be careful not to drift away from what we have heard from the Father through the prophets and the Son*. A drifting away from these things (things mentioned in chapter one) will bring about a just recompense on the negative side of things (Remember all Christians

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will receive a just recompense – positive or negative.) Then the author stated plainly what he was speaking about — *the world to come which will not be subjected to angels* (v. 5) — a world which will exist at a *future time*.

Chapters three and four deal with the second warning. This warning deals with our striving to enter the Rest and uses the Children of Israel as an example, showing how they failed to enter the Rest in the Promised Land through unbelief and disobedience. We must *not* follow their example, but rather, through faithful obedience, strive to enter the Rest — a rest to be realized at a *future time*. Chapter five speaks of the high priestly ministry of Aaron, comparing it to the high priestly ministry of Christ, Whose blood has been offered once for all time as a propitiation for our sin. Then the author leads us to look from this *present* ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary to His coming ministry when He appears as a King/Priest after the order of Melchizedek during the Messianic Era — pointing to Christ's ministry at a *future time*.

Comparisons are made along the way, one of which is made between the milk of the Word and the meat of the Word, which the recipients of this epistle had begun to regress from the meat back to the milk. This is something that we must be careful of as well. Contextually, the meat of the Word surrounds an understanding of Melchizedek, which we will get to in a minute.

Comparisons are made along the way, one of which is made between the *milk of the Word* and the *meat of the Word*. Recipients of this epistle had begun to regress from the meat back to the milk, and so the author of the epistle rebukes the recipients saying that *by this time they ought to be teachers of the Word* but instead, they *need someone to teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God*. These first principles would have to be seen as the foundational material concerning Christ and His Bride, the full scope of salvation and the 7th Day as set out in the opening chapters of Genesis.

This is a warning we would do well to heed as well. Our understanding of Scripture needs to be built upon the foundation laid out in God's Word at the beginning, and on nothing else. **Psalm 11:3** says ***If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?*** It is at the beginning, God began to build His Word, and that is where we must begin as well.

And so we have seen that Hebrews chapter six begins with the admonishment to *'leave the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ* and to *go on to perfection*, spelling out six items which are elementary things upon which the recipients had come to focus. The word translated *'leaving'* has the idea of abandoning; making a complete separation from, and so clearly the *'first principles of the oracles of God'* in 5:12 are not the same as the *'elementary principles of Christ'* in 6:1 that are to be abandoned. (In fact, the word translated *'principles'* is a different Greek word in each location.)

So how are we to understand why those six principles must be left behind?

John Herbert writes:

“Now let's remember that in the early years of the Church the majority of those who became Christians were by birth Jews, who were very familiar with the ritual and practice of the tabernacle; and in Heb.9: 9-10 we can see that these things – the tabernacle/temple rituals – were *'symbolic for the present time'*. And that which was symbolic could not *'make him who performed the service perfect in regard to conscience'* and the reason for this is that these things were *'concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation'*. What is being spoken of here, then in chapter 6:1-2 is the performance of religious ritual for its own sake, that which we might call today, **legalism** – the following of certain religious practices with a view to their performance being accepted as righteousness. These of course are quite useless in that respect and therefore need to be abandoned in favor of acts of faith born of faithful obedience to the word; all things of course having been fulfilled in Christ Jesus our Lord... And of course, it is self-evident that those who would cling to ritual as a means of demonstrating righteousness would be those who are spiritually immature – those who partake only of milk.

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And so, the admonition is to leave, to abandon these practices, and such an abandonment is a prerequisite to what is to be done next – to *'go on to perfection'*. It is not possible to go on, until that which is being clung to is left behind.”

Herein is the third warning. *If the Lord allows* a believer to press on to perfection through coming into an understanding of these things — *and then that individual falls away*, there is no repentance on the part of God concerning the future inheritance, the rest. The Children of Israel did just that. They came into a full knowledge of the blessings which God had in store for them in the Promised Land, but they didn't believe what He had told them about it, and became disobedient — refusing to go in. He turned them back to the wilderness (Num. 14:29-35 [not back to Egypt]), and even though *they* repented (Num. 14:40), they could not change the mind of God concerning their inheritance in the land (Num. 14:41-45). However, pressing on to maturity gives us a greater understanding of what the hope is before us; this hope has to do with the coming era and it becomes the anchor of our very soul, which prevents us from drifting.

Chapters seven through the first half of chapter ten flow together to make a large parenthetical thought — that of the present and future ministries of Christ. As with the rest of the epistle, everything here propels us forward. Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is on behalf of believers in this dispensation, offering us cleansing for our sin as we travel this journey to our Promised Land, the heavenly city – the New Jerusalem. But His ministry as High Priest according to the order of Aaron in the heavenly sanctuary is only for the present time – this age. There is coming a time – the age to come – when Christ will come as King/Priest after the order of Melchizedek. His acting in the order of Melchizedek is during the Messianic Era out ahead.

All that which is pictured from the Old Testament and depicted throughout the Book of Hebrews draws our attention forward to the Coming Age. And during the present time, Christ offers us hope and cleansing from sin through His present ministry. We only need to repent, confess, and press on toward perfection – the salvation of our soul, our goal.

With a clearer understanding of these things, we come to the fourth warning. We will observe the text today and then look at it more closely tomorrow. The text is printed out in double-space for you to make thorough observation. Study the text carefully today, then we will work through some questions on it tomorrow. (Be sure to note the use of the personal plural pronoun “we” in the opening section of this passage.)

Hebrews 10

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 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. 32 But recall the

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former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 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 to the saving of the soul.

NOTES:

Day Two — Willful Sin

Yesterday we observed the last half of Hebrews chapter ten. Within this passage there is such a stern warning that some might be inclined to think that it is not directed toward believers. But neither the text nor the context will allow any part of it to be directed to anyone other than to believers. Yesterday we briefly mentioned the *context* of the chapters leading up to this fourth warning, reviewing each chapter leading up to it. The context is dealing only with believers and their future hope; so it is with this warning.

The *text* of this warning is also dealing with the future hope — a hope reserved *for believers alone*. This hope has nothing to do with the unsaved! Sinning willfully will never condemn a non-saved person. Rather, it is in having a lack of faith in Christ as the Passover Lamb that condemns a non-believer (John 3:18). A non-saved person would only be expected to sin.

So what does this fourth warning have to do with in regard to believers? How should it be applied? Please pray for more understanding.

Comparing the third and fourth warnings may help us understand that which is involved in *sinning willfully*. The question is: Is the author dealing with *all* willful sin or willful sin *in particular*? Let’s look at it.

The three and a half chapters preceding this fourth warning (chs. 7-10a) constitute a large parenthetical thought dealing with the priesthood of Christ. In these chapters, God lays out specifically how we are

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cleansed from sin's defilement. And though these chapters are placed between these two warnings for this purpose, sometimes it is helpful to go back to the third warning, take out these three and a half chapters (7-10a), and read the fourth warning exactly on the heels of the third. Let's try that.

The third warning —

Hebrews 6

3 And this we will do if God permits. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

It is impossible for whom?

If they do what?

What becomes true, and why?

So let's say that a Christian allows himself to be carried along to maturity, and he becomes enlightened, and tastes the heavenly gift, and partakes with the Holy Spirit, and tastes the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come. What if that individual *then goes on to sin willfully*? (Watch how the fourth warning follows the third warning.)

Hebrews 10

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 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.

For if *who* goes on sinning willfully?

After what?

Then what?

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In v. 29, what three things has the person done to deserve punishment of this kind?

Was the person described in this passage sanctified? If so, by what was he sanctified?

Did you catch similarities between the third and fourth warnings? They are as follows:

From Hebrew 6 —

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened... If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance...

and from Hebrews 10 —

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge <1922> of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins...

So again, what would be the reason that a saved individual may not reach to end of their faith, the salvation of their soul and the redemption of their body?

If an individual, after receiving a mature knowledge of *this* truth — concerning things related to Melchizedek in the age to come, etc. — then falls away (6:6 [falls away from the knowledge]) and willfully sins against this mature knowledge (10:26), what is awaiting that person (10:26ff)?

Please note: This passage is not dealing with sin in general. Each of us will fall into sin, even willful sin. And it is for this reason that chapters 7-10a are placed within the text, as these chapters reveal how God deals with sin in the life of a believer. It is for this expressed purpose Christ is presently ministering on behalf of saved people in the heavenly sanctuary. He is offering cleansing of sin, with His Blood on the Mercy Seat, and as we repent and confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Each of us presently dwells in a body of flesh with all its attributed weaknesses. But if we avail ourselves through repentance and confession to Jesus Christ as our High Priest (Whose blood was offered as a sin sacrifice once for all time), we are washed clean and the confessed sin is *taken away* and remembered no more — forever! Therefore this fourth warning does not have to do with sin in general, even willful sin in general.

Rather, this fourth warning is dealing with willful sin on the part of an individual who *has been allowed by God the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Grace) to come to maturity* (third warning). And after coming into this mature knowledge, if that individual falls away from *this knowledge* — *sinning willfully against the truths*

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about the kingdom, treating as unclean the blood covenant by which he was sanctified, insulting the Holy Spirit (Who graciously granted him to press on) — there no longer remains a sacrifice for that sin (fourth warning [10:26ff]).

But the ramifications of that sin cannot be eternal, due to the finished work of Christ and the free gift of eternal life. The ramifications for this willful sin will be Millennial. The believer (who has come to this kind of maturity) can expect a very harsh judgment during the Messianic Era. Check the text and see if that is what it is saying.

(This kind of judgment can be seen in a gospel account. Some of the ones to whom Jesus had been extending the offer of the Heavenly Kingdom fell into this kind of sin. In Matthew chapter twelve, Jesus spells out judgment to those who had full knowledge of the offer being made to them — the Pharisees. They knew who Jesus was — the Son of God. And when they attributed to Satan the power given to Jesus by the Holy Spirit, they blasphemed against the Holy Spirit [the Spirit of Grace [*cf.* Heb. 10:29]. In Jesus' Own words, this sin would not be forgiven them in *this age* nor in *the age to come* [Mt. 12:31, 32]. Eternal judgment was not in view! It could not be in view [see Matt. 12:22-37].)

On the heels of this stern warning, the author goes on with his admonishment and encouragement.

Hebrews 10

32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 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 to the saving of the soul.

Persecution has always been part and parcel with this message. From the days of Moses and the prophets, when God spoke to His people concerning *obedience* relative to the Land, Rest, and Inheritance even to this present day, persecution has been the lot of a child of God who would believe, live out, and carry on this message.

Let's re-read this passage and think through a few things. Look at vv. 32-34. Circle the phrase *after you were illuminated* in v. 32. From the preceding context and warnings, what do you think the author is referring to when he uses this phrase?

From this passage, list the things that were endured as part and parcel of the *great struggle with sufferings*. In other words, what did they have to endure *after being illuminated*?

The end of v. 34 explains why they endured such treatment. Why was it?

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Not forgetting all that we have learned throughout this epistle — all the author has been dealing with in the warnings — what would the author be referring to *as an enduring and better possession*?

We cannot ignore the tough verses in Scripture, can we?

See you tomorrow.

Day Three — Words of Encouragement

Today we will complete Hebrews chapter ten and introduce chapter eleven. Skim over yesterday's work so you will be in context. Then we'll pick up again at the end of chapter ten.

Hebrews 10

35 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 to the saving of the soul.

Write out the essence of vv. 35 and 36.

Based on v. 36, is *the promise* conditional or unconditional?

Then in v. 37, the author quotes from the Old Testament, telling of the imminence of Christ's return with His reward — the positive reward is implied in the text, the negative reward is expressed. (It is interesting that it is laid out this way and not the reverse, don't you think?)

What kind of person is v. 38 dealing with — saved or unsaved? How do you know?

What are the two possibilities given for "the just" (i.e., those who have been justified)?

And if the just one draws back, to what does he draw back?

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But what encouragement does the author give to his readers? He believes they will not be of those who draw back, but rather of those who do what?

Now let's talk about that! In Hebrews chapter eleven, we are about to meet individuals *who have looked forward to these things*, displaying faith through their actions, and in doing so, have *saved their souls*. Introducing — the Old Testament hall of fame! These are individuals whose lives offer us great examples of having done exactly what is mentioned in v. 39 — displayed faith to the saving of their soul. And...

Hebrews 11

1 Now faith <4102> is the substance <5287> of things hoped for <1679>, the evidence <1650> of things not seen.

Study the definitions in verse one.

faith <4102>

substance <5287>

hoped for <1679>

evidence <1650>

Hebrews 11:1 is not as much a definition of faith as it is a statement relating *the result of faith*. With these definitions in mind, how would you describe faith?

The kind of faith described in v.1 is based on what is mentioned exactly in the previous verse (10:39). In 10:39, what phrase describes the faith referred to in Hebrews 11: 1? (Remember there were not chapter or verse divisions in the original writing.)

And what does that kind of faith offer believers? (Compare 10:39 with 11:1.)

It is through *this kind of faith* — faith to the saving of the soul — that these men of old gained a good testimony (v.2).

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And as we have seen in Lesson Fifteen —

Hebrews 11

6 But without faith it is impossible to please <2100> Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder <3406> of those who diligently seek <1567> Him.

Feel free to look up the definitions in this verse —

please <2100>

a rewarder <3406>

seek <1567>

Today and tomorrow we will look at some of the individuals mentioned in chapter eleven and see *what they did* and *why they did what they did*; perhaps we will also understand their outcome as it is spelled out in the text.

As we peer into this Hall of Faith, we will see that these statements are God’s own commendations of these individuals — commendations made of specific Old Testament saints who are mentioned by the author under the direction of the Holy Spirit for specific reasons. This is not a randomly chosen list of names.

Because these individuals *looked forward* to specific things, they *acted* in specific ways; in the end, they will be rewarded for their actions. Please note as you read these statements that — in every instance — these individuals acted “by faith.” Don’t let that phrase slip from your notice.

Let’s get started.

Hebrews 11

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

What did Abel do *by faith*?

Why did he do it?

What is the outcome for him?

Hebrews 11

5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe

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that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

What did Enoch do *by faith*?

This is an interesting placement of v. 6, which is quoted so often, and one with which we can be encouraged as well. But contextually, it could be seen as God's commentary on Enoch. Relating v. 6 to Enoch, what do you think this says about Enoch?

Verse 6 is also good to keep in mind as we continue to read about each of these OT saints.

What is the outcome for him?

Hebrews 11

7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

What did Noah do *by faith*?

Why did he do it?

What is the outcome for him?

Hebrews 11

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

What did Abraham do *by faith*?

Why did he do it?

What is the outcome for him?

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Hebrews 11

11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude-innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

What did Sarah do *by faith*?

Why did she do it?

What is the outcome for her?

Hebrews 11

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

What did all of these do *by faith*?

Why did they do it?

What is the outcome for them?

We'll pick up tomorrow. You're doing a great job! Hang in there!

Day Four — Our Role Models

Yesterday we began to peruse the Old Testament Hall of Fame — Hebrews chapter eleven. Today we'll pick up where we left off. I hope you are seeing the developing picture of how one can *please God*. It is essential not only to understand these things, but it is also essential to act upon what we see!

We are continuing in Hebrews chapter eleven where the author brings us back to Abraham.

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Hebrews 11

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

What did Abraham do *by faith*? (Do you remember studying this?)

Why did he do it?

The outcome is that he was commended by God.

Hebrews 11

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

What did Isaac do *by faith*?

And he was commended by God.

Hebrews 11

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

What did Jacob do *by faith*?

Scripture reveals that of all of Jacob’s twelve sons, it was Joseph who received the double-portion of the inheritance. Jacob gave the double-portion to Joseph by giving each one of Joseph’s sons a share of the inheritance (Gen. 48:8-22). In other words, Joseph’s two sons received the same inheritance that Joseph’s brothers received. And in this respect, Joseph received the double-portion.

The blessings Jacob gave to Joseph’s sons are written out in Genesis 48:8-22. In these blessings, Jacob spells out his faith, reiterating what God had previously revealed to him. And Jacob was blessing Joseph’s sons according to his belief. In other words, Jacob acted upon what he believed.

And he was commended by God.

And then —

Hebrews 11

22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

What did Joseph do *by faith*?

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The orders that Joseph gave concerning his bones being carried with the Children of Israel in the exodus were based upon what his father told him at the conclusion of Jacob blessing his sons (Gen. 48:22). Joseph believed God through what Jacob had told him, and gave the instructions concerning his bones. Joseph's coffin, within the midst of Israel (Gen. 50:24-26), would be a testimony to Israel during the ensuing years of slavery, a testimony to the fact that God was going to one day take the people out of Egypt and bring them to the land God swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (*cf.* Gen. 15:13-14; Gen. 50: 24-26; Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32). In this respect, Joseph's unburied coffin in their midst was a visual, constant reminder that God was going to deliver them from bondage — something they were to believe and look forward to. (If you want to check out the timeline of Israel's enslavement in Egypt, refer to pg. 86 in Part I The Old Testament portion of this Survey Study.)

And Joseph was commended by God.

(Notice something in the previous two verses. It is mentioned of both Jacob and Joseph that “when he was dying” he did something. This reveals that both men went to their deaths with these future things foremost on their minds! This is wonderful to see!)

Continuing —

Hebrews 11

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.
What did Moses' parents do *by faith*?

Why did they do it?

And they were commended by God.

Hebrews 11

24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

List all the things that Moses did *by faith*?

Why did he do such things?

What can be the assumed outcome for him?

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Hebrews 11

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

What did Moses continue to do *by faith*?

Why did he do it?

Now let's look at a whole list of faithful people —

Hebrews 11

29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. 31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

Generally, what did these individuals do *by faith*?

The following two verses reveal why they did it:

Hebrews 11

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect <5048> apart from us.

perfect <5048>

We have seen this word before, haven't we? (It was in last week's lesson.) We saw that the word has to do with *bringing something to its end goal*. But look back up to v. 35. According to the end of v. 35, what will be the outcome for them?

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So how would you connect having “a better resurrection” to being “perfected”?

So how would you understand vv. 39-40?

I hope you get the picture. Based upon their faith, these people performed certain acts (works) that will have age-lasting ramifications because they looked forward to the very things which God desires us to look forward to. By looking ahead, these men and women believed that the things they could see (in the natural world) did not emanate out of that which they could see through faith (11:3), for what they saw in the natural world was disorderly, not God’s original arrangement of things. However through faith, they saw that there is a day coming in which order will exist once more. And because they could see these things by faith, they acted in certain ways that exemplified their faith. This list of faithful saints in Hebrews chapter eleven is given to us for examples of the kind of faith which has the foundation of things seen through faith — future things. We are to reflect upon this as we live our lives here on earth, with the encouragement that these kind of blessings can be ours if we but heed the warnings given to us throughout the Book of Hebrews, believing what God saw fit to tell us through the prophets and His Son (bringing us back to chapter one).

Any thoughts?

Day Five — The Fifth Warning

It is necessary to note once again that there is a flow of thought in the warnings of the Book of Hebrews. Let’s reduce each warning to its irreducible minimum. The flow is this — Don’t drift away from the words of the prophets and of the Lord (2:1-4 [reflecting back on ch. 1]); strive to enter the rest out ahead (chs. 3 and 4); also strive to understand what is involved in this rest; and should you allow yourself to be carried along by the Holy Spirit to a mature knowledge, don’t turn away from this knowledge (6:4-6), because if you heed the first three warnings and come into a mature knowledge of these things and then *sin against this knowledge*, there is a terrifying expectation of judgment (10:26-31). But don’t stop here! The author goes on to point out that there are (as of yet) unseen blessings in heeding these warnings — unseen through physical eyes, but seen through eyes of faith. And this kind of faith is the firm foundation upon which our hope rests.

This is the flow of thought given throughout the Book of Hebrews and it is very important for us to see this. But we need to understand *the other side* of the fourth warning. It is this — *if you heed this warning there is great expectation of reward*; and you, the reader, only need endurance (10:35ff)! Then the author follows this encouragement with some examples of Old Testament saints who have endured conflict, looking ahead to that coming Day, living today *by faith*. They will *yet be rewarded* (ch. 11); they only await us! (Just think of that!)

Based upon the individuals mentioned in chapter eleven, the author goes on to bring us to the fifth warning. This fifth and final warning in the Book of Hebrews concerns itself with *the rights of the first-born son*. Keep in mind what you have learned as you read through chapter twelve.

This first verse mentions *so great a cloud of witnesses*. Referring to this group of Old Testament people in

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the previous chapter as “witnesses” doesn’t mean that they *watch* us. Rather it means that they *are examples* to us. They are witnesses in the respect of being examples for us.

Thoughtfully and carefully read through this chapter. Read with discernment, striving to keep it all in the context of this book.

Hebrews 12

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. **5** And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; **6** For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” **7** If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? **8** But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. **9** Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? **10** For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. **11** Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. **12** Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, **13** and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. **14** Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: **15** looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; **16** lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. **17** For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

18 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, **19** and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. **20** (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.” **21** And so terrifying was the

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sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”) 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 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, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. 25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” 27 Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Basically, what do vv. 16-17 say?

Compare Hebrews 12:25 with 2:1-3. What comparison do you see?

As first-born sons, the Children of Israel were warned by God *to heed His Words*. In chapter twelve, the Church is also warned by God *to heed His Word*. And it all has to do with individuals maintaining their first-born status in the family. Hence you have the fifth and final warning in the epistle —

Hebrews 12

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

Notice that leading up to this fifth and final warning, the author tells his readers that the Father is going to discipline his sons, and he gives his readers encouragement as to what to do when they are disciplined by the Father (vv. 5-15). It is on the heels of this that the fifth warning is spelled out. And it is interesting that Isaac’s first-born son, Esau (who sold his first-born rights in order to satisfy his fleshly desire) is given as our example.

Then the author brings the whole picture full-circle (12:18ff). He goes back to the type of the Children of Israel in the wilderness at Mt. Sinai (which was seen in Hebrews 2:2 and chs. 3, 4), and brings things forward to another mountain. Reread vv. 18-29, and make the comparisons on the chart. (This will be great discussion material for your class this week. You can review what we have learned in Lesson Six, if you need.)

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The Children of Israel

Christians

The Book of Hebrews closes with some do's and don'ts listed in chapter thirteen. I'll leave that to your perusal, based upon what we have learned these past two weeks. If you have time, please read the chapter through, so that you are familiar with it.

You are doing a great job! This is difficult, I know. I leave you with this passage to consider.

2 Corinthians 5

9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

Please be persuaded!

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Lesson Eighteen — The Judgment Seat of Christ

Day One — The Word of God

Day Two — According to Our Works

Day Three — Revelation Chapter One

Day Four — Revelation Chapter Two

Day Five — Revelation Chapter Three

Well, we have made our way to the last book of the Bible – The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ! There are yet so many things to learn, but hopefully you have a clearer understanding of how the Bible is put together and will continue to learn the details of these things as you read and study your Bible.

This week we are going to study a topic that is extremely important, yet talked little about. It is the topic of judgment — specifically The Judgment Seat of Christ. Please pray for understanding as you approach your study this week.

Day One — The Word of God

First, let's lay down a foundational thought — At the moment a person is saved, he passes out of judgment into life! Out of *eternal death* (which is judgment), into *eternal life*, which is the free gift. And as we have seen, this new life is through faith in the finished work of Christ. Therefore, it is *eternal* judgment that an individual passes out of through faith.

John 5

24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life...

Again, this judgment is based upon Christ's finished work on the cross, and an individual who places his faith in the One Who performed this work passes out of this judgment into eternal life. Therefore, a saved individual's eternal judgment is completely dealt with by Jesus Christ's death on the cross.

But the Bible doesn't stop there with the idea of judgment. A judgment will yet take place for individuals who have passed out of eternal judgment, into life. This judgment has to do with one's *actions* during this present age with a view to the Coming Age, with the eternal ages not being in view. Age-lasting judgment is based upon ones *works*, and the Bible has very much to say about this judgment. We would do well *not* to ignore these truths.

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We have covered some of the passages concerning Judgment Day in previous lessons, but we need to look at some of them again this week. One passage which we have previously looked at is in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

I Corinthians 3

11 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.

What is the foundation which is laid?

What are the materials which can be used to build on this foundation?

What do these materials represent?

What will be the element which Jesus will use to test the quality of each man's work?

According to this passage in I Corinthians, what is the *positive potential* for a believer?

What is the *negative potential* for a believer?

Here are a few others passages which also deal with the Judgment Day for Christians.

Romans 14

10 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.

II Corinthians 5

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

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According to these passages, who must appear before The Judgment Seat of Christ?

According to the Scriptures what must they do there?

One of the verses that seems to cause confusion about a believer's judgment is found in the Book of Romans. The reason for the confusion may be due to people taking the verse out of its context. First we will read the verse by itself.

Romans 8

1 There is therefore now no condemnation [<2631> katakrima] to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

So, is there condemnation for the Christian or not? First, let's look to see what the original word means. It is the Greek word — *katakrima*. It has to do with *an adverse sentence* (the verdict); *a rendering of a judgment against*, hence — a condemnation.

Do you see the phrase that is underlined? The King James Version and the New King James Version include a phrase in the text, but some translations do not. The NASB, for example, does not include the underlined portion of the verse. The reason is that the manuscripts used in the translation of the NASB did not have the phrase included, which is why it is not found in the translation. But whether or not it is included in v. 1 is really of no matter because *the succeeding context* in the chapter reveals the exact same thought — there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ *if they walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*. Look at a few of the succeeding verses.

Romans 8

4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded [fleshly minded] is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

According to these verses in Romans chapter eight, *how* is there no condemnation (adverse verdict or judgment) for a believer?

And it is obvious from the text leading into Romans 8:1 (i.e., Rom. 7) that we are dealing with the saved and not the unsaved, just as it is obvious that the text succeeding v. 1 relates to the saved, as well. *It all* has to do with *choosing* to walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh, a choice that only a saved person can make, as an unsaved person does not have the ability to do anything but walk by the flesh since he remains in a spiritually dead state.

We can also easily see that Paul is addressing believers in the text as he calls his recipients “brethren” in v. 12.

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Romans 8

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

To whom is the “you” in v. 13 referring?

In understanding how “death” can be referring to the saved here, you may want to go back and review the two sections on The Full Scope of Salvation, as well as the part dealing with Faith, Works and the Reward. That may refresh your minds as to what this “death” will consist of for the saved during the Millennium.

As we close for the day, please write out what you have learned from Romans 8. Feel free to go to your Bible and read the entire chapter.

Day Two — According to Our Works

Today we will see what the Bible has to say about judgment for the believer. We have covered some of the following passages in previous lessons, but they bear repeating here.

Romans 2

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 [Lit., age-lasting] life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 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.

How does this passage relate to I Corinthians 3:11-15 in Day One?

Galatians 6

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

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sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting [Lit., 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. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

When is the “due time” that this reaping will take place?

Ephesians 6

8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Colossians 3

23 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.

What do you learn from these verses? Be as specific as you can be in your answer.

John 5

22 “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son... 27 “and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

I Peter 4

5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

How does this verse compare with what we learned in Romans 8:1-17 in yesterday’s study.

II 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...

Who will be the Judge?

And whom will be judged?

When does this judgment take place?

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We will continue to read through passages and see how clearly truths about judgment are stated time and again. (Please underline all the phrases that have to do with render according to one's works/deeds.)

Psalms 62

12 Also to You, O Lord, belongs mercy; For You render to each one according to his work.

Proverbs 24

12 If you say, "Surely we did not know this," Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?

Jeremiah 17

10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

Jeremiah 32

19 'You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

Ezekiel 18

30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.

NOTES from what you have seen in these passages:

Romans 14

10 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.

II Corinthians 5

9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things

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done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

I Peter 1

17 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;

Revelation 22

12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

Overall, what is taught in Scripture about judgment? What have you learned?

Personal question: Do you believe that you will literally stand before Jesus Christ on that Day and have to give an account to Him of what you have done on this earth? If that were to happen today, what do you think the outcome would be?

I am sure this thought causes you to shudder! As well it should! But in comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can know that any sin from which we have repented and confessed will *not be remembered* at The Judgment Seat! That is “good news!” The present ministry of Jesus Christ is in the heavens as He offers a cleansing for our confessed sin. But there is coming a Day when He will appear as Judge. We need to know, understand, believe, and act according to this truth! And *that* is why it is so important to know these things.

All too often Christians think that it is *only* those who are *spiritually dead* who will be judged. But the truth of the matter is that *all people* will stand before Jesus as Judge — for the things they have done on earth — each group of people at different times (I Cor. 15:23). And for Christians standing before The Judgment Seat of Christ, these judgments and determinations can have nothing to do with their eternal judgment. (Christ's work paid that price in full!) Rather, these judgments and determinations can only have to do with their inclusion or exclusion from the Coming Kingdom.

Think about it.

Day Three — Revelation Chapter One

Though we may have previously understood that Jesus will certainly judge those who are *spiritually dead* (the unsaved), the verses and passages we read yesterday make it very clear that Jesus *will* judge those who are *spiritually alive*. We will continue along this line today.

Read the following verses to see that even those spiritually alive will face Christ as Judge. (I encourage you to look up the context of any passage.)

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Hebrews 10

30 For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The LORD will judge His people.”

(Do you remember that this passage is connected to the fourth warning in the Book of Hebrews?)

The distinction between people groups will be made in *the timing of each of the judgments!* Jesus will come in judgment *at different times for different groups* of people. And He will begin with the Church.

1 Peter 4

17 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?

With whom does judgment begin?

There are other passages which would reveal the same thing. But these probably suffice.

So, let’s talk about the various judgments that will take place yet future, and will ultimately include the entirety of mankind. Here is the order in which the various judgments play out:

- 1) **The Church**, the Body of Christ (believers covering the time extending from Pentecost to the moment of the resurrection and rapture), will be present at The Judgment Seat of Christ, as this particular judgment is for those who are “*in Christ.*” Hence, the name — *The Judgment Seat of Christ* (II Cor. 5:10). This judgment will take place *in the heavens*, immediately following the physical resurrection of the bodies of those who have died in Christ and the rapture of those who remain alive when the Church is caught up to Christ in the heavens (I Thes. 4:16-17). There will be **no** Old Testament saints at this judgment, nor will there be any unsaved individuals. Again, this judgment will take place in the heavens, and is for the purpose of determining each person’s position (or lack thereof) in the Coming Kingdom of Christ.

Following the Resurrection/Rapture of the Church, and the JSOC in the heavens, the 7-year Tribulation will transpire. Then, at the end of the 7 years, we see that:

- 2) **All Old Testament saints** will be resurrected, as well as saved Jews who died during the Tribulation – all of whom will stand in judgment alongside those saved Jews who came through the Tribulation alive. This judgment will take place on the earth, and is also for the purpose of determining each person’s position (or lack thereof) in the Coming Kingdom of Christ. No unsaved Jew will be present at this judgment.
- 3) Then after the Jews are judged, Jesus will gather the saved **Gentiles** coming out of the Tribulation (resurrecting those who had died during the Tribulation, and gathering those still alive) together, and will judge them on the earth, again determining each person’s position in the Kingdom. This is called The Sheep and Goat Judgment. No unsaved Gentile will be present at this judgment.

After these judgments are concluded, events will unfold that will place Jesus in His rightful position as the Supreme King upon the earth, as well as over the earth (from the heavens). And He will reign for 1,000 years. Again, the reason for these three judgments to transpire *prior to* the Millennium is so that determinations can be made as to each saved person’s position within the Coming Kingdom of Christ. These determinations are made according to the way each person lived once they were saved. And an unsaved

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person has no need for a determination such as this, as an unsaved person is not offered such a position within the Kingdom.

- 4) Then, *after* the 1,000-year Reign of Christ has transpired, **all the unsaved** will be judged, and then cast into the Lake of Fire for all of eternity. Again, they are not judged *prior* to the Kingdom, because the unsaved are not offered a part in the administration of the Kingdom. The fact is that all unsaved people from the creation of Adam forward will be judged at this same judgment — the Great White Throne Judgment — which will take place after the millennium, but prior to the new heavens and new earth being brought into existence.

The remainder of our focus of study this week will be *The Judgment Seat of Christ* — the judgment having to do with the Body of Christ. Today we will peruse Revelation chapter one. As you read through this chapter, look for the descriptions given of Christ. You will make a list of these descriptive terms at the end of the chapter, so you may want to underline the descriptions as you come to them.

Revelation 1

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near. 4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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

NOTES:

In Acts chapter one, Jesus ascended into heaven on a cloud as bystanders watched. Read what happened.

Acts 1

9... He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

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Back to Revelation chapter one —

Revelation 1

8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

9 I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. **10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, **11** saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, **13** and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. **14** His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; **15** His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; **16** He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. **17** And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. **18** I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. **19** Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. **20** The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

Make of list of the descriptions of Christ given in this chapter.

These various descriptions give the picture of Jesus as Judge when He judges the Church at the JSOC. We saw one example of Jesus appearing with a golden band around His chest (v. 13), depicting Him as a magistrate (a judge), whereas the priest would wear his band around the waist (as seen when Jesus was washing the feet of the disciples). It is comforting to know that at this present moment Jesus remains our High Priest, and as we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us! Praise the Lord for His enduring love for us. And so NOW IS THE TIME to take care of business as to the way we walk as

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a saved individual! Walk by the flesh and receive a negative judgment at the JSOC, or by the Spirit and receive no negative judgment. It really is up to us right now. For when Jesus dons the golden band around His chest, there will be no more time for a change of mind and confession. Then comes judgment.

We'll need these descriptions for our study tomorrow. See you then.

Day Four — Revelation Chapter Two

Yesterday we studied Revelation chapter one. We noticed a few things that need to be mentioned from chapter one and then continue in chapter two. John wrote —

Revelation 1

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Revelation 1

19 "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. 20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches."

Today and tomorrow we will look to see what the Apostle John was instructed to record and send to the seven churches. In these two days of study, we will mostly be observing the text. Today we will study what John wrote to the first four churches.

Yesterday you made a list of the descriptive phrases which had been written of Jesus in chapter one. Today, as you come to the individual letters addressed to the Churches in Asia, I will ask you to make note of the various descriptions made of Jesus in chapter one which are repeated in each of the letters. You will be asked to identify those specific descriptions used in the letter. These repeated descriptions of Jesus as Judge from chapter one are being used again in chapters two and three, and serve to confirm the fact that He comes in the role of Judge to the Churches in these two chapters.

Also as you work through each letter to the Churches, you will see that Jesus (described in some way as Judge) begins each one of these letters with the phrase, "I know your works..." Remember that judgment has to do with works!

Following these statements in each letter, facts are given about the way in which that particular Church acted with either *commendatory* or *condemnatory* comments (or both), with an admonition about that which they were to do in view of the Coming Day of Judgment.

Then each letter ends with an overcomer's promise, which has to do with the reward given to individuals who will have been found to have overcome, along with an admonishment to "listen to what the Spirit *says* to the Churches."

Let's begin to study each letter.

Revelation 2

1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 "I

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know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent. 6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

What is the description of Jesus in this letter to the Church at Ephesus, and how is it similar to Revelation 1:16a, 20?

What positive things did Jesus say of them?

What negative things did He say of them?

Are they *to do* anything? If so, what?

And what will be given to the one who overcomes?

We'll remember that in the Garden, prior to Adam's sin, God had given Adam and the Woman the provision to eat from of the Tree of Life. This was not for the purpose of extending to them eternal life, for they had been created to live eternally already. Access to the Tree of Life was for the purpose of them acquiring the wisdom to rule over the earth – the very purpose for their creation. Death only came into the picture *after* they sinned. And once death came into the picture, they would not be able to rule, and access to this Tree was then denied to them.

Here, in this overcomers' promise, access to the Tree of Life is granted to Man once again, and that for the obvious reason – acquiring the wisdom necessary to rule and reign with Jesus Christ over the earth when He comes into His Kingdom.

Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; [Wisdom is *personified* as a woman in the following verses. Keep that in mind when reading.] 14 For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. 16 Length of days is in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who retain her.

Then for the second overcomer's promise:

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Revelation 2

8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9 “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”“

What is the description of Jesus in this letter to the church at Smyrna, and how is it similar to Revelation 1:8, 17b, 18a?

What positive things did Jesus say of them?

What negative things did He say of them?

Are they *to do* anything? If so, what?

And what will be given to anyone who overcomes?

So, what would it mean for a Christian to be hurt by the second death? Well, first let’s look at the *context* of the promise: **Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.** When do you think we are to “be faithful until death”?

And with what “death” is this dealing?

We are to be die to our flesh (fleshly desires) here and now, *so that* we can *live* in the Coming Age, thereby *receiving the crown of life.*

Then the text goes on to say: **11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.**” So we can see that this “second death” is juxtaposed to receiving “the crown of life”. For those who do not overcome, they will experience “death” (i.e., separation from Christ and His glory) when He comes into His Kingdom. And that is described as being hurt by the second death in this text. We also see this later in Revelation:

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Revelation 20

6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

So, the “second death” for a Christian is not being able to participate in ruling with Christ in His Kingdom for the Coming Age, the 1,000 years.

The next overcomer’s promise:

Revelation 2

12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, ‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 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.

17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”“

What is the description of Jesus in this letter to the church at Pergamum, and how is it similar to Revelation 1:16b?

What positive things did Jesus say of them?

What negative things did He say of them?

Are they *to do* anything? If so, what?

And what will be given to anyone who overcomes?

Just as the manna came down from heaven in order to sustain the Children of Israel providing all they needed during the time of their journey to the Promised Land, even so Jesus is the Manna – the Bread from Heaven – which comes down from heaven to sustain us spiritually, providing all we need as we make our trek to our

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Promised Land – the Heavenly City. But the HIDDEN MANNA is something different altogether. The *hidden manna* is that which will be given to the overcomers to sustain them, providing all they will need during their future work as rulers with Christ when He come into His Kingdom. And the White Stone, upon which a new name will be written, is to be given to overcomers as they overcame in their race of the faith, having overcome the devil, the world and the flesh.

Revelation 2

18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

19 “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. 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. 24 Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 But hold fast what you have till I come.

26 “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 27 ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ --as I also have received from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star.

29 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

What is the description of Jesus in this letter to the church at Thyatira, and how is it similar to Revelation 1:14b, 15a?

What positive things did Jesus say of them?

What negative things did He say of them?

Are they *to do* anything? If so, what?

And what will be given to anyone who overcomes?

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The Judgment Seat of Christ

Lesson Eighteen

Power over the nations is described in v. 27. This overcomers' promise has to do centrally with two kingdoms – the present kingdom under the control of Satan, and the Coming Kingdom under the control of Jesus Christ. And as stated, Christians who do not get involved here and now in the kingdom of Satan – 'he who keeps my work until the end' – will possess ruling power alongside of Christ when He comes into His Kingdom – ruling over the nations with a rod of iron. Then, too, being given the Morning star is an allusion to Christ Himself (Rev. 22:6). Overcomers will have a *special and unique relationship* with Jesus Christ. Herein is the fourth overcomers' promise.

Ruling over the nations with a rod of iron is part of the inheritance Christ is to receive as the only Begotten Son of God (Ps. 2:9). This is also part of the inheritance Israel is to receive as God's adopted firstborn son (Rev. 12:5); and now we see that this is also part of the inheritance of overcoming Christians, who are adopted as firstborn sons.

Day Five — Revelation Chapter Three

We will continue working through the letters written in Revelation chapter three addressed to the remainder of the seven Churches. We are doing this observation so that we will better understand the warnings given to Church at the beginning of the dispensation, in order to provide us with proper understanding as to how we should live our lives here and now in view of the coming Judgment Day.

Let's begin observing the text in Revelation chapter three.

Revelation 3

1 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. **2** 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. **4** You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

5 “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. **6** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”“

What is the description of Jesus in this letter to the church at Sardis, and how is it similar to Revelation 1:4b, 16a, 20a?

What positive things did Jesus say of them?

What negative things did He say of them?

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Lesson Eighteen

Are they *to do* anything? If so, what?

And what will be given to anyone who overcomes?

He who overcomes and has not defiled his garments, *will be clothed in white* (referring to the wedding garment of Rev. 19:8) and *will be allowed to walk with Christ*. Their names will not be blotted out from “the Book of Life”. This is *not* associated with one’s *eternal life*, as someone’s name *cannot* be blotted out of that book! This is a different book altogether. The Book of Life has to do with one’s life in the Kingdom! Therefore, the non-overcomers will not have these blessings of life when Christ comes into His Kingdom. Additionally, Jesus says that He will *confess the names* of the overcomers before His Father and the angels.

The next overcomer’s promise:

Revelation 3

7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens: 8 “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

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

13 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”“

What is the description of Jesus in this letter to the church at Philadelphia, and how is it similar to Revelation 1:18b?

What positive things did Jesus say of them?

What negative things did He say of them?

Are they *to do* anything? If so, what?

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The Judgment Seat of Christ

Lesson Eighteen

And what will be given to anyone who overcomes?

In ancient times, columns in cities were often inscribed with the names of the conquerors of that city. And when Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, he had two massive pillars constructed at the porch of the Temple. He named one pillar *Jachin* and the other he named *Boaz*. The meaning of Jachin is *establish*; and the meaning of Boaz is *strength*. Hence, we can see that overcomers will *go out no more* – meaning they will not have to go out to war ever again (cf., Josh. 14:11; Deut. 21:10; 24:5; I Chron. 7:11). Overcomers will also possess *firmly established positions of rulership* alongside Jesus when He comes into His Kingdom within the Heavenly City – the New Jerusalem. Overcomers, in this respect, will be pillars in the Temple in the Heavenly City.

And finally, the 7th overcomers promise:

Revelation 3

14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 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.””

What is the description of Jesus in this letter to the church at Laodicea, and how is it similar to 1:1:5?

What positive things did Jesus say of them?

What negative things did He say of them?

Are they *to do* anything? If so, what?

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The Judgment Seat of Christ

Lesson Eighteen

And what will be given to anyone who overcomes?

This final overcomer's promise is very straight-forward. Appropriately, this is the culmination and fulfillment of all the aforementioned promises – *to sit with Christ on His Throne, just as He sat with His Father on His throne*, having overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. When Christ ascends His own throne above the earth in the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, so will overcoming Christians ascend the same Throne together with Him, thus fulfilling *all* of the promises related to those who will overcome.

This is the goal toward which we must be presently living our lives, the goal *which will be realized* when Christ comes into His Kingdom.

Well, this has been quite a week of study, hasn't it? We have put together large sections of the puzzle pieces that we have been working on for weeks. Perhaps now we can understand why and how it is so important to see judgement in the way the Scriptures lay it out for us.

One thing to remember as we close this week is that all the overcomers' promises will be received by all the overcomers. In other words, if you are found to be an overcomer (and I HOPE you are!), then you will not just receive one or two of the promises, but ALL of them. Each promise (and all the promises) are on offer to you now. All overcomers will receive ALL the promises. I hope that is clear.

I hope it is equally clear that the individuals within the Church who are the overcomers, will also be the ones who make up the Bride of Christ. Just as the wife for Adam was taken out of his body, formed, and presented back to him by God the Father, so will the Wife for Christ be taken out of His Body at the JSOC, formed and presented to Him so that the Two will rule over a restored creation.

We'll look into this in more detail next week. See you then.

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Lesson Nineteen — The Redemption of the Inheritance — for the Bride

Day One — Just to Make Sure...

Day Two — The Order of Events in the Revelation

Day Three — The Purpose of the Tribulation with respect to the Bride

Day Four — The Redemption of the Inheritance of the Earth

Day Five — The Bride Makes Herself Ready

Last week we studied the first three chapters of the Book of the Revelation. Overall, this has been an amazing journey over these last months (hasn't it?), as we have gone from Genesis to the Revelation. Hopefully, we have come to realize that our diligent study of Scripture has an end goal, as we strive to understand God's plans and purpose for mankind, *and how we, as individuals, fit into His glorious plan.*

In last week's study we witnessed what will be the outcome of the Christian's race of the faith – our appearance at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Some Christians will have reached the end (the goal) of their faith – the salvation of the soul (I Peter 1:9); but others will *not* have reached that goal. And we now know that it is at the JSOC where these judgments and determinations will be meted out. The overcomers will receive the promises and become the Bride of Christ; the non-overcomers will be separated from Christ and His Glory for the Millennial Reign. It will only be at the end of the 1,000 years, that this *death*, this 1,000-year *separation*, will be done away with, and then all those who have been eternally saved will experience life for the Ages of the Ages.

In remembering just how the Woman had been taken out of the Man's body in the Garden at the very beginning, and now having seen how the Bride will be taken out of Christ's Body at the JSOC, we can easily see the veracity of the passage we considered very early in our study:

Isaiah 46

9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 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'...

So, what more is there to see about God declaring the end from *the beginning*? What does the *end* (that which comes to completion in Revelation) have to do with the *beginning* (that which was laid out as foundation in Genesis)? How does one relate to the other? This week we will begin to piece a little more of this together.

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The Redemption of the Inheritance

Lesson Nineteen

Day One — Just to Make Sure...

In our study last week, we realized from Revelation chapter one that in the near future Jesus will don the clothing of a Magistrate and will judge the resurrected/raptured Church in the heavens. Then in chapters two and three of Revelation, we ‘watched’ the judgment take place. As Jesus judges the complete Church, we saw that the criteria for His judgment will be our works. Seven times Jesus repeated the words: “I know your works...” And then at the end of each of His statements of judgments, He states a warning to the Churches (Philadelphia excepted) and a promise to those Christians who will have overcome – seven overcomers’ promises (Revelation chs. 2 and 3).

One wonderful thing to consider in these three chapters in the Book of the Revelation is that God, in His everlasting love and mercy toward the Body of Christ (from which His Bride will be taken), *has allowed the Church to know ahead of time what to expect at the JSOC*. (How marvelous is that?) Not only does He allow us to glimpse this *future* judgment, in which *all* Christians will be present, but He also reveals what we might be doing wrong and how we are to correct those wrong actions and attitudes, so that we *can receive* the promises, which are extended to all who will have been found faithful. And this has been in the Book since the beginning of this dispensation. So, for approximately the past 2,000 years, in a respect, Christians have had the opportunity to “see into our future,” to prophetically know exactly what each of us will partake in, so that we can make the necessary changes in our lives now so as to be found as an overcomer. Praise the Lord, and thank You, Lord, for Your mercy and loving kindnesses!

One thing to note about the overcomers’ promises is that *all of them* have to do with rulership in the Coming Age when Christ comes into His Kingdom, and nothing to do with the eternal, ongoing ages. Let’s briefly review all seven promises. As you consider each promise, please write down *how* the promises have to do with the Coming Kingdom. (You can review the intent and meaning of each promise in Lesson Eighteen, Days 4 and 5.)

1) **Revelation 2**

7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

Why will it be necessary for a ruler to eat from the Tree of Life during the Millennial Age? (See Lesson Eighteen, Day Four.)

2) **Revelation 2**

10 “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”

What does it mean to *receive the crown of life* as opposed to *being hurt by the second death*? (Look back at Lesson Eighteen.)

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3) Revelation 2

17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

What does it mean to be given Hidden Manna to eat, and to receive a white stone with a new name?

4) Revelation 2

25 “But hold fast what you have till I come. 26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations - 27 ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ --as I also have received from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star.

What would it mean to have power over the nations (i.e., “ruling with a rod of iron”)?

What does it mean to possess the morning star?

5) Revelation 3

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

Why would a ruler have a white garment? How does it relate to the Book of Life (life for the age to come)? And what does *confessing* a name before the Father and His angels mean?

Can you see how having one’s name confessed before the Father and His angels is in direct contrast to having one’s name blotted out from the Book of Life for the Coming Age?

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6) Revelation 3

11 “Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

Why does an overcomer need to receive a crown? And what does it mean to be made a “pillar in the Temple” and to receive a new name?

7) Revelation 3

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.

What does it mean that a person will be granted to sit with Christ on His Throne?

Summarily, how would you see these promises as relating to the Coming Kingdom?

We know that the number 7 represents *divine completion of that which is in view*. Here, with the 7 overcomers’ promises, the Coming Kingdom of Christ is in view! And so, as God divinely inspired the Apostle John to write the Book of the Revelation, there are 7 promises offered to those who will have faithfully overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. These promises represent *exactly* what will be necessary for anyone to possess in order to rule alongside of Christ when He comes into His Kingdom.

One reason that these promises only relate to the Coming Kingdom is that once the Kingdom runs its entire 1,000-year course, a whole new *universal* order of rulership will be established. There will be a New Heaven and a New Earth, and the Throne of the Father and the Throne of the Son will merge into one Throne and rest upon the New Earth. Rulership over the entire creation will emanate from this location. And these promises do not relate to that scope of jurisdiction (I Cor. 15:24-27; Rev. 21:1-5).

Tomorrow we will be considering a few questions to which you probably already know the answers, but we need to make sure! The questions are: **WHY is the Judgment Seat necessary if we have been saved through faith in the death of Jesus? WHY does He subsequently have to judge us?** In other words, **WHAT is the purpose for this Judgment?** Meditate upon these things, and we’ll see you then.

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Day Two — The Order of Events in The Revelation

So, the questions we were to be pondering from the end of yesterday's study were:

WHY is the Judgment Seat necessary if we have been saved through faith in the death of Jesus?

Since we are saved through faith in the death of Jesus,

- **WHY does He subsequently have to judge us?** In other words,
- **WHAT is the purpose for this Judgment?** And,
- **WHAT is being judged?**

And then let's add a related question:

- **What are *the results of the JSOC*?** (*Where* would we see those results?)

It is easy to see that the JSOC will result in positive ramifications for some Christians, and negative ramifications for others. The positive ramifications are shown in Revelation 2 and 3 in the form of promises made to those who will have overcome, which we looked at yesterday. The non-overcomers at the Judgment Seat will *not* receive those promises, thereby receiving a negative judgment. And those who are overcomers, and receive the promises will be those who make up **the Bride of Christ**. *That's the reason for the judgment, subsequent to receiving our free gift. Jesus will judge **the works** of Christians in order to determine those who have been faithfully obedient to Him, and He will reward them according to those works.* They will be **co-heirs with Him** in His Kingdom, **adopted as firstborn sons**, completing the *triad* of First born Sons who will rule.

And once the Bride for the Son is in place, just as Joseph (a type of Christ) takes a temporary leave of his Gentile wife, Asenath, to redeem his brothers from sure death; and just as Moses (another type of Christ) takes leave of his Gentile wife, Zipporah, to redeem his brothers from sure death, even so Christ takes leave of His Bride to bring about Israel's redemption. So, let's look at what takes place *after* the JSOC.

After the Judgment Seat of Christ, the following scenes that take place in the heavens *may* appear to be *unrelated events* – that is unrelated to the judgment seat. But, assuredly, the events of chapters 4 and 5 *are not unrelated* to what had just taken place in those first three chapters. Let's look at it:

Revelation 4

1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

After *what* things?

The answer to *that* simple question is **why** things in chapters 4 and 5 can proceed in the heavens, which then, in turn, allows things in chapters 6-18 to transpire on the earth, having *first* been initiated in the heavens (*cf.*, Dan. 4:26b, and Luke 11:2). It is *because* there is now a Bride for the Son that events of Revelation chapters

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4 and 5 can begin to unfold in the heavens (which was the reason for our brief review of the first three chapters this week). So, let's look at the events that take place in these two chapters.

In Revelation chapter 4, the heavenly scene is laid out. There is a Throne with One sitting upon it, and a rainbow surrounding the Throne showing judgement has been completed (cf., Gen. 9:13), along with twenty-four elders dressed in white robes and crowned with golden crowns. There are lightnings, thunderings, voices, seven lamps of fire, four living creatures...all worshipping the One Who sits upon the Throne. It's quite a scene (c.f., Rev. 4:1-9). But there is something to be noted here about the actions of the 24 elders:

Revelation 4

10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 11 “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

These “24 elders” *represent* the 2/3rds of Lucifer's original host of angels who were created to rule over the earth, and who did not follow him in his rebellion against God prior to Genesis 1:2. These are the crowned angels who are clothed in white robes in Revelation chapter four – the ones who relinquish their golden crowns before the Throne with a view to the Bride of Christ (just previously identified at the judgment seat) wearing these crowns when Christ comes to rule in His Kingdom – His consort queen ruling alongside Him.

You may want to pause and take a moment to read Revelation chapters four and five.

In chapter 5, focus moves to a 7-sealed scroll in the right hand of the One sitting upon the Throne. Within this scroll are the terms of the redemption of the earth – it is the title deed to the earth. And a search is made for One Who is worthy to open the scroll and loose its seals, and to look in it. Finally, there is One Who stands in the midst of the Throne – the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David – the only One found worthy. When the Apostle John (the author of the Book of Revelation) turned to look, he saw a Lamb as though it had been slain. This One – the Lion/Lamb – took the scroll from the Hand of the One sitting on the Throne. And when He had taken the scroll from the Hand of the One on the Throne, the 24 elders fell down and worshipped. Then the voice of many angels, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands upon thousands praised and worshipped –

Revelation 5

12 saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!” 13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!” 14 Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

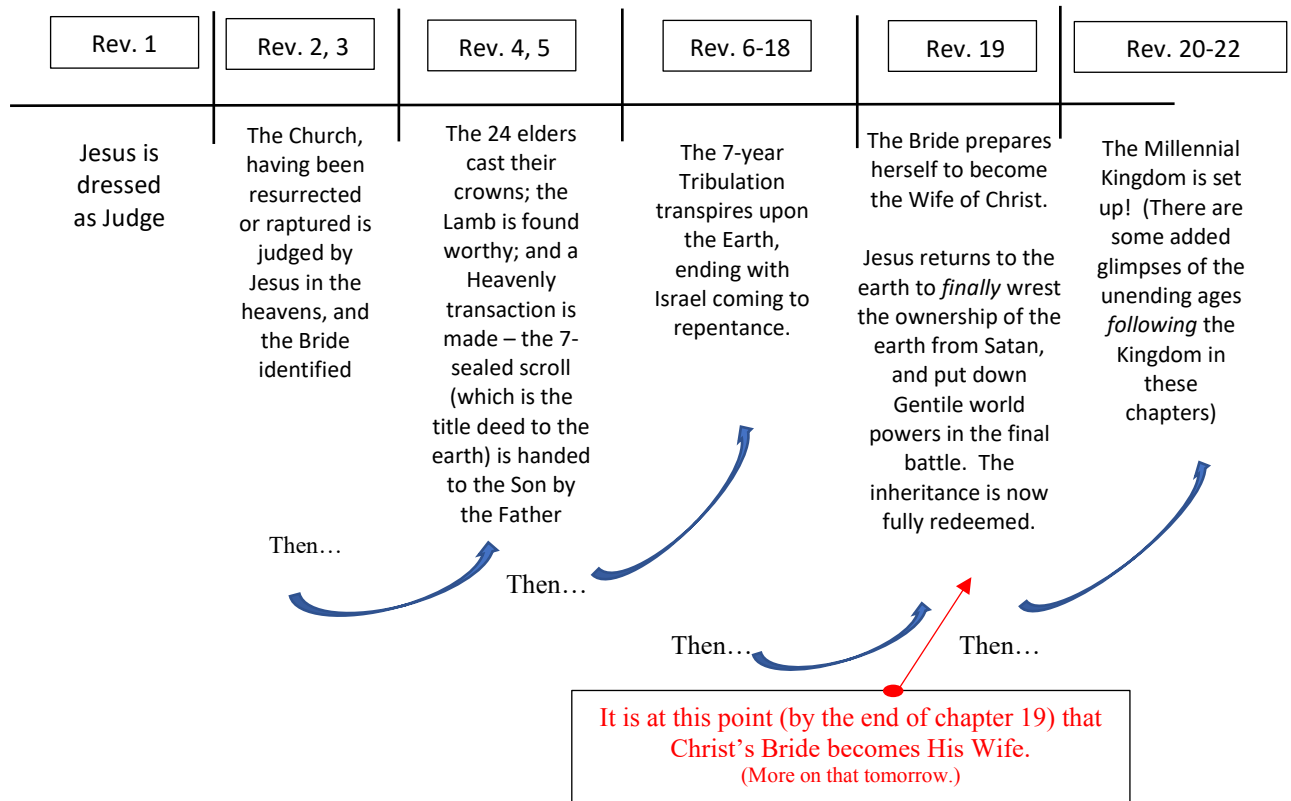
Wow! What just happened??? To help us understand this scene, we may want to see how these two chapters fit into the chronology of entire book. *Context and flow of events in Revelation is of utmost importance in understanding the Book as a whole.*⁶ The chart below may help us see the context of chapters 4 and 5 and allow us to see the flow of events. Take a close look at it.

⁶ But then this Book does not stand on its own! It must also relate to all the previous books in the Bible. And we are about to see *how* this is true through the use of the *types* laid out in the OT historical accounts.

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A brief overview of the timing of events in the Book of Revelation



While this timeline reveals the chronology of the whole Book of the Revelation, it must be remembered that chapters 6-18 are not laid out in a chronological format. Rather, within these chapters, a timeline will be laid out, then ongoing passages will drop back into that timeline giving more details and commentary of events which will take place within that period of time. This type of thing happens over and over again throughout these chapters.

So, the original question in our study today is: Why does the Judgment of the Church have to take place first? And what will be the result of this judgment? Can you answer those questions? (Really, the answers are the same for both questions.)

And *because* Jesus now has a Bride as a result of chapters 1-3, the events in chapters 4 and 5 can transpire. Can you summarize the events of chapters 4-5?

More on Revelation 19 tomorrow. See you then.

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Day Three — The Purpose of the Tribulation with respect to the Bride

As we saw in the chart from yesterday, even though the Bride was identified through chapters 2 and 3, she is not seen again until Revelation chapter 19! Today we want to get a better grasp on *why that space of time?* There is very good reason for it! Let's jump from Revelation 2 and 3 straight into Revelation 19, and have a look:

Revelation 19

1 After these things [the events which transpired in chapters 6-18] **I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! 2 For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." 3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"**

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" 6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 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." 8 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. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Remember now, we have jumped ahead 16 chapters – from the JSOC (chs. 2 and 3) to just beyond the Tribulation (chs. 6-18). We are in Revelation 19 here. So, let's note how this looks on the brief overview chart from yesterday's study. Go back and look at the part of the chart that deals with chapters 2 and 3. Draw an arrow from this section to the section dealing with chapter 19. Then somewhere along the arrow write the words: "The Bride is not seen again until..." Now you have a visual.

We have briefly looked at what takes place in heaven *immediately after* there is a Bride identified for Christ (Rev. 4 and 5). It is here that the 24 elders cast their golden crowns before the Throne; then a scroll is seen in the right hand of the One Who sits on the Throne (God the Father), and a search is made for One found worthy to open the scroll and loose its seals. Again, the scroll is *the title deed to the earth* and within it are the terms of the redemption of the inheritance of the earth.

There is found ONE worthy to receive the scroll and loose its seals – it is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lamb that was slain. And the transaction is made. The One sitting upon the Throne hands the scroll to the Lamb, and much worship and praise ensued to this One found worthy. (I suggest that perhaps you take a minute and read Revelation 4-5 with the understanding of what is happening.)

Revelation chapter six then opens with the Lamb breaking the first seal. **This begins the Tribulation upon the earth.** The tribulation must run its full course (Rev. 6-18) before we see the Bride again! We are going to look at the flow of events in the Tribulation next week. But for now, suffice it to say that the Tribulation *with respect to Israel*, is to bring about God's judgment upon Israel, thereby bringing forth national repentance, which *must be* in place in order for the events *which follow* the Tribulation to transpire. (That last sentence is pretty important to grasp! You may want to underline it, and then see how this flows on the chart from yesterday.)

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And once this judgment upon Israel as a Nation *and* National repentance is brought to pass *then* events in Revelation 19 can take place. (Look again at the chart and see the visual again with these thoughts in mind. It is *because* this judgment upon the Nation of Israel *and* their National repentance will have taken place, that the events of Revelation 19 can now begin to unfold.) Let's briefly review what these events are:

Revelation 19

6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife [Lit. woman *gune* in the Greek] has made herself ready." 8 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. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

So, who has made herself ready in v. 7?

(Some translations have "wife," some have "bride" in v. 7. The Greek word used here is *gune* which literally is the word for *woman*. Context usually determines if the text is dealing generically with a *woman*, or specifically a *wife*, or *bride*. The reason we still see her as the Bride of Christ [and not yet His wife] is because, although Israel – as a Nation – has repented [see Rev. 19:1-6 (we'll deal with this next week)], there is still one final thing Christ must do in order for the redemption of the inheritance to be completed, which *must* happen prior to her becoming His wife. He must put down Gentile World Power and wrest the rulership of the earth from Satan. And this is portrayed in Revelation 19:11-21, which we will also look at next week!)

And what was granted to her in v. 8?

What is the "fine white linen" in v. 8?

According to v. 9, what is about to take place now that all *the previous events have taken place*?

Wedding festivities can now take place in the heavens with respect to the Bride of Christ.

So, what we see here is the Bride of Christ, having been separated from (taken out of) the Body of Christ – the very result of the Judgment Seat – *preparing to become the Wife of Christ* with the wedding festivities beginning in the heavens. And now with Israel repentant as a nation, Jesus can do what is necessary to complete the redemption of the earth as the inheritance for His wife-to-be, and then set up His reign over the earth as the Second Man, the Last Adam. And THAT, my dear people, is the very result of the JSOC. Jesus will then have a Wife taken from His Body, just as Adam did, and she will rule with Him from the Heavenly City during the entire Millennial Reign. THAT'S AWESOME!

But *why did it take 16 chapters in the Book of the Revelation to get us there*? Well, setting aside what needs to take place with the Nation of Israel for a moment, we need to consider a couple of things with respect to the Bride-now-Wife of Christ. The reason for the interim period of time is really due to TWO *foundational* types, which need to be fulfilled in their antitypes. The two foundational types are **Adam and the Woman**,

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and **Ruth and Boaz**. So, in order to answer the question of *why it took so long* to get us there, let's look at these two types with respect to what we have just learned and see how the antitypes are fulfilled.

Let's list some things we already know. We'll remember that:

- God created Adam to rule over the earth in Satan's stead.
- God deemed it necessary for Adam to have a wife to help him rule.
- God formed a wife for Adam from a part of his body, and then presented her back to him so that the two could rule over a restored creation as one.

Then we know that

- God tested the Man and the Woman for obedience *prior* to their stepping into the position of rulership.

But, with the fall of the Man and the Woman in the Garden, rulership over the earth was out of reach for them – a **complete redemption** would be required first.

What kind of redemption? A *complete* redemption!

And so, what we must consider is that Adam's sin not only affected him and his wife (having brought forth their death with respect to their spirit, *and* soul, *and* body), but also Adam's sin affected the earth itself. Both man, and the earth was now in need of redemption!

There are several ways that we should be able to see that the earth itself was adversely affected by sin and in need of redemption, but let's consider just two:

- 1) In Genesis 3:17-18, after Adam's sin the earth was cursed, then producing thorns and thistles, marring the very perfection to which the earth had been restored in Genesis chapter one.

And then also in

- 2) Romans 8:21-22 we see that *the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption...* and that *the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs...* until the placement of firstborn sons – the adoption of sons, which won't take place until the JSOC is complete.)

OK. We'll add one more way that Scripture shows that *the earth needs to be redeemed* as well as man. Let's read this verse:

Colossians 1

16 For by Him [Jesus Christ] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Relate v. 20 to v. 16. In v.16, what things were created by Jesus Christ?

And in v. 20, what things needed to be reconciled to Himself? (To reconcile means to put back in proper order.)

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And how was that reconciliation to be accomplished?

We have known for so long that Man needs a Redeemer; but have we considered that the earth needed to be redeemed as well? Can you see that now?

And so, in Genesis 3:15 God promises a REDEEMER – with subsequent Scriptures revealing that the Redeemer would have to do TWO things. He would have to:

- Redeem Man, ultimately placing him back in the position to be able to rule, *and*
- Redeem the earth as the inheritance – for the Second Man, the Last Adam and His Wife, the one identified as His Bride at the JSOC – over which they would rule.

We'll end today with a brief review of the redemption of Man, which should be very familiar to you by now, and tomorrow we will look at the redemption of the earth.

The Redemption of Man

Our salvation – in its fullest sense – is also known as our redemption. In our lessons on *the full scope of salvation* (Lessons 13-15), we have seen that faith in the death and shed blood of Jesus on the cross allows a person to receive eternal salvation. This is the free gift, granted by God through our faith in Jesus' death and shed blood on the cross as our Passover (I Cor. 5:7). Spiritual birth puts man back into union with God and opens the way for working out *the salvation of the soul* and *the redemption of the body*. Through the death and shed blood of Jesus, an individual can ultimately be redeemed back to the position for which Man was created. And since we have already spent time studying salvation in its full scope, we will not revisit it here in any detail. But suffice it to say, the full scope of our salvation is also our redemption!

With the sin and death of Adam, Jesus, as *the Second Man, the Last Adam* (see I Cor. 15:45, 47), will be the One who will rule over the earth in Satan's stead in the heavens above the earth. But as it was in the Type, so will it be in Antitype. Just as God required Adam to have a wife to help him rule, so will Jesus require a Wife to help Him rule. And so, the judgments and determinations made at the JSOC will have revealed His Bride, who will have been taken from His Body, formed, and presented back to Him so that, as One, They can rule over the restored earth. Again, if we see it in the Type (Adam and the Woman), we must also see it in the Antitype (Christ and His Bride).

With all of this information/review, it is easy to see that the purpose for the JSOC is to acquire a Bride for Christ. But now we must understand something else! Due to the death of Adam in the Garden, Mankind's right to rule over the earth was lost. So, keeping in mind that a marriage relationship is required to rule, now the earth over which the Man and the Woman were to rule within that marriage relationship was ruined! Jesus will not only need to redeem Mankind, but He will also need to redeem the earth as the inheritance which has been promised from the very beginning. Here are a couple of verses to show that the inheritance *is* the earth:

Romans 4

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

Psalm 2

7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession...

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These are just two of the passages in Scripture which plainly states what our inheritance is. Tomorrow we look to see how this inheritance is redeemed.

It will be the overcomers revealed at the judgment seat who will receive the inheritance. We'll end today's study with this verse:

Revelation 21

7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Day Four — The Redemption of the Inheritance of the Earth

In recent days of study, we have seen that Jesus must have a wife in order to rule over the earth. (God had established marriage as a prerequisite for rulership over the earth within the kingdom of man at the very beginning. And that has not changed.) We have seen that it is at the JSOC where the Bride is identified and separated from His Body (Rev. 1-3). Then we do not see the Bride again, until Revelation chapter nineteen. But (...and this is a very big "but" here), Christ's Bride cannot become His Wife until *something else* happens.

There are events that must transpire in heaven (Rev. 4-6) between God the Father and God the Son, with the 24 elders being witnesses, after which certain things must transpire on the earth having been initiated from the heavens (Matt. 6:10). It is only *after* ALL these events take place in the heavens and then on the earth that Jesus' Bride can become His Wife.

But why is it set up this way? It is because of a type which was set forth way back in the OT in a book that, at first glance may seem like no more than a history book! But we have learned there is ALWAYS a reason for God including any historical detail and events in His Word! And the Book of Ruth is no exception!

To understand how the Bride will become the Wife, we would need to go the Book of Ruth⁷. Through the type/antitype structure of Scripture, the Book of Ruth lays out the picture of 'a close relative', Boaz, *redeeming a lost inheritance* for a Gentile widow named *Ruth*. Ruth had been brought into a Jewish family by her marriage to Elimelech's son, Mahlon. But Mahlon died, and with his death, Ruth lost the right to the family's inheritance. Then, after certain events transpire in Ruth chapters 1-3, Boaz (who was her 'close relative' through her marriage to Mahlon) acts in such a way so as to redeem the lost inheritance for Ruth. And it was at the point of that redemption, she became Boaz' wife.

Here is a very brief overview of the events in **Ruth Chapter 1** leading up to the redemption of her lost inheritance and her becoming his wife:

- The setting for the Book of Ruth was during *the times when the Judges ruled*, and when there was no king in Israel – everyone did what was right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6). Also, *there was a famine in the land of Israel*.
- A man of Bethlehem, Elimelech (whose name means "God is King") moved his family to Moab, a Gentile country. The man's wife's name was Naomi, and his two son's names were Mahlon and Chilion.
- While in Moab, both sons took Gentiles wives – Ruth and Orpah, respectively.
- Eventually, all three men die in Moab – Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion. Naomi is bereft of her husband and two sons.

⁷ There is *very* much to learn from the Book of Ruth in the way of the type/antitype structure of Scripture concerning the Bride of Christ. But for our purposes here, we will only be briefly looking at the *type and antitype* of the redemption of a lost inheritance by a 'close relative.'

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- Then Naomi hears that the Lord has visited her people and that there was bread in Bethlehem; she began her journey back to Bethlehem *along with the two daughters-in-law*. It should be noted that all *three* women began the journey.
- Part way into the journey, Orpah turned back to the way of Moab. She returned to her people, her gods, her land. But Ruth clung to Naomi, saying: “**Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me**” (Ruth 1:16, 17).
- They arrived at Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

All of the above mentioned historical facts are meticulously laid out in the Book of Ruth. None of the details herein are superfluous! Nothing is without meaning. (But we’ll leave the in-depth look into that for another study.)

And then, briefly in **Ruth Chapter 2**, we see Ruth, in total obedience to Naomi’s instructions (and later obedient to Boaz’ instructions), diligently working in the barley harvest and then the wheat harvest, all the while preparing herself for what was to happen in chapter 3.

In **Ruth Chapter 3**, Naomi states that she seeks *security* for Ruth (literally *rest* for her), and therefore instructs Ruth to:

- Wash herself
- Anoint herself
- And to put her best clothes on.

Then Naomi sends Ruth to Boaz’ threshing floor, as he would be threshing that night. Let’s read about that night:

Ruth 3

1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security [Lit., *rest*] for you, that it may be well with you? **2** Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. **3** Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. **4** Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.” **5** And she said to her, “All that you say to me I will do.”

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. **7** And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. **8** Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. **9** And he said, “Who are you?” So she answered, “I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing [lit., skirt], for you are a close relative.”

10 Then he said, “Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. **11** And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. **12** Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. **13** Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you-good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”

14 So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.”

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15 Also he said, “Bring the shawl that is on you and hold it.” And when she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley, and laid it on her. Then she went into the city. 16 So when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “Is that you, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her. 17 And she said, “These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, ‘Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’” 18 Then she said, “Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.”

In v. 7, list the actions Ruth takes.

(Please note that Ruth uncovering his feet was not some sort of random act. Naomi had instructed Ruth to act in accord with the OT Law given in Deut. 25:5-10, a law that dealt with a widow becoming married again *within the family* in order to raise up a son in the name of her dead husband, so that the dead husband’s name would not be blotted out in Israel. This marriage *within the family* is also done for *inheritance* purposes for the widow – the inheritance she lost due to the death of her husband, but would be redeemed through her marriage to a close relative. If the near kinsman refused to act in accord with this law, the widow had the right to *remove one of his sandals*. By the action of *uncovering his feet*, Ruth was asking Boaz to perform the duty of a close relative. And Boaz knew what she meant.)

Further, in v. 9 Ruth makes a verbal request of Boaz. What does she ask him to do?

This too, is with respect to marriage. In Ezekiel 16:8 God describes the time when He took Israel as His Wife. He and Israel entered in to a covenant relationship, and she became His. In this passage, it describes God as covering Israel with His wing (Lit. His skirt). So, by this verbal request (asking Boaz to cover her with his skirt), Ruth was *asking* Boaz to marry her *because he is a close relative*. Can you see how this is all fitting together?

Now read vv. 10-13. Does Boaz understand what Ruth is requesting? How would you know?

What does Boaz say to her in the middle of v. 11?

Through her *action of uncovering his feet*, Ruth was requesting him to redeem her lost inheritance; and through her *asking to be covered with his skirt*, Ruth was asking Boaz to marry her. Both were in accord to OT Law, of which she no doubt had been instructed by Naomi to do.

Then what does Boaz tell Ruth to do?

According to the passage, why does he have to take leave of her? (Explain in detail.)

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Then briefly describe what happens in vv. 14-18.

Oh! May the implication of this whole scene not be lost on us! Here in capsule form is a picture of what will take place at the JSOC for *the faithful Christian*. Ruth is a picture of the Christian who will make up the Bride of Christ; Orpah a picture of the unfaithful Christian who turned back to their old life. And although unfaithful Christians *will certainly be present at the JSOC*, the Book of Ruth only depicts the outcome for the faithful. (Other *types* throughout Scripture picture the outcome of unfaithful Christians there.) In addition, the Book of Ruth lays out for Christians *what will be necessary to have a successful outcome*.

So, Ruth showed up at Boaz's threshing floor (a picture of the Judgment Seat) having fully completed the work which had been given to her through the instructions of her mother-in-law, Naomi, as well as having followed the previous commands of Boaz, her kinsman redeemer. In appearing at the threshing floor in this fully prepared fashion, Ruth, through her actions and her words – in no uncertain terms – asked Boaz to marry her and thereby redeem the inheritance for her. Boaz was notably happy to take Ruth as his wife. But (before the actual marriage took place, Boaz first needed to take care of the business of redeeming the inheritance on Ruth's behalf – the inheritance which had been lost due to the death of her husband in Moab.

We will look at this tomorrow. Keep up the good work!

Day Five — The Bride Makes Herself Ready

From our study yesterday, we saw in **Ruth Chapter 3** that Ruth had requested Boaz to redeem her lost inheritance and to marry her. Boaz was eager to do so, but first had work to do on Ruth's behalf. Today we will see that at the beginning of **Ruth Chapter 4**, Boaz went to the gate of the city to conduct the transaction of the redemption of the inheritance with "the *closer relative*" as the elders of the city were gathered to witness the transaction. Let's read about it.

Ruth 4

1 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 3 Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. 4 And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem it." **5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance."**

From what we learned yesterday when referencing Deuteronomy 25:5-10, of what do you think Boaz reminded the closer relative concerning the redemption of the inheritance for Ruth?

With that thought, the closer relative reacted:

6 And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it." 7 Now

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this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel. 8 Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself.” So he took off his sandal.

And again, from what we learned yesterday, what do you think giving his sandal to Boaz indicated?

9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, from the hand of Naomi. 10 Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day.” 11 And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. 12 May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman.”

So, what was the result of this transaction made at the gate of the city before the elders as witnesses? (See vv. 9 and 10.)

Yes! At the very moment the transaction was completed (the very moment the inheritance was redeemed), Ruth became Boaz’ wife, even in her absence. The next time they saw each other, they were man and wife (Ruth 4:5-6, 9-10.)

Now, get this! This is *exactly* the reason we had to leave the completed events of the Judgment Seat at the end of Revelation Chapter 3 with the Bride having been identified, but not yet having become Christ’s Wife, and *move on to* and *through* the succeeding events of Revelation chapters 4 and 5, and then on into chapters 6-19a.

Specifically, once a Bride for the Son has been identified, the scenes of Revelation Chapters 4 and 5 can now take place – heavenly events which become the antitype to Ruth Chapter 4. In Revelation chapters 4 and 5:

- There are 24 elders who surround the Throne in heaven (the antitype to the elders in Ruth 4);
- God the Father is present (the antitype of the Nearer Kinsman or *Closer Relative*), and Jesus appears in the midst of the Throne (the antitype of Boaz going to the gate of the city, who has a bride waiting for Him to redeem the inheritance on her behalf)
- A transaction is made – the 7-sealed scroll (which is the title deed to the earth) is handed from the Father to the Son, as the Son is the only One who can redeem the inheritance for the Bride, and take her as His Wife (the antitype to the relinquished sandal from the nearer kinsman to Boaz)
- The 24 elders surrounding the Throne praise the Son as the only One Worthy to open the Scroll and redeem the earth (the antitype to the elders in the Book of Ruth giving blessings and praise to Boaz).

We’ll remember that God the Father cannot redeem the inheritance for the waiting Bride, as His inheritance is Israel, and to do so would be to the ruin of His inheritance. Once the Nation of Israel comes to repentance, the Father will re-establish Israel as His Wife once again. It is for this reason that He cannot take the waiting Bride as His Wife.

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For those who would like to see the above information in the form of a chart (with even more detail), here we go:

Parallels in the Book of Ruth & The Book of the Revelation

Ruth – The Type	The Book of the Revelation – The Antitype
The nearer kinsman takes a seat at the city gate	God the Father is seated on His throne
10 elders of the city are there to witness the transaction between Boaz and the nearer kinsman	24 elders surround the throne in heaven and witness the transaction between God the Father and God the Son
Ruth is not present	The Bride is not present
Boaz is in the midst of the elders with Ruth elsewhere waiting for him to redeem the inheritance	Jesus who appears in the midst of the throne and the 24 elders has a Bride previously identified waiting for the redemption of the inheritance
A transaction is made concerning redeeming the inheritance and then confirmed with the passing of the sandal	A transaction is made as the 7-sealed scroll (the title deed to the earth) is handed from the Father to the Son
The nearer kinsman could not redeem the inheritance for himself as it would have marred his own inheritance	God the Father cannot redeem the inheritance for Himself as His inheritance is Israel who He will yet future take as His wife
The elders and people at the gate witness and acknowledge the transaction and speak blessing and prosperity upon the union	The 24 elders praise the Son as the One found worthy to open the scroll and redeem the inheritance for His Bride
Ruth, having prepared herself according to the instructions of Naomi, becomes the wife of Boaz	The Bride, having made herself ready, has become the wife of the Son
The result of their union leads to regality with their great grandson David reigning as King in Israel from whom will come the Christ	Christ and His Bride rule over the earth from the heavens in the 7 th Day – The Millennial Kingdom

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And with *these things* in place in Revelation chapters 4 and 5, things can then move right into chapters 6-18, which tell of events that will be executed upon the earth for the purpose of bringing about two essential things in order for the redemption of the inheritance to take place:

- 1) Israel must experience national repentance. Revelation Chapters 6-18 depict the actual events which will be necessary to bring Israel to that point. Her complete repentance is pictured in Rev. 19:1-6. (We'll look at the details of these events in Lesson Twenty-one.) And,
- 2) Jesus must take the ownership of the earth away from Satan by force, which is seen in Revelation 19:11-21. This is the Battle of Armageddon.

Placed within the middle of these two events (Rev. 19:7-10) there is celebration in heaven where we see the Bride, who has not been mentioned since Revelation chapter three, partaking in the wedding festivities as she will have made herself ready, while she awaits the completion of one final event (which must occur *in order for the redemption to be complete*). Let's read about the Bride:

Revelation 19

7 "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." 8 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. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

And that, my dear people, is the result of the JSOC, as well as that which had been accomplished through the Tribulation following the Judgment Seat with respect to the Bride of Christ. We just had to get there. Isn't it such a beautiful picture!!

Remember, John is writing about these events.

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Lesson Twenty — Israel's Disobedience

Day One — The Great Harlot

Day Two — Israel's Fall Brings Blessings to Gentiles

Day Three — The Irrevocable Gifts and Calling

Day Four — Israel's Furnace of Affliction

Day Five — The Timing of Israel's Affliction

Last week we learned that after JSOC (Rev. 2 and 3), the Bride is not seen again until Revelation 19. We saw that the two chapters following the JSOC (Rev. 4 and 5) depict events that will take place in heaven between the Father and the Son in the antitype to Boaz going to the gate of the city for the purpose of doing what was necessary to redeem the inheritance on behalf of Ruth, after which she would become his wife. Then Revelation chapters 6-18 detail the period known as 'The Time of Jacob's Trouble' (Jer.30:7) – the 7-year Tribulation which will take place throughout the world with Israel as the main focus. A cursory glance through Revelation chapters 6-18 reveals that the inhabitants of the earth – the Jews in particular – will go through horrendous events for a period of 7 years, with the last 3 ½ years being called *The Great Tribulation* (Mt. 24:21).

In this week of study we will consider *why* the nation of Israel will go through a time affliction, and what the outcome will be.

Day One — The Great Harlot

Let's begin today with a review of the first few verses in Revelation 19, paying particular attention to v. 2:

Revelation 19

1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! 2 For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." 3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

In your own words, summarize this passage. (We just want to make sure you are getting the picture here!)

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Verse 1 says: "After these things..." After what things? (It may be helpful to go back to the chart in last week's lesson to answer this question. The chart is in Day Two.)

From the text, whose smoke rises forever and ever?

Whom do you think "the great harlot" is?

Understand that v. 2 is a summation of Revelation chapters 6-18 – God has judged the Great Harlot. And it really is quite easy to see that the Great Harlot has been judged throughout the events of these interim chapters. Without going into too much detail here, suffice it to say that the one whom God has judged throughout the Time of **Jacob's** Trouble is the Nation of Israel! Hence the God-given term for the events as prophesied by the Prophet Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 30

7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

If you were to read the entire 30th chapter of Jeremiah it would be easy to ascertain who it is referred to by the term *the Great Harlot*, and why she is looked upon as such. (If you have time, you may want to read the chapter.) The "*great harlot*" is *Israel* – the adulterous wife of God, and to see this one would only have to read a few passages from the OT:

Deuteronomy 31

16 And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. 17 Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?'"

What does v. 17 say will befall Israel for playing the harlot?

From what we have been learning, what do you think the evil and troubles that befall them will be?

Psalms 106

39 Thus they were defiled by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds. 40 Therefore the wrath of the LORD was kindled against His people, So that He abhorred His own inheritance. 41 And He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles, and those who hated them ruled over them.

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Jeremiah 3

6 The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 7 And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.

From these passages, why is Israel seen as the Great Harlot?

As far as Israel's relationship with God is concerned, what is the clearly stated result of her playing the harlot in v. 8?

The entire chapter of Jeremiah 3 depicts the very reason God divorces Israel, but also gives *hope* to her *if she would but repent!* And then on into chapter 4, the Lord God continues to call His adulterous wife back to Himself, calling for her to repent. Is it any wonder that the very message contained within the four gospels at the opening of what we have come to call the "New Testament" is a call for Israel's repentance? It was the message John the Baptist was sent to give to the nation; it was the message Jesus brought to the nation; the very message He sent out through His twelve disciples, telling them not to go to anyone, but the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

"Repent, for the Kingdom of the heavens is at hand!"

And wasn't this even the message that went out to all Israel during the re-offer of the Kingdom of the heavens throughout the Book of Acts? *If they would but repent, Jesus would come back and set up His Kingdom.* But lo, they did not. And so we have the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens having been taken away from Israel, which is now being offered to a *new nation*, a heavenly nation – the one new man in Christ.

And so, God has divorced Israel as a result of her harlotry. If you are interested, there are many other passages which would also identify Israel as the harlot – Isa. 1:21a; Jer. 3:1-14; Ezek. 16:2, 28-30 ; 23:17a, 18a, 35-37; Hosea 2:10.

And if you still have *any* doubt that Israel is the harlot you should just read the entire chapter of Ezekiel 16. Wow.

We'll pick it up here tomorrow.

Day Two — Israel's Fall Brings Blessings to Gentiles

As we have seen, Israel has had a long history of playing the harlot with the other nations of the world, something she was not to do as the Wife of God. As a result of her harlotry, God finally divorced her (Jer. 3:8), and *the Theocracy* which God had set up in Israel *ended*, and the Times of the Gentiles began. But divorce does not mean that God has forsaken Israel! No, He fully intends to remarry Israel and make her His wife again. (This is the very reason God the Father cannot redeem the inheritance for the waiting Bride who was identified at the JSOC. To do so, would mar His inheritance, as shown in the type played out in Ruth

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chapter 4 with the closer relative of Boaz not being able to take Ruth as His wife. And so, the Father will hand the 7-sealed scroll to the Only One worthy to take the scroll.) And yet... *the Father cannot remarry Israel until she repents from her harlotry, which is the entire reason for the Tribulation with respect to Israel.*

Make sure that you do not skim over the last sentence of the last paragraph. It is very important to understand.

God had created the Nation of Israel as a special and distinct nation – one that was not to be counted among the other nations of the world (Ex. 33:16). This nation was to be His special people, His most treasured possession. She was to be the Nation who would rule the world within a marriage relationship – a Theocracy with God as King, and Israel as the wife of God. But, as stated at the very outset, in order for this to work, Israel would have to obey God:

Exodus 19

5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; 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 which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

This statement was given by God to Israel through Moses very shortly after the nation had left Egypt. According to this passage, what were the people to do?

But this did not happen. Throughout the centuries, the Nation of Israel disobeyed God by forming unholy relationships with the other nations of the earth, and in this sense, God saw His wife as a harlot, and finally divorced her – but *just for a time...*

It is interesting that this 7-year Tribulation is called "The Time of Jacob's trouble"! Let's read again the verse in Jeremiah where that term is used:

Jeremiah 30

7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

Though this time period will be trouble for Israel, what will the outcome be?

Yesterday we learned that Israel is seen as the Great Harlot. But today we will see how God has used Israel's disobedience as a blessing for the Gentiles. Paul writes about this in Romans:

Romans 10

19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says [to the Nation of Israel]: "I will provoke you [Israel] to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation." 20 But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me." 21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."

How is Israel described in v. 21?

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Keeping in mind that this is a NT passage wherein Paul is quoting the Prophet Isaiah, of whom do you think is being referencing in v. 20?

We can also ascertain the answer to the previous question in Ephesians –

Ephesians 2

12 that at that time you [Gentiles] 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.

How are the Gentiles described?

Now back to Romans 10. What does the Lord say He wants to do to Israel in v. 19?

Why do you think God would want to do that?

Now let's look at further commentary about this in the next chapter of Romans. Paul is speaking to the Church at Rome about the Nation of Israel:

Romans 11

11 I say then, have they [Israel] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! 13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.

So, what happened as a result of the fall of Israel, and what would provoke them to jealousy (v. 11)?

Through his ministry to the Gentiles, what is Paul's end goal with regards to his brethren in the flesh – the Jews (v. 14)?

What will have the fall of Israel provided for the world/the Gentiles throughout this present dispensation?

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And then logically, what would Israel's repentance mean for the Gentiles?

So, Paul reasons: if Israel's fall has brought riches (salvation) to the Gentiles, then how much more would Israel's *fullness* (lit., *completion*) bring! Paul is not asking a question here, he is making a statement!

According to Romans 10:21 (printed above), Israel is a disobedient and contrary people; and then in Romans 11:11 we find that as a result of their disobedience, salvation has come to the Gentiles in order to provoke that same nation to jealousy. Paul's desire (which would reflect God's desire as Paul was *inspired* to write this) is that through such provocation some Jews might be saved. In the meantime, Israel's stumbling and fall is *riches for the world*; their failure *riches for the Gentiles* because salvation has come to the Gentiles *as a result of* Israel's rejection of their Messiah. (All of this has always been God's plan; for nothing takes God by surprise.)

But as Paul so aptly reasons...if their failure produces such blessing for the Gentiles, then their coming to completion (through repentance) would bring even more – so much more!

Paul continues:

Romans 11

25 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 [the Gentiles] 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.

And so – simply stated – God is using this time to bring in the Gentiles, fulfilling the OT prophecies concerning them. But once the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, what happens next (vv. 26-27)?

And the way that "all Israel will be saved" is to bring the Nation to repentance through the judgments of the Tribulation. Now look at v. 29. Keeping within the immediate context of vv. 25-28, what gifts and what calling of God are irrevocable?

This will be our subject for study tomorrow.

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Day Three – The Irrevocable Gifts and Calling

To begin our study today, please go back and reread Romans 11:25-29, which is at the end of yesterday's lesson. Paul tells the Church at Ephesus that he does not want them to be ignorant of this mystery: **that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.** Here he is referring to a period of time which will have covered a 2,000-year period – the 2,000 years of the present dispensation. In Ephesians, he calls it *the Dispensation of Grace*. Let's read the term within context.

Ephesians 3

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles-- 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages [Lit., generations] was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

In this passage, Paul states a facet of this mystery in v. 6. What does he say it is?

Now look back at the passage in Romans 11 again. What will happen *after* the fullness of Gentiles has come in?

Then Romans 11:26-27 summarizes it all. What does do these verses say?

Yes! God is NOT finished with Israel. Nor will He be. He *will yet* send the Deliverer from Zion. God *will yet* turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And how will He do that? By bringing about a judgment upon them that will be of such magnitude that it will cause them to *turn back to the God of their fathers in repentance*. And this will be wrought through the judgments of the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" – the 7-year Tribulation, which is the final 7 years of the *previous* dispensation, the dispensation of the Jews. (More on that next week.) Paul somewhat concludes his thought along these lines by exclaiming:

Romans 11

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

So, what about this time of tribulation that Israel is soon to experience? Will it ruin them forever? Will they be annihilated off the face of the earth, like certain nations even today desire to see happen? God was very specific about the answers to these questions in the books of all the OT Prophets. We'll only need to read a few to get the gist. Let's begin in Jeremiah:

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Jeremiah 30

7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

According to this passage, what would be the message of hope for Israel in the midst of The Time of Jacob's Trouble?

Further description of this period is given by Zechariah:

Zechariah 13

8 And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: 9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

Zechariah tells us that two-thirds of Israel will die during this period. But what is the message of hope for the Nation of Israel despite these odds?

What will happen to the one-third who survive?

What does God say of them once they repent?

What will be their response?

Israel's refining, brought about through these judgments, will result in their repentance at the completion of the 7 years of tribulation (Rev. 19:1-6). The fact that one-third of the Nation is brought *through* the Tribulation, means that the nation will not be totally destroyed despite the best efforts of Antichrist, the Gentile World Leaders, and all those anti-Semitic groups around the world who will have said in many ways, at many times something of this nature:

Psalm 83

4 They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."

Why will Gentile world powers not be successful in eradicating Israel? It is because the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. It is because God will be in the very midst of Israel during the time of their trouble. He will bring them *through* it.

Daniel 3

17 "If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king...

...25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

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Isaiah 43

1 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.

Paul's exclamation in Romans 11:33 is appropriate. It is out of God's great love for His people, Israel, that He will bring forth such horrific judgments of the Tribulation. He will *not* annihilate His people. He will *not allow* Gentile World Ruler to annihilate His people. He will walk with them through the fires of these very judgments *for the sole purpose of bringing them to repentance in order that they will be able to fulfill the very position for which they were created in the first place* – that to rule over the Gentile nations and for untold blessing to flow through them to the nations of the world. *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*

Day Four – Israel's Furnace of Affliction

In the final two days of this week's study we will glimpse some of the OT prophecies of Israel finding themselves 'in the furnace of affliction.' We'll also see that due to the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, when they walk through these 'fires' – for God's own sake – He will bring them through. Perhaps, nowhere is this more poignantly foreshadowed than in Daniel chapter three with the 3 Hebrew men, who refused to bow the knee to the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, finding themselves in a fiery furnace.

As you read this passage, keep in mind that Nebuchadnezzar is a prophetic picture of the Antichrist, and the 3 Hebrew men in the furnace are a prophetic picture of the Nation of Israel going through the "fires" of the Tribulation.

Daniel 3

15 ...But if you do not worship [the golden image], you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?" 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. 18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." 19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated....

... 24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." 25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Given what we are learning, what would you say the fiery furnace being heated to 7 times the norm would represent to Israel yet future?

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And given what we read at the end of yesterday's homework (Isaiah 43:1-2), what do you think it means that a fourth person was seen in the midst of the fiery furnace? Who was this individual?

So, why is it that Israel can never be destroyed? God promises them that He will be with them when they 'walk through the fire' and they will not be burned, not even scorched (Dan. 3:27)! When the three Hebrew men were released from that fiery furnace, not only were their garments not touched, but the smell of smoke was not even on them! Such a powerful image of the future state of the Nation of Israel when she comes through the fires of affliction in the Tribulation, and then assumes her role at the head of the nations on the earth – all because *God was in their midst* during the heat of their affliction.

There are a few things that should be understood about this 7-year Tribulation, which is also known as Daniel's 70th Week. The fulfillment of this 7-year period brings to completion the *previous* dispensation, which had been stopped prior to its full end, and the 2,000-year dispensation of the Church ushered in. Once the Church is resurrected/raptured and judged, then things can begin to happen on the earth that will allow the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. So, let's look and see just *how* this 7-year period *is* the *final* 7 years of the *previous dispensation* – the Dispensation of the Jews. It is quite amazing, really!

In these final two days of this week's study, as well as our study next week, we'll touch on portions of Daniel's prophecy in order to see how God laid it out. As you read, please strive to do so with understanding. Here in Daniel chapter nine, Daniel was praying to the Lord his God for a *specific* reason. See if you can discern his reason, as well as understand what he is praying for:

Daniel 9

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans- 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. (See Jer. 25:12)

3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. 6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day-to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. 8 O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. 10 We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. 12 And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though

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we have not obeyed His voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly! 16 O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.

17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

In vv. 1-2, what has Daniel discovered through reading the Book of Jeremiah?

Let's read what Daniel would have understood from the writings of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 25

11 'And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation...' (Refer back to Dan. 9:1-2)

Jeremiah 29

10 For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

After reading these passages in Jeremiah, what did Daniel discern to be the timing of Israel's exile in Babylon?

So then in Daniel 9:3-4, what did Daniel do?

What is the essence of his prayer (vv. 4-16)?

And after confessing his own sins, as well as the sins of his people (Israel), what does Daniel ask God to do (vv. 17-19)?

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We'll stop here today and pick it up tomorrow.

Day Five – The Timing of Israel's Affliction

You may want to review yesterday's study, as today is a continuation from there. Do a quick review now.

There is good reason for Daniel to make his confessions throughout this prayer and to be so specific in asking God to act (as he did in vv.17-19). From the words/phrases Daniel used in this whole passage (which we read yesterday), it is obvious that he knew the Scriptures well, as many of the phrases he used are almost verbatim from several places in OT Scriptures, which had been written prior to Daniel writing this. Daniel knew why God had brought about this time of desolation in Israel. He knew that the 70 years were complete. We'll remember that the Babylonian kingdom had been overthrown, which was one of the indicators that the 70 years were complete. And obviously, he was also familiar with this passage:

II Chronicles 7

13 “When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land...”

Do you think v. 13 is talking about a literal lack of rain, with locusts devouring the land, and pestilence being sent among God's people? Why, or why not?

Look at the first phrase in v. 14. Write out what it says:

Contextually, what people would that be referring to?

Now underline what the very last phrase is in Daniel 9:19. How do the two connect?

From yesterday's study, reread what Jeremiah says the Lord will do after 70 years, and explain why Daniel asks God to do this now?

In essence, what do you think Daniel is thinking?

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Based upon what Daniel had discerned from the writings of Jeremiah, he was expecting the kingdom to be restored to Israel, and Israel to be made head of all the nations, as was promised to the Nation.

(Nebuchadnezzar had been allowed by God to sweep into the Southern Kingdom – Judah – in 3 different waves finally accomplishing a total disruption of the kingdom. This type of judgment had been previously promised by God as a consequence for Israel's continued disobedience. Israel's rulership over all the Gentile nations was only promised to Israel *if they were obedient to God*. But as we have seen, Israel had been continuously *disobedient*, so God allowed this Babylonian king to infiltrate the land and carry off the princes of the land into exile – Daniel being one of those princes.)

After reading the prophecy which Jeremiah had been given by God, Daniel knew that this exile was only to last for 70 years after which that kingdom would be punished (hence the overthrow of the Babylonian kingdom by the Medes and the Persians). And the 70 years now ended. So, understandably, he was expecting God to restore the kingdom to Israel. But God had more to explain to His servant, the Prophet Daniel (*cf.* Amos 3:7). Let's keep reading in Daniel 9 and see what happens next.

Daniel 9

20 Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

24 Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

25 Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

According to vv. 22-23 why did the Angel come to Daniel?

In the first half of chapter 9, Daniel had discerned that 70 years had been decreed for the exile brought about by Nebuchadnezzar. This time had now ended. But here God is showing Daniel *another* period of 70. Here, God is speaking of 70 "*weeks*", not 70 *years*. The word "*weeks*" is referring to seventy 7-year periods. The word '*week*' simply means *seven*. God is showing Daniel that instead of dealing with 70 *years*, He will in the future be dealing with *seventy 7-year periods*, or 490 *years*. And according to this prophecy, 490 years is the amount of time determined for certain things to be fully accomplished for Daniel's people and his holy city. Gabriel reveals to him that which we have come to call "Daniel's 70 Weeks", which will be a period of 70 x 7 years, and which will bring about a final and complete deliverance for his people and their city – not temporary as it would turn out to be after the 70 years of the Babylonian Captivity. So...

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Who are Daniel's people?

And to what city is this passage referring?

From v. 24 list the 6 things that are determined to be accomplished within Seventy 7-year periods, or 490 years:

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1) | 4) |
| 2) | 5) |
| 3) | 6) |

Who do you think the 'Most Holy' is?

Who is the "prince who is to come" (v. 26)?

Go back over this list and see if there is anything that has been fully brought to pass yet. Has there been?

Why do you think that not even one of these 6 things has yet been fully accomplished?

Well...that's it for this week. Whew! We are learning a lot about the Book of Revelation from OT writings, aren't we? And isn't that the way it should be? One would *never* begin to study end-time prophecies by jumping ahead to the Book of Revelation! One would have to begin in the Old Testament, as it is *all* first laid out there, and only unfolded in the Revelation.

Next week we will look at more details concerning the Tribulation. See you then.

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Lesson Twenty-one — Daniel’s 70th Week

Day One — The Breakdown of the Seventy Weeks

Day Two — Seven Years Remaining

Day Three — When, and What will be the Sign...

Day Four — The Timing of the Tribulation

Day Five — The End of the Present Age

Last week we spent some time looking at the centuries-long disobedience of Israel as a nation. As the Wife of God, they had become a harlot, and God gave Israel a writ of divorce (Jer. 3:8). But, again, only for a time... God loves Israel with an everlasting love and will yet re-establish the Nation as His Wife. But first, Israel must repent, which is why – for centuries – the message to them, by the prophets, John the Baptist, Christ, the Disciples and then the fledgling church, has been one of *repentance*.

Last week we also saw that during the Tribulation Israel will be seen as “the *Great Harlot*”. Her harlotry will have reached a climax when the Nation makes a peace treaty with the one who we know will be the Antichrist. And the signing of this peace treaty will be the beginning of the judgments which will ultimately bring Israel to repentance! This is the last “week” in Daniel’s 70-week prophecy, which we have begun looking at. Let’s deal with this final 7-year period.

Day One — The Breakdown of the Seventy Weeks

We have seen that there are *six things* that are to be accomplished by the full end of Daniel’s 70-week prophecy, none of which have yet been fulfilled. (Note the very end of last week’s lesson.) The reason none of these events has come to fruition is because the *final 7* years of the previous dispensation have not yet played out! And God, in His omniscience, knows exactly what will take place within specific time periods within the 70 weeks – the 490 years. Let’s now take a minute to reread vv. 24-27.

Daniel 9

24 “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

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Daniel's 70th Week

Lesson Twenty-one

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

Can you see 3 divisions within the seventy weeks? Underline them and then write out what you see.

The 70 ‘weeks’ (seventy 7-year periods) are separated into three unequal parts: seven, sixty-two, and one (with that final one being the goal or consummation of the previous 69 ‘weeks’ or 483 years). Here is the breakdown:

- Seven ‘weeks’ (Seven 7s = 49 years)
- Sixty-two ‘weeks’ (Sixty-two 7s = 434 years)
- One ‘week’ (One 7 = 7 years)

Making a total of seventy 7s = 490 years.

Then, Gabriel reveals to Daniel the *exact* timing of when this prophecy would begin to unfold. Look at v. 25. What is the event that begins the countdown?

It can be noted that there was quite a break in time from when Daniel was first given this prophecy to when this prophecy was to be set in motion through the issuing of *the decree to restore and build Jerusalem* (v.25). There were various other decrees which had been given during the interim period that pertained to some facet of the restoration of Jerusalem, but not specific to the rebuilding of the wall. For example, at the end of the 70-year period prophesied by Jeremiah, the Persian king Cyrus was responsible for the decree of sending a group of Jews under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest to Jerusalem in order to begin the work of rebuilding the temple. This is seen in

Ezra 5

13 “However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God...”

But it was not until the days of Nehemiah, cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, that the decree was issued to resume *the restoration of the city, Jerusalem, which would of course include the rebuilding of the city's wall.*

Nehemiah 2

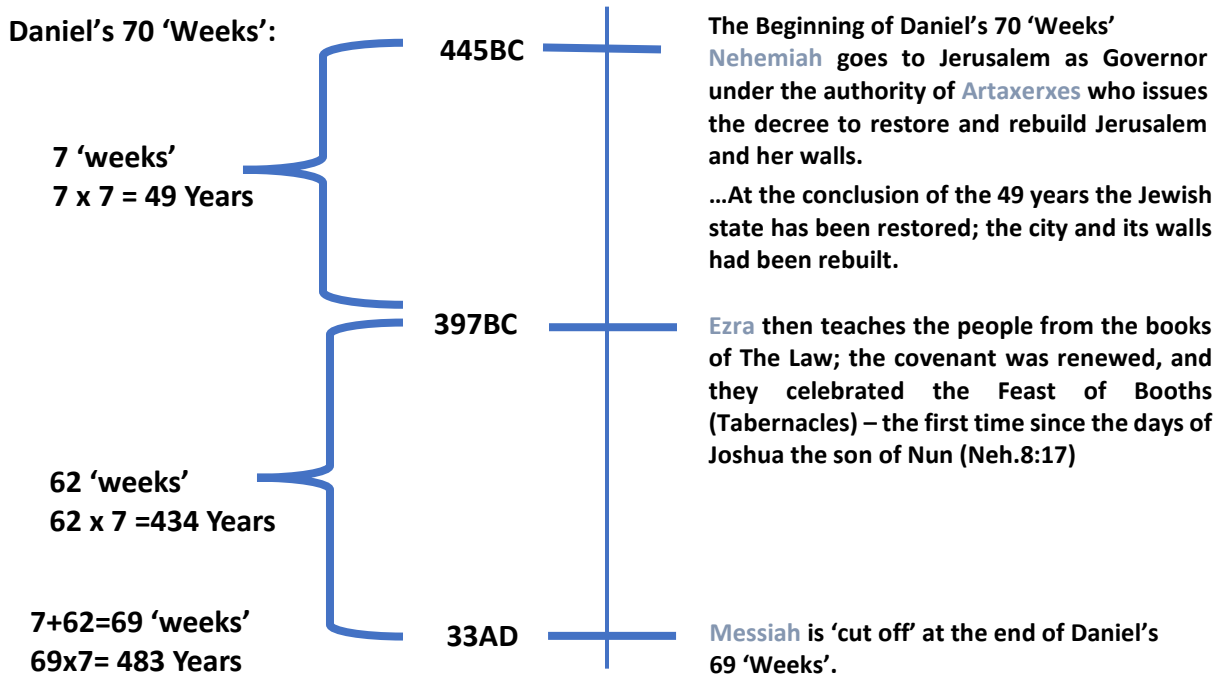
1 And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before... . . .5 And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.” 6 Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), “How long will your journey be? And when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

According to historians this date was approximately 445 or 444BC and would have been over 90 years after Daniel was given the prophecy.

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As we end today’s study, the following chart may help us. While studying this chart, please note that Scripture uses 360-day years and not 365 as we currently do. Therefore, all dates given are approximate secular historical dates not Scriptural:



Daniel’s 70th ‘week’ – the final 7 years, remains to be fulfilled – it is ‘The Time of Jacob’s Trouble’

Day Two — Seven Years Remaining

Today we will take a minute to review the dispensational timeline, which we studied in Lesson Eleven. We will do this in order to see how Daniel’s 70th week fits. (For a complete review, you may want to revisit Lesson Eleven, Day Two.)

First, let’s review what a dispensation is. Remember, Dispensations do not have to do with a period of time, per se. Rather, dispensations fit into time periods, as we shall soon see. The word *dispensation* is translated from the Greek word *oikonomia*, which is made up of two words – *house* and *management*. Therefore, the word has to do with the *management of a house*, which is to say from a Scriptural standpoint, God has placed managers (or stewards) in charge of His household.

There are a couple of things that need to be remembered about dispensations:

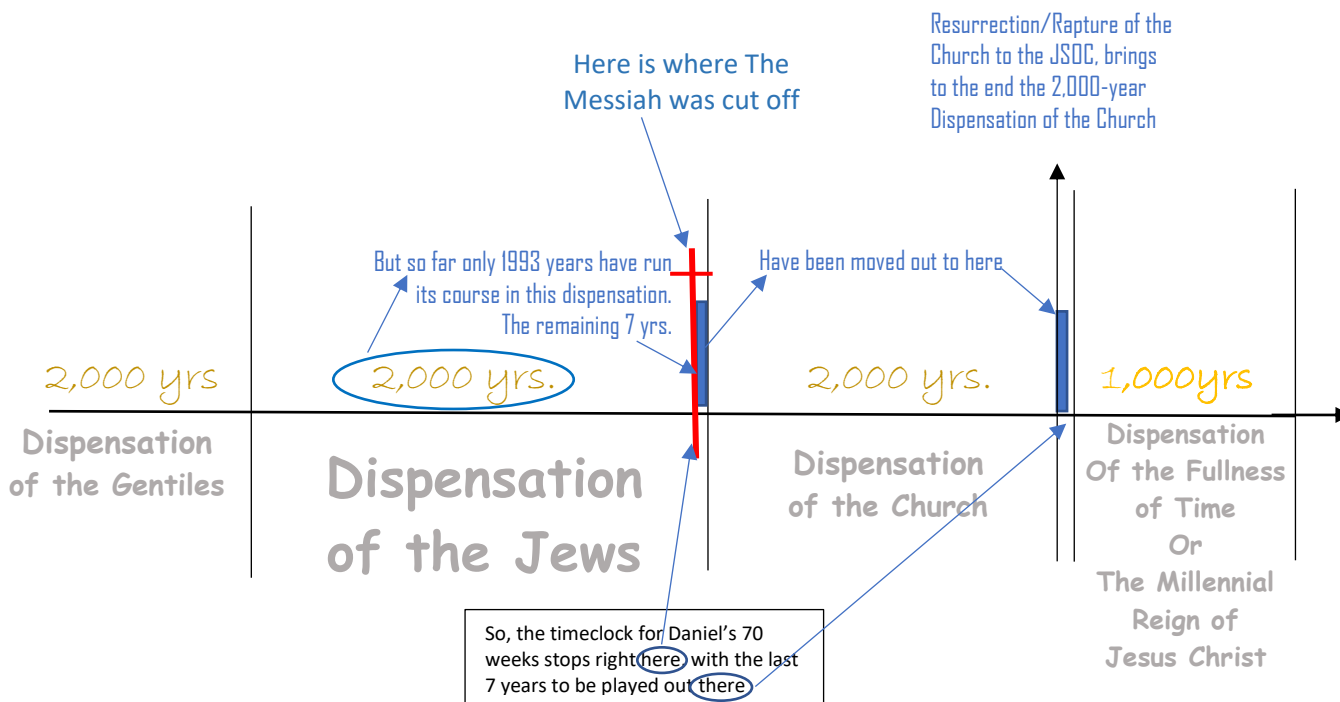
- First, that the concept of *dispensation* has its basis in Scripture (and not just in the history of man’s ideology, as some would teach), and

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- Second, a dispensation in and of itself does not denote any specific length of time, although a dispensation or several dispensations can fit into an age.

Now might be a good time to recall the timeline we looked at in Lesson 11. It has been placed here for our review. Let’s look at the portion that has to do with the Jews here.



While there is a 2,000-year period allotted for each of the dispensations of man, including the Jewish one, as we have seen there is a 7-year period that remains unfulfilled, which is now easily ascertained from Daniel’s 70-week breakdown. Though we looked at this initially in Lesson Eleven, we just need to recall these things for this week’s lesson. Review is always good, right?

So, the thing we need to remember here, is that the Jewish dispensation has not yet come to a full end. There are 7 years yet to play out. And the chronometer paused at a particular point in the Jewish dispensation – at the *cutting off of the Messiah* (i.e., His crucifixion), plus an additional 53 days leading up to the Day of Pentecost. The last 7 years were then pushed out 2,000 years into the future from this point with a new dispensation being ushered in. This is the present dispensation – the Dispensation of the Church, which must run its full course before the last 7 years of the previous dispensation can resume and come to a close.

God is not finished with Israel! Remember, His gifts and calling are irrevocable. And though the Nation has been set aside for a time, God will yet again resume His dealings with this household servant. And though many Bible teachers throughout Christendom today teach that *the Church replaces Israel*, nothing could be further from the truth! One would only have to go to one place in the Scriptures for a clear statement attesting to that fact (though there are many other places one could go to):

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Romans 11

25 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.

In your own words explain what the mystery is in v. 25.

I have left a space between v. 25 and v. 26 here. In that space you could insert the phrase *The Dispensation of the Church*. Then once this present dispensation comes to a close with the Resurrection/Rapture of the Church, God begins to deal with Israel again. Verse 26 reveals what will take place at the very end of the final 70th week of Daniel – *all Israel will be saved*.

Tomorrow we will look at further detail concerning this last 'week' of Daniel's 70 Weeks. See you then.

Day Three — When, and What will be the Sign...

On Day One this week we saw the breakdown of Daniel's 70-week prophecy, which is "The Time of Jacob's Trouble" also known as the 7-year Tribulation. In Daniel's prophecy there are 7 weeks plus 62 weeks at the end of which the Messiah was cut off (i.e., Jesus was crucified). Let's pick it up there today and look more closely at the division in time between the 69 weeks and the 70th week.

Daniel 9

26 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

Do you see the semi-colon after the first phrase in v. 26? Will you make two bold slashes with a small space between right at the semi-colon separating the two phrases? This space represents the insertion of the 2,000-year Dispensation of the Church. (You may want to insert that phrase here just like we did yesterday in the Romans 11 passage. Both passages are dealing with the same thing.)

Fifty-three days after Messiah was cut off, on the Day of Pentecost the Church was instituted. This quite literally stopped the time-clock for the Jewish Dispensation, as well as stopping the time-clock for the 490 years of Daniel's prophecy. As we have seen there are still seven years to play out, which will bring both to its full end.

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The phrase that begins to explain the 70th week of Daniel is “And the people of the prince who is to come...’ The “prince who is to come” is the Antichrist, prophesied in the books of the prophets, referred to by Jesus, and mentioned by Paul and John. Then the phrase “**the people** of the prince” refers to the people who, at that time, tout him as the world leader – the people who will follow this Gentile world leader, with the emphasis of the statement being on “the prince”.

Before we summarize the details seen in these couple of verses in Daniel, let's look at how Jesus answers a question of His disciples concerning this time-period. This dialogue took place in the week leading up to His crucifixion. But before we get to the question and answer, let's first see what led to the disciples asking a specific question concerning the timing of the end.

In Matthew chapter twenty-three, Jesus laid out eight woes to the scribes and Pharisees (two of the three main sects of the religious leaders of the day) warning them of their hypocritical stances in the way they led the people. Jesus concluded this list of dreadful woes by saying:

Matthew 23

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"

Summarize what Jesus said in vv. 38 and 39.

The quote in v. 39 is taken from Psalm 118: **'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'** Psalm 118 is a Psalm dealing with the Tribulation – at a time when *all* nations will come against Israel. But the Psalmist recognizes that as horrific as that time will be, God will not allow Israel to die. He will yet raise them up. And when God does raise Israel up at the end, Jesus will return to the earth, and Israel will finally recognize their Messiah. And with this recognition, they will cry “**Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!**”

Because the disciples understood this, they seized an opportunity to ask a three-part question. Let's look at it:

Matthew 24

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Specifically, what three questions did the disciples ask?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

As we move forward in this passage, it is important to remember here that He is speaking to *Jewish* disciples concerning the Time of Jacob's Trouble. Since that is the case, of whom will this answer be dealing – the Church or Israel?

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Matthew 24

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Go back to the disciples’ three-part question. About what time period did the disciples ask?

Verses 4-14 encapsulates the whole of the Tribulation. List what happens in vv. 4-6.

What is the last phrase in v. 6?

Now list what will happen in vv. 7.

Verse 8 marks the mid-point of the Tribulation, transitioning from the first half to the second half. The phrase “the beginning of sorrows” describes the beginning literally means *birth pangs*. This would describe the anguish beginning to take place at the onset of the Great Tribulation.

Now list what happens in vv. 9-14.

What is the last phrase in v. 14?

This phrase would reflect back on the phrase “the beginning of sorrows” when the Nation of Israel will be born in a day (Isa. 66:8-10).

Overall, vv. 4-14 describe (with very broad strokes) the whole of the Tribulation, which then brings the world to the end of the Present Age (v.14), and very shortly thereafter ushers in the Coming Age, the *Dispensation of the fullness of time* (Eph. 1:10 [i.e., the Kingdom Age]). Then in v. 15 forward, Jesus drops back to the

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midpoint of that which He had just brought to an end. Let's read it, remembering that He is answering specific questions that His disciples had asked concerning His Coming and the end of the Age.

Continuing in Matthew 24

15 Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Verses 15-20 explain an event that will take place *right at the midpoint* of the Tribulation. What is the event, and list the things that Jesus says the Jewish people should do at this point.

Then vv. 21-24 give some of the details of the last half of the Tribulation:

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Again, remember that Jesus is answering His disciples' questions concerning *the sign of His Coming* and *the end of the age*, we can know that He is dealing here with the Jews at the end of the Tribulation and NOT the Church. The Church is in the heavens at this point in time, having already been judged, with the Bride awaiting these events to be completed. So, this discourse is fully about the Jews and the Tribulation. He ends this particular discourse by warning the Jews not to believe in the false christs who will be coming...

23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 "See, I have told you beforehand.

Jesus continues in vv. 26-35 to describe the sign of His coming (see v.30) and the end of the age. Then in vv.36-44 Jesus answers the disciples first question concerning "when will these things be?" wherein He states that 'no one knows the day or hour except the Father' which He then follows up with a warning in vv.42-44 to watch and be ready! As we close for today why not go back and read all of Matthew 24: 1-44.

Day Four — The Timing of the Tribulation

Yesterday we got a bird's eye glimpse of the scope of the Tribulation. Today we will fill in more details of this period with a further study from the Book of Daniel. Let's go back to the portion in Daniel 9 that depicts this last 7 years:

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Daniel 9

26 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; / / And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

So, who is this ‘prince who is to come’? There are several names given to him in Scripture, but probably the most familiar would be – the Antichrist. In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 he is referred to as ‘the man of sin’, ‘the son of perdition’ and ‘the lawless one’. In Daniel chapter 7 and Revelation 12:1-3 he is referred to as ‘the Beast’. In Isaiah 10:24 and Micah 5:5-6 he is called ‘the Assyrian’. He will be a Gentile of Assyrian descent, depicted as the one riding on the white horse at the beginning of Revelation chapter six. In fact, *he is the man who is depicted as riding on the other three horses*, in the chapter as well. With the Lamb (Jesus) having been found worthy to open the scroll, we can now witness the opening of each of the seals on the scroll (which we’ll remember is the deed to the earth):

Revelation 6

1 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Write out the description of the man sitting on the white horse.

The paragraph just above this passage identifies who the rider of the white horse is. Who is it?

Let’s keep reading the next several verses, answering a few questions, then we will summarize.

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” 4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Write out what happens as a result of the rider on the red horse.

Who is this rider?

5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”

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Write out what happens as a result of the rider on the black horse.

Who is this rider?

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

Write out what happens as a result of the rider on the pale horse.

Who is this rider?

So, what is all of this about? If you'll remember, God often structures sections of His Word by laying out a sequence of events covering a complete and specific time period, then drops back into that time period to fill in detail. And often He will drop back repeatedly, filling in more and more details. This is exactly how God lays out Revelation chapters 6-18. First, in these eight verses of chapter 6 (which we just read), *God lays out the whole of the 7-year Tribulation*. And then, the chapters that follow, all the way through to the end of chapter 18, He constantly drops back and fills in a tremendous amount of detail, running some events consecutively, some concurrently, and some running both consecutively then overlapping.

And so, what is it that sets the whole of the Tribulation in motion? It is Christ as the Lamb – the One found worthy to redeem the earth – in the Heavens opening the 1st seal, which allows the rider on the white horse to go forth on the earth. This rider is seen possessing a bow (with no mention of arrows) and being given a crown – showing him to be a ruler – and he goes forth for the purpose of conquering and to conquer. The white horse indicate that he is to be *perceived* as a so-called *man of peace*, whereas his true motive of conquering and world domination will not be evident until the 2nd seal is opened.

And so, the rider on the white horse and his actions depict the first half of the Tribulation – the first 3½ years. There is *relative* peace on the earth during this period; but finally, the true intentions of its rider come to the surface with the opening of the 2nd seal, which begins the second half of the Tribulation. At this midpoint, many events transpire upon the earth in rapid succession. A fiery red horse appears with a rider, the same rider as was on the white horse. The red horse indicates that peace will be taken from the earth as people kill one another. The last half of the Tribulation is referred to as *The Great Tribulation*. Things upon the earth deteriorate so rapidly and so drastically that there has *never, ever* been a time in the entire history of mankind like this period, nor will there be again.

This is when things begin to happen with events running concurrently *and* consecutively. As the rider on the white horse continues to go forth conquering and to conquer, he now is given a great sword, and is seen on a fiery red horse. Then seals 3 and 4 are opened, with the rider on a black horse followed by a pale horse, respectively. The colors of the horses depict the horrific continuing deterioration of the state of affairs on the earth once 'the man of sin' is revealed (II Thess. 2:3-4).

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Now let's return to Daniel 9:27 which gives added commentary to the part in verse 26 wherein we drew two bold slashes at the semi-colon, and gives further details on the final 'week'. Verse 27 shows that the beginning of the 7 years will be marked by a covenant – a peace treaty – which the Antichrist will make with *the many* in Israel. (Remember the first rider is on a **white** horse.) Let's re-read it:

Daniel 9

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

How does the final week begin?

What happens in the middle of the final week?

Who is the 'he' and what does 'he' do?

How do the events described in Dan. 9:27 compare with what Jesus said in the answer to His disciples' questions in Mt. 24:15? (We read Matt. 24:15 yesterday.)

(The Book of Daniel further references the 'abomination of desolation' and the removal of the daily sacrifices in Dan.11:31 and 12:11.)

In answering His disciples' questions, what does Jesus tell Jews in Jerusalem to do in that future day when they see this abomination take place (see Mt. 24:16-20)?

What do you think it means that they are to "flee to the mountains"?

Remember a mountain in Scripture usually refers to a kingdom or nation. So, if the Jews in Jerusalem are to *flee to the mountains*, "let the reader understand" that they are to flee into *the Gentile nations*. While it is true that the Great Tribulation (i.e., the last half of the 70th week) will be bad over all the earth, it will not compare to how bad it will be in the geographical location for the Nation of Israel in the Middle East during this time.

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It is at the middle of the 'week' that the second seal is opened, and the fiery red horse appears. The actions of the rider on this horse will continue to run throughout the remainder of the Tribulation, running concurrently with the consecutive openings of the 3rd and 4th seals. The black and pale horses indicate further intensification of tribulation upon the earth, as the Antichrist continues to go forth conquering and to conquer, with the end goal of absolutely erasing the Nation of Israel off the face of the earth.

Palms 83

4 They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."

But *does* that happen? *Can* the Nation of Israel be eradicated? Why or why not?

Tomorrow we will see how God then fills in the details of these last 3 ½ years.

Day Five — The End of the Present Age

So, as we have seen, the final 'week' of Daniel's 70 'weeks' prophecy begins in the heavens when Christ opens the 1st seal on the 7-sealed scroll, which allows the rider on the white horse – who is the Antichrist – to appear on the scene upon the earth. This is the same event described in Daniel 9:26 as 'the prince who is to come' making 'a covenant with many' in Israel for one 'week'; and will begin the events that Jesus described in His answer to His disciples' questions about the end of the age and the sign of His Coming in Mt. 24:4ff. The rider on the white horse will bring *relative* peace to the earth for a time. As a result during this time of 'peace' Israel will re-build the Temple in Jerusalem and resume the daily sacrifices and offerings, something not seen for almost 2000 years. The rider on the white horse will be perceived as a so-called 'man of peace' but his true motives are not revealed until the opening of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th seals in the heavens, revealing his ever-intensifying actions upon the earth as depicted with his going forth on the red, black and pale horses – events which will begin at the midpoint and run consecutively and then concurrently through to the end of the 7 years.

It is in the middle of the 'week' (the 2nd seal opened and the rider going forth on the red horse) when things will change dramatically for Israel as her city and sanctuary (her newly built temple) are destroyed following Antichrist setting himself up in the temple, declaring himself to be God. This is what Jesus referred to as *the abomination of desolation* (Matt. 24:15ff). It is at this point that the *Great Tribulation* begins, the last 3 ½ years. And, as shown by the events surrounding the opening of the 3rd and 4th seals, *unless those days are shortened no flesh would be saved but for the elect's sake* (the nation of Israel) *those days will be shortened* (Matt. 24:22)!

Yesterday we looked at the first 8 verses in Revelation chapter six, and we saw the opening of the 1st through 4th seals. But what about the 5th, 6th and 7th seals? Where and when do they come into play?

Well, the 5th and 6th seals are opened in heaven, as seen in the remaining passages in Revelation chapter six, with added commentary about the last half of the Tribulation revealed in Revelation chapter seven. Then the 7th seal is opened in Revelation chapter eight.

When reading chapters 6b-18 in the Book of the Revelation, it must be remembered that these interim passages are not to be understood in a linear fashion. That is, the events described in these chapters which transpire during the last half of the tribulation are *not* written in a chronological format. Rather, the author takes a series of events, running these events through to the end, then drops back into another place in the

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last half and runs another series of events through to the end. Over and over this is done, all the while filling in detail after detail so that the reader understands!

For example, when reading about the sounding of the 7 trumpets and the pouring out of the 7 bowls these are further commentary on the horrific events previously revealed through the opening of the final 6 seals; but in all three instances the 7th of the 7 (seals (Rev. 8:1), trumpets (Rev.11:15), and bowls (Rev. 16:17) are shown to have reached a terminal point. And of course, this cannot be understood without seeing the type/antitype structure of the historical events in the Old Testament. So many of the historical events are set as types, pointing to antitypes that are fulfilled in this time period.

So, the chapters which continue on from chapter 6 in the Book of Revelation through to the end of chapter 18 simply depict ongoing and overlapping events, showing the ever-intensifying conditions upon the earth and are God's commentary on the events previously revealed.

Let's look specifically at chapters 17-20a. These chapters give a summary of the last half of the Tribulation as well as touching on events which immediately follow the Tribulation and can actually be divided into 4 sections. (You may want to read the texts in your Bible after you have gone through the descriptions of each section.)

The Four Sections of Revelation 17:1 - 20:6

1) Revelation 17:1-19:6 This section deals with the final judgment of the Great Harlot (who we know to be Israel) as God uses the Gentile world powers to persecute her to such an extent that she will have nowhere to turn but to the God of her fathers. These judgments bring about *the complete destruction of the Great Harlot* – not the destruction of Israel (as that cannot be) but *the destruction of Israel's harlotry*. In the first six verses of chapter 19, the Great Harlot is seen burning, and *the smoke of her burning rises forever and ever*.

Revelation 19

2 "For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." 3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever.

Though Israel will have passed through the fires of judgment, *she* will not be consumed, only her sin will have been done away with. The judgment of Israel and her repentance is so complete that the statement of *her smoke rising forever and ever* reveals that *she will never, ever again play the harlot*. The smoke rising forever is an allusion to the burnt offering and/or incense offering given for sin – it will be like the sweet-smelling aroma of the 'qatar' which is brought about through Israel's repentance (*cf. Ex. 29:18.*) At this point, Israel will have repented, which allows for the events of the next section of Scripture to take place.

2) Revelation 19:7-10 Here, for the first time since chapters 2 and 3, the Bride comes back into view. Because the Great Harlot - Israel - has been 'judged' through the furnace of affliction of the Great Tribulation, preparations for the marriage feast in heaven can begin. The Bride of Christ, who had previously made herself ready through her righteous acts can soon become His Wife:

Revelation 19

7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife [bride] has made herself ready." 8 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.

There will be one more thing that must be done in order for the redemption of the inheritance to be complete.

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(Remember, it is the *complete* redemption of the inheritance that finally allows for the Bride of Christ to become His Wife, as seen in the type set forth in the Book of Ruth.)

Ruth 3

11 "And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman...Ru 3:18 Then she [Naomi] said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."... Ru 4:9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. 10 "Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day.")

And so, once we glimpse the Bride in the state of readiness in the heavens, we then can see Christ returning to the earth, along with His angels, in order to take care of business with not only with the Gentile World Rulers, but also with Satan and his angels. We read about these events in the following section.

3) Revelation 19:11-21 The heavens open up and Christ returns to the earth with His angels (v. 14). He brings judgment upon the Gentile world powers for their harsher-than-necessary treatment of Israel, and wrests Satan's crown from him, along with the other crowns worn by the fallen angels. This is the great battle, often referred to as the Battle of Armageddon. And this battle is what brings a total and complete end to 2600 years of Gentile domination, as well as the end of angelic rule over the earth (*cf.* Heb. 2:5).

Revelation 19

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Finally, Israel will find herself in the position for which she had been created in the first place – that to be the head of all the nations, and not the tail, and Christ and His Wife will take their rightful place on the Throne in the Heavens in Satan's stead.

4) Revelation 20:1-6 All of that toward which Scriptures has moved since Genesis chapter one will have been brought to fruition. Satan will have been bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years, and all who have been found faithful in their calling to Christ will be assigned positions in His rule over the earth.

Revelation 20

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.

My, oh my! It ends just as it has been prophesied through Moses (at the beginning), the Prophets and the Psalms. *All* the types laid out in the OT will have been fulfilled. The scepter will have changed hands, and

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not only will the Bride of Christ now be His Wife, but also Israel will have been reestablished as the Wife of God the Father.

And we will leave it at that, with only one more week of study bringing this survey of the Bible to its end. It has been a journey, hasn't it? One more week...and then the rest of our lives for ongoing study!

See you next week – our final week of lessons. You're doing a great job!

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Lesson Twenty-two – The Millennial Reign of Christ and Beyond

- Day One – The Christ's Return to the Earth
- Day Two – The Interim: The 30 Day Plus 45 Days
- Day Three – The Final Battle
- Day Four – The Age of the Ages
- Day Five – The Eternal Ages

In the past few weeks of our study we have glimpsed the layout of the final 7 years of the Dispensation of the Jews, which brings Man's Day (6,000 years) to a close. We have seen that the Book of Revelation is the culmination of ALL previous Scriptures. In this final week of study, we will see that the whole of Scripture ends exactly where God said it would in the beginning with Man ruling over the earth. Subsequent Scriptures reveal that Man will rule in the heavens in Satan's stead over and upon the earth, with Christ as the Second Man, the Last Adam along with His Wife – ruling together from a Throne in the heavens, with Israel at the head of the nations on the earth. Together, this fully and completely fulfills God's plan for Mankind, which is stated initially in the first chapter of Scripture:

Genesis 1

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

In this week of study, we will look at events from the return of Christ to the earth all the way through to the Eternal Ages. This is our final week. We have come so far!

So, let's do this!

Day One – Christ's Return to the Earth

Let's look at a brief summary of events at the very end of and beyond the 7-year Tribulation as laid out in Revelation 17:1-20:6:

- At the end of the Tribulation, we see that the Great Harlot (Israel) will have been brought to repentance (Rev. 17:1-19:6).
- Then *because of Israel's repentance*, the Bride of Christ comes back into view as she participates in the wedding festivities in the heavens, having already prepared herself through her righteous acts (Rev. 19:7-10). But before the Bride can become Christ's Wife, He must return to the earth in order to redeem her inheritance. And so,
- In Revelation 19:11-21 we see Christ's return to the earth on a white horse along with His heavenly army – His angels – for the purposes of doing battle with Satan and his angels, bringing judgment upon the Gentile world powers, and wresting the rulership of the earth from Satan, et al. This battle is referred to as the Battle of Armageddon.

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- Then, going into Revelation 20:1-6, we see the *result* of the Battle – the utter defeat of Satan’s rule over the earth, his being bound in the bottomless pit for the duration of the Coming 1,000 years, and the utter annihilation of Gentile world power. (Hallelujah!)

From Christ’s return on a white horse with His heavenly army (vv.11-16) until He does battle with the Antichrist and his armies in the Battle of Armageddon (vv.17-21), several things will have to transpire on earth between these two points in time. However, that which must occur is not detailed here in the Book of Revelation – we would have to go elsewhere in Scripture to get these details. We know from previous weeks of study that before the battle can take place repentant Israel must come to salvation, resulting in the nation being “born in a day” (Isa. 66:8-12). All OT saints as well as Tribulation saints will be resurrected. Then along with those Jews who are alive at the end of the Tribulation but still scattered throughout the Gentile nations, all will be regathered together for the purpose of judgment. This is the *judgment of the Jews*.

Once those found faithful are identified, they will then, along with Christ, enter the Promised Land. Then, once they are back in the Land, the Battle of Armageddon will finally take place.

Revelation 19

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Who is the beast?

Against whom will the beast and the kings of the earth make war?

What will be the outcome of this battle?

Comparing v. 21a with Hebrews 4:12 and Revelation 2:16, what is ‘the sword which proceeded from the mouth’ also an allusion to?

Ezekiel 20

33 "As I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. 34 I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. 36 Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says the Lord GOD. 37 "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38 I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

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Where will Israel be scattered when Christ returns?

Once the Lord regathers Israel, where will the nation be taken for judgement (v.35)?

How do verses 36 and 37 reflect back to Israel at Mt. Sinai?

What is the outcome for rebellious individuals within Israel?

While there are many, many places we could go to in order to have the complete word picture in minute detail, time does not allow for that here, so we will just hit a few highlights.

In our last lesson we looked in some detail at Daniel's 70 'Weeks' prophecy which was given to him to show events relating to the Jewish people and Jerusalem, culminating in the 70th 'Week' which we discovered is the 7 Year Tribulation – the Time of Jacob's Trouble. The Book of Daniel is a companion book to The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ and reveals a wealth of details concerning the end of the age and the final destruction of Gentile World Power and its leader, the Antichrist (a. k. a. 'The Beast').

Once Daniel's final 70th week (the 7-year Tribulation) concludes, bringing his 490-year prophecy to its conclusion ($7 \times 70 = 490$ years), Daniel adds two specific periods of time – a 30-day period followed by a 45-day period, the totality of which begins at the end of the Tribulation and runs successively up to the beginning of the Millennium. We can see this at the very end of Daniel's prophecy, but we will have to figure out the math, so bear with me for a moment. Let's read what he writes in the last chapter of Daniel.

Daniel 12

11 “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. 13 But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”

We learned in the last lesson that at the mid-point of the Tribulation the Antichrist will go into the newly built temple in Jerusalem and declare himself to be God. Do you remember how many days there are in a Jewish calendar year – the *scriptural* year?

Therefore, how many days will make up the 70th 'Week'? (7×360)

How many days will each half of the Tribulation be? ($7 \times 360 \div 2$)

We know that the Tribulation is divided into TWO parts. The Tribulation begins with the signing of Antichrist's peace treaty “by the many” in Israel. The first 3½ years are marked by *relative* peace in the Land of Israel, but at the midpoint in the Tribulation Antichrist goes into the Jewish Temple and sets himself up as God (*c.f.* II Thess. 2:3). This action on his part “takes away the daily sacrifice” and brings about a “desolation” in Israel aka as the Abomination of Desolation), marking the end of the first half of the Tribulation, and beginning of the second half – a period referred to as ‘The Great Tribulation’. So, since we

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know it is a 7-year period, and that a year is made up of 360 days, we can know that each half of 7 years would consist of 1,260 days ($2,520 \div 2 = 1,260$).

Now look back at v. 11. How many days are mentioned in this verse?

Take that number and subtract out the number of days that make up the last half of the Tribulation. How many days make up the difference?

But then Daniel makes an interesting statement in v. 12. He writes about a blessing that is to be given to the one who waits and comes to what day?

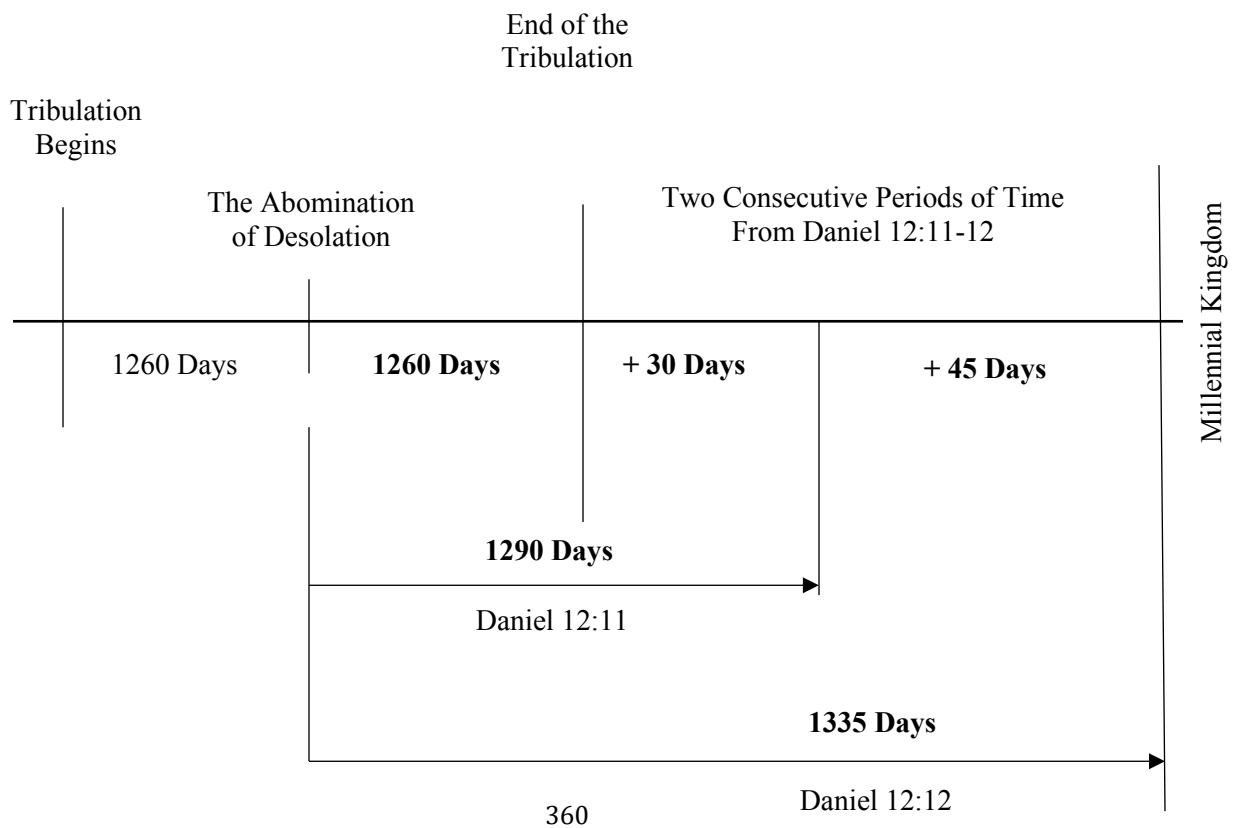
Now take *that* number and subtract out 1,290 days. What is the difference here?

So from our math, we have determined that there are two consecutive periods of time: a 30-day period, immediately followed by a 45-day period.

Then, there is a wonderful promise given to Daniel in v. 13. What is the promise?

We'll close today with this chart, which may help to clarify what was revealed to Daniel concerning the end of the age, and will pick it up here tomorrow:

The TWO consecutive periods of time as seen in Daniel Chapter 12



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Day Two – The Interim: The 30 Plus 45 Days

We will begin today by remembering that due to Israel crying out to the God of their fathers towards the end of the 7-year Tribulation, God will send Jesus back to the earth in order to deliver the Nation.

Revelation 1

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

And it is in ‘looking on Him Whom they pierced’ that they will realize that they had killed their Messiah 2,000 years prior:

Zechariah 12

10 “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”

What two statements do each of these passages have in common?

What do you think these passages are indicating about Israel with respect to Jesus? What will they know about Him now?

And something to note: It will then be for Israel *as if no time has transpired from the killing of Jesus to this moment in time*. What do these passages say Israel will do when they see Jesus?

So, when ‘the tribes of the earth’ (referring to the twelve tribes of Israel) see Him there will be *a time of mourning!* There are a couple of verses that we might want to consider here:

Numbers 20

29 Now when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

For how long did the congregation of Israel mourn for Aaron?

Deuteronomy 34

8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended.

For how long did the congregation of Israel mourn for Moses?

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And where did this mourning take place?

So now (finally!) having mourned the fact that they crucified the Firstborn in 33AD, they will realize that *Jesus was also killed as their Passover Lamb*. It will be then that *all the Jews* left alive on the earth at this terminal point in the Tribulation, having been scattered throughout the Gentile nations (and while still scattered), will *by faith* appropriate the blood of the Lamb (slain 2,000 years ago). This will allow the salvation to come to the entire nation in a day, just as it had been done in Egypt so long ago. Thus, ***the Feast of Passover will have come to its intended fulfillment***. At that point, there will be *National*, as well as *individual* repentance on the part of Israel, and thus the entire Nation will be born in a day, just as spoken by the Prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 66

8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children. 9 Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God. 10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; 11 That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom, That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory."

ISRAEL'S PROPHETIC CALENDAR

With the **Feast of Passover** completely fulfilled and the Nation fully saved through faith in their Passover, the next five feasts (of the seven feasts given to Israel in Leviticus 23) will be accomplished. (These feasts had been given to Israel during Moses' day and were *to be celebrated annually as a continual reminder* to the Nation of what each feast would point to in its ultimate chronological fulfillment. In this respect, the seven feasts have always been a *prophetic calendar* for Israel.) It will be with Christ's return that *all* seven feasts will begin to be ultimately fulfilled! And so, it is within these time periods given in Daniel 12:11-12, a period between the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom – the 30 plus 45 days, that six of the seven feasts will be fulfilled, with the 7th feast being ultimately fulfilled in the Millennium itself. So, as we glimpse these feasts, let's understand that they all must be seen as prophetic, pointing to a future ultimate fulfillment for Israel, having been given to them some 3,500 years prior.

As each feast was celebrated in Moses' day, *each* one pointed to some facet of the future day when the One Whom Moses typified would also be sent by God to deliver the Nation once again from the grip of the one whom the Assyrian Pharaoh typified – the Antichrist. And this will also be for the purpose of their being taken into the Land of their inheritance once again with a Theocracy in view. Just as with Moses, so also with the One Who was typified by Moses – Jesus. And on both occasions, past and future, this will occur for the purpose of setting up a Theocracy in the Land!

So, with the Feast of Passover fulfilled at Christ's second advent and all Israel saved, the Feasts of Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and the Feast of Weeks (also known as the Feast of Pentecost) can be fulfilled in fairly rapid succession. Then these will be followed by the Feasts of Trumpets, Atonement, and lastly the Feast of Tabernacles, which will transpire and be fulfilled during *the whole of the Millennium*. So, let's deal with each of these feasts briefly, seeing what each will mean to Israel yet future.

Historically, Passover took place on the 14th day of the first month of the Jewish year. It was the beginning of the feasts. With that feast having been fulfilled at His Coming, it will be immediately followed by:

- **The Feast of Unleavened Bread** which was to begin on the 15th day of the month and last for 7

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days – a complete period of time. This feast has to do with removing the leaven (picturing sin) from within the house (picturing the House of Israel). Of course, in its *ultimate fulfillment*, this feast would have to do with the House of Israel removing *their sin of unbelief* from within – unbelief which brought about the *sin of killing their King/Messiah*. And now, due to their *individual and National* repentance, they will have put this sin out of the House, thus fulfilling the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Then we have...

- **The Feast of First Fruits.** This feast was to be celebrated on *the first day of the week following Passover* and had to do with bringing the first fruits of the land to the Lord. The *early harvest* would be *the barley harvest* and represents resurrection. In 33 AD – the year that Jesus was crucified – this feast fell on the 3rd day after Passover. And so, *Jesus was resurrected on the third day*, which was the very day the Nation of Israel was celebrating the Feast of First Fruits. In addition to Christ being raised, there were a number of OT saints who were raised at the same time (Matt. 27:52-53). This partial resurrection – of OT saints – on this feast in 33AD represents the *first fruits* of the Nation, with the yet future *resurrection* of all the OT saints being its ultimate fulfillment.

In that future day when all OT saints are resurrected, they, together with those Jews alive on the earth at the end of the Tribulation (now saved) will be gathered together in the wilderness of the peoples in order for the judgment of the Jews to take place. This is when all saved Jews throughout the history of the Nation, will be judged. A separation will take place, the faithful from the unfaithful. We can read about it in:

Ezekiel 20

34 "I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. 36 Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says the Lord GOD. 37 "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38 I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD...

According to vv. 34-36, what does God say He will do with/for Israel in that day?

What do you think *passing under the rod* in v. 37 implies?

What does v. 38 reveal will be *the result* of this judgment?

Who shall not enter the land?

Can you see the separation here?

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With this separation (this judgment) in place, then the next feast can be celebrated. It is **The Feast of Weeks** (a.k.a. **The Feast of Pentecost**). This feast was to occur on the first day of the week after 7 weeks had transpired from the Feast of First Fruits, and had to do with the *late* harvest, i.e., the wheat harvest.

Exodus 34

22a “And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest...

Both the barley and wheat harvests picture resurrection, but from two different aspects. For Israel, the barley harvest (seen in the Feast of First Fruits) would picture Israel’s resurrection, so to speak, *after* their *baptism into death* – the death of the Passover Lamb, a vicarious death experienced through faith just as in Egypt, along with their burial in the Red Sea and their being resurrected – brought up out of the sea *in order to walk in newness of life*, a life of obedience to their Redeemer, God. This was a baptism of repentance with a Theocracy in view.

With all this in mind, note the words of John the Baptist to Israel at the beginning of Christ’s public ministry to saved Jews:

Matthew 3

11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with [Lit., in] the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

What does John say about his baptism?

What does John say about the baptism of the One coming after him?

What is the outcome of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire in v. 12?

Can you see the separation here?

So, then here at the end of the Tribulation, perhaps we can see the deliverance of the Jews out of the Gentile nations to the wilderness of the peoples also as a picture of that same baptism – a baptism of repentance. With Gentile nations often represented in Scripture by ‘seas’, perhaps here the now-repentant Nation could be seen as coming up out of the ‘seas’ (out of the Gentile nations – pictured by the Red Sea passage), as a baptism of repentance with a theocracy in view.

In a prophetic sense, in the passage in Matthew we just read, John was speaking of *the possible fulfillment* of the Feast of Weeks (or Pentecost), which had *begun* to be fulfilled three years later on the very day of the Feast of Pentecost in 33AD, but could not be ultimately fulfilled at that time because Israel, as a Nation, did not repent.

In 33AD, the Holy Spirit was sent by God on Pentecost according to the promise Jesus gave to His disciples just before He died (John 16:7ff). In this ‘baptism’, the Holy Spirit was sent in the form of a flame of fire resting upon the heads of the 120 disciples who had gathered together in that upper room, just as Jesus had told them to do so on the day of His ascension into heaven. This was their baptism *in the fire* and *in the Holy Spirit* and would have to be seen in connection with the wheat harvest on this Feast of Weeks, since it

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happened on *that* day. Peter recognized that what happened on *this particular Pentecost* was to be the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:24-32), if the Nation would but repent (see Acts 2:14ff).

Joel 2

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. 29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. 30 And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. 32 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

So with the *reoffer* of the Heavenly Kingdom beginning to be made to Israel on the Feast of Pentecost in 33AD, and the 120 Jewish disciples being *baptized in the Holy Spirit* for the purpose of taking the reoffer to Israel (if Israel would repent and fulfill their national calling to take the message throughout the Gentile nations), *then* the great Day of the Lord (the Millennial Kingdom) could transpire.

But alas, during the succeeding 30 or so years, the Nation did not repent and therefore was set aside for the duration of a dispensation (2,000 years), the Dispensation of the Church. Hence, Joel's prophecy was *not* fulfilled at that time, nor was the Feast of Pentecost.

But the Feast of Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) will reach its ultimate fulfillment in that future day during this interim period between the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium. The Holy Spirit will be sent at that time, and will baptize the repentant and restored Nation, thus allowing Joel's prophecy to also reach its ultimate fulfillment during the ensuing Day of the Lord, the 1,000 year Kingdom.

Then, let's deal with 5th feast, which is **The Feast of Trumpets**. This will be *the re-gathering of faithful Israel to the Land* (Matt. 24:29-31). As we have seen, the OT saints will have been raised from the dead on the Feast of First Fruits, they together with the Jews alive at the end of the Tribulation will have been judged in the wilderness of the peoples, and a separation will have occurred. The faithful Jews will then be allowed to rule with Christ in the Kingdom. Some will be taken into the Heavenly Land and rule over with Christ over the earth from His Heavenly Throne; and some will be taken into the Earthly Land, and rule with Christ from David's throne upon the earth.

A couple of OT prophecies can be seen with regards to this in the texts below:

Ezekiel 37

12 "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13 Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. 14 I will put My Spirit in you (cf. Joel 2:28f), and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it," says the LORD.'"

Isaiah 27

12 And it shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will thresh, From the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. 13 So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

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And so in brief, as the trumpet sounds all Jews who had been found faithful at their judgment – both resurrected Jews (having been resurrected on the Feast of First Fruits) as well as Jews still alive on earth at the end of the Tribulation – will be re-gathered and brought to the wilderness outside of Israel. It is here, in the wilderness, that all saved Jews will be judged – judged *on the same basis* and *for the same purpose* that the Church had been previously judged – works with respect to positions within the kingdom based upon one's faithfulness to their calling. Those found faithful will reign with Jesus as the King of kings. Those who are not found faithful will not be allowed to do so. Daniel writes about this fact:

Daniel 12

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life [age-lasting in the Kingdom], **Some to shame and everlasting contempt** [age-lasting separation during the Kingdom].

Then, it is following this that **The Feast of Atonement** will take place. This is the feast wherein the saved Nation (having been saved through availing themselves of the blood of the Passover Lamb), having put their sin out of the house (out of the House of Israel – fulfilling the Feast of Unleavened Bread), can now have their sin cleansed through the blood shed at Calvary and placed on the Mercy Seat in heaven. The Feast of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32) represents the complete national cleansing of their repented and confessed sin of unbelief, as well as that of having crucified their Messiah.

We can see this fulfillment referred to in Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 36

24 “For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. 28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. ...

...33 ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt..."”

Make a list of the events seen in this passage in the order in which they appear:

And as these six feasts come into their ultimate fulfillment (with the final feast – the Feast of Tabernacles being fulfilled during the whole of the Coming Age), we can now better understand what was meant in the final discourse between the angel (who had been sent to Daniel in chapter 10 to tell him many things) and Daniel at the very end of prophecy given him:

Daniel 12

8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" 9 And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. 11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up [i.e., the midpoint in the Tribulation], there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days [the last half of the Tribulation plus the 30 days].

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12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days [the added 45 days]. 13 But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

From what we have learned in today's lesson, *who* will receive the blessing mentioned in v. 12? (I really hope you can figure it out!)

Day Three – The Final Battle

Before we begin our lesson today, perhaps we should address the last question in yesterday's homework. The question is: *Who* will receive the blessing mentioned in Daniel 12:12? Did you figure it out? I hope you did. But just to make sure, the blessing will be for those Jews who *have waited*. Waited for what? Is it that they have waited for the time to come – that 45-day period spoken of in this verse? Well, yes *and* no. It's not the 45 days, per se, that a Jew should have waited; rather, it is *what the Lord will do* within that 45 days and *that what will immediately follow*. It is all about that which Daniel had prophesied!

There are several OT passages which tell the Jewish people to *wait upon the Lord* and *why*, but here is one that may shed more light upon the answer to the question of what they are to wait for:

Isaiah 30

18 Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him. 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; You shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; When He hears it, He will answer you.

Contextually, for what will these Jews have waited? (Hint: See v. 9)

So, I hope this helps you to better understand the blessing that is mentioned in Daniel 12:12.

Now, for today's lesson...

What we have seen in part this week, is that the Nation of Israel (those having been found faithful at their judgment in the wilderness of the peoples) can return to the Land covenanted to their fathers and be cleansed. NOW THE STAGE IS SET to pick up where we left off in Revelation chapter nineteen. Once the Nation is gathered back into the Land, the Antichrist and Gentile World rulers can make their long-awaited and final move. One final effort to wipe Israel off the face of the earth!

Gentile armies, led by Antichrist, are gathered to the north, south and the east of Israel, as they plan a full-blown invasion to *finally* and *forever* destroy the Nation of Israel. This is the Battle of Armageddon, referred to earlier in the Revelation:

Revelation 16

16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

Let's reread the section of chapter 19:

Revelation 19

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like

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a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

*(This battle is the battle which will bring the whole of Man's Day to its full and complete end, thus allowing the Day of the Lord to begin on earth, as it has been in heaven. This is the moment toward which all of mankind's history has been moving for the past 6,000 years. And actually, this battle could only take place at this point, as it was necessary for the various things which we have been studying this week to have transpired *prior* to the Battle. If for no other reason, and there *are* other reasons, Israel would need to be back in the Land as a Nation rather than scattered throughout all the Gentile nations (as they had been for the previous 3 ½ years). Here they are – the Nation, as a whole, back in the Land giving the Antichrist and his world coalition one final attempt to destroy the Nation off of the face of the earth. And while the Antichrist and kings of the earth are focused on destroying Israel once and for all, they face an Opposing Army against Whom they would have no hope of defeating!*

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, 18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

So, to get some of the details of this final battle, please answer the following questions.

What is depicted in v. 19?

Who are the two individuals who will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire at the end of the Battle?

What happens to the rest of those in the Battle?

According to vv. 15 and 21, what is it that destroys those who would seek to destroy Israel in the Land?

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A good cross reference to this is Isaiah:

Isaiah 11

4b He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

Ah! Finally! That which is necessary to bring to completion the redemption of the inheritance (the redemption of the earth) will have finally been accomplished, *all of which is stated in a brief 11 verses in Revelation 19*. How is it possible to contain such an all-important, six millennia-long awaited event such as this in 11 short verses in the Book of Revelation?

So again, how can such a momentous event – such as defeating Satan and angels and binding them in the bottomless pit, thus bringing their heavenly rule over the earth since time immemorial – be stated in so few verses? Additionally, how can it be that *the termination* of a 2600-year period of Gentile world domination be confined to this short passage here at the end of Revelation chapter 19? After all, aren't these *the very points* towards which all of Man's history been inexorably moving for 6,000 years?

But the details of these events at the end of chapter 19 *are not at all* confined to these few verses! Not by a long shot!!! Consider how much detail can be found in the Scriptures leading up to the 11 verses in Revelation 19, which really lays it all out for us *preceding* the actual events. Some of those details can be seen

- In 3 previous places in this final book of Scripture. (See **Revelation 9:13-21; 14:14-20; and 16:12-16**.) These passages give additional insight as to the details of this final battle and the results thereof. And remember, as you read these passages, which contain so much figurative language (of which the entire Revelation is filled), that all figurative language points to literal things.
- Then, details of the termination of Gentile world domination and/or details of the restoration of Israel to her rightful place as head of the nations can also be seen throughout many, many places in the Old Testament through typology. For example, this can be seen in
 - Genesis 6-8 with Noah's Flood; and
 - Genesis 11 with the destruction of Babylon's kingdom under Nimrod; and
 - Genesis 14 seen through the battle of the kings during Abraham's day. Also,
 - Joshua 6 with the destruction of Jericho in Joshua's day.
- Other places that give details to these events culminated at the end of Revelation 19 can be seen in
 - Psalms 2 and 83; as well
 - Many chapters throughout the books of the Prophets. Also seen in
 - Isaiah 14, and
 - Ezekiel 38-39.
- And one could not only read full chapters in these books of the Prophets, but there are whole books in the OT which have been given over completely to prophetic detail concerning these events, which are finally fulfilled there at the end of Revelation chapter 19. The Books of
 - The Exodus and of
 - Estherdepict – through typology – the demise of Gentile domination and the rise of Israel to her rightful place at the head of the nations on earth.

So you can see that the final eleven verses in Revelation 19 only state the facts of that which had been prophesied throughout the millennia to and through the Jews about these things finally coming to fruition. And by the time one gets to the Book of The Revelation no more needs to be stated about these events except that which is briefly stated in Revelation chapters 9, 14, 16 and 19. And so...

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Summarily, with Israel's harlotry brought to a complete end, and the Nation repentant and restored (Rev. 17:1-19:6), *and* with the redemption of the inheritance in place through the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21), the Bride, who had prepared herself (Rev. 19:7-10), now becomes the Wife of Christ; and Israel is now re-established as the Wife of God!

With all of the above in place, what happens next? Let's keep reading and see! At the end of the battle –

Revelation 20

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

We'll pick it up here tomorrow.

Day Four – The Age of the Ages

Ah, yes! Will you just think about the phrase “***The Age*** of the ages”? What implication do you think that phrase has?

The implication of this phrase can be likened to the implication of the title to the book in the Bible written by Solomon – The Song of Songs. Did you know that Solomon wrote 1,005 songs (I Kings 4:32)? And the one that God placed in His Word was the one that He chose as THE song of all the songs which Solomon wrote!

Well the same thought applies to the Coming Age. From God's perspective, this age is ***THE AGE*** of all the ages. We can see this in Scripture in several ways:

- 1) We already know that from the creation of Man until this Coming Age there will have been 6,000 years, or 6 days – the Day of Man (six is the number of Man, according to Rev. 13:18). And the Coming Age will be the 7,000th year, or the 7th Day – the Day of the Lord. Each thousand-year period is counted as *a day*. We see this clearly stated in:

II Peter 3

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

- 2) It is the 7th Day toward which all things have been moving, even since Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Genesis 2

2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 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.

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How many times did God mention “the seventh day” in these two verses?

Well, *that* is a good number. The number 3 is the number in Scripture which depicts **Divine perfection**. Compare this to the number of times God mentioned the other six days of the week by naming their respective days in Genesis chapter one. How do they compare?

And according to this passage, *what* did God do on the 7th Day?

And interestingly...

- 3) The 7th day is *the only day* in Scripture which God named...

Exodus 20

11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

...all the other days of the week were given numbers with respect to the Sabbath.

At the end of yesterday’s study, we began to look at Revelation 20. Let’s begin our study today here:

Revelation 20

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. 7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison...

You may want to read through this passage several times. And then write out what is revealed here about the 1,000-year period.

FYI: Notice the description given for the resurrection mentioned twice in this passage. It calls it *the first resurrection*. The word *first* refers to this resurrection being *foremost in time, place, order or importance*. It means it is *the best, the chief* resurrection. You may want to go back and reread vv. 5, 6 with this in mind.

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Now go back and count up how many times the term “a thousand years’ is used in these seven verses. How many is it?

Again, just as in what we learned yesterday about the last ten verses of Revelation 19, here we find that these seven verses only summarize what has been given in *very great* detail in *many* other places throughout both the Old and New Testaments!

But setting that aside, let’s consider something else in this passage, which we have also seen in *many* other places. Let’s consider *life* and *death* as both are contrasted here. To do so, please read vv. 4-7 one more time. Let’s look at what is said about those who *live* and those who *do not live* for these thousand years. Write down all you learn about those who ‘live’.

Now write down what you learn about those who ‘do not live’ for those thousand years.

Do you think this *living* or *not living* has to do with physical life?

Why or why not? (Please don’t skip over this question. Give it some thought based upon what we have learned previously and write out your *thought-through* answer.)

To understand the answer to this question clearly, we would have consider life and death as presented even at the very beginning of Scripture. When God originally created the Man and Woman in the Garden, He created them

1. in His image and likeness – they had the covering of Glory, just as He does;
2. for the purpose of rulership – they were created to rule over the earth, just as He rules over all of Creation.

Then, God told Adam that they were not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for *when* they ate from *that* tree, they *would surely* die!

We know that they ate, and because God said that they would die *when* they ate, we would have to take God’s Word for it – they *died that very moment!* Yet it *appeared* that they *lived*, in the way we might consider *living*; it *appeared* that they *didn’t die physically*, in the way we might understand *dying*. So, how should we understand this?

Previously in our study, we learned that *life* and *death* from God’s perspective is completely related to

1. *our being in His image and likeness* – covered in Glory, and
2. *able to fulfill the purpose for which He created Man* – to rule over the earth.

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Now go back and reread *the very last sentence* in v. 4 of the previous passage. Write out what it says. (Just the last sentence in the verse, not the whole verse.)

And reread the first sentence in v. 5. What does it say about “the rest of the dead”?

Did they “live again”? If so, when did they live again?

So, *this* is the way we would have to view life and death! We would have to view it the way God views it:

- To have *life* is to be in the image and likeness of God, and *to rule with Christ*.
- To *not have life* is to not be in the image and likeness of God, and *to not rule with Christ*.

It really is as simple as that. Of course, this is with respect to the Coming Age, the Messianic Era, the Kingdom of Christ.

After the 1,000 years the individuals who could not rule with Christ during His Kingdom could now rule... but more on that tomorrow! Let's finish up today's study. We are looking at things right at the end of the Battle of Armageddon and into the Millennium.

The results of this Battle:

- Brings 2,600 years of Gentile world domination to an abrupt end, allowing Israel to take her rightful place at the head of the nations.
- Satan and his angels will be cast into the bottomless pit for the whole of the Coming Age.
- The Antichrist and the Beast will be cast into the Lake of Fire, which will be their eternal abode.
- All the kings of the earth and their armies will be killed, with their blood running in a valley up to the horses' bridles for the length of 200 miles (Rev. 14:20), and their flesh eaten by the birds of the air.
- Brings about the redemption of the inheritance for the Bride of Christ, who now becomes His Wife.
- Now a whole new order of rulers over the earth will be in place.

The Day of Man is over. Now, the Day of the Lord begins on earth as it has been in Heaven. (Remember the way Jesus taught His disciples to pray: “Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”) This is a new age, the Coming Age, THE Age of the Ages. This is the time toward which all things have been moving since the restoration of the earth and the creation of Man on the very first page of Scripture. It is when God's three first born Sons will assume their rightful places as rulers of the world:

- The repentant and converted Nation of Israel, God's *adopted first born son*, will reign supreme over all the Gentile nations of the earth from Jerusalem, with Christ ruling from David's throne in the midst of His people. Israel will then fulfill the Nation's calling – that to be God's witnesses throughout the whole world, taking the message that *Jesus is alive and ruler over all the world* (Gen. 45:26)! Through this, all the Gentile nations will be blessed through this son – Israel.
- Christians found faithful at the JSOC will be now be *the adopted first born son*, and will rule over the earth (in the place of Satan and his angels) from the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem, as the Wife of Christ, Who will be ruling from His own Throne in the heavens over the whole earth.
- Christ, God's *only begotten First Born Son* – will have a dual reign, exercising authority in both the heavens and on the earth, as prophesied in

Isaiah 66

1a Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool...”

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So, before we close our study today, let's look at a few passages that may give us a glimpse of *just how awesome* this Coming Day will be. There are more, but these will do for now:

Daniel 2

44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Isaiah 61

1 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 3 To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified." 4 And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. 5 Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, And the sons of the foreigner Shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. 6 But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, And in their glory you shall boast. 7 Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, And instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs. 8 "For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, And will make with them an everlasting covenant. 9 Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, And their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, That they are the posterity whom the LORD has blessed." 10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11 For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Isaiah 11

10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

Isaiah 2

3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Micah 4

1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more.

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Zechariah 8

20 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Peoples shall yet come, Inhabitants of many cities;
21 The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, "Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, And seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also." **22** Yes, many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, And to pray before the LORD.' **23** "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'""

Revelation 2

7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Revelation 11

15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

This is the Day of the Lord! Everything in Scripture inexorably moves toward this 1,000-year period, inexorably moving toward that Day, which will then have come to fruition. It is what the 6 days in Genesis chapter one all lead up to – the 7th Day of Rest. This is the Day that the Lord has made! It is that which was spoken of at the beginning, having found its fulfillment at the end (Isa. 46:9-10). It is what the sign of the Sabbath pointed to. It is the reason for Man's creation; the reason for his salvation. Ah! It is **THE AGE** of all the ages!

Day Five – The Eternal Ages

Today we will look at what happens beyond the thousand years. Picking up where we left off yesterday in the Book of Revelation, we'll now read from chapter 20:

Revelation 20

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison
8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. **9** They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. **10** The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The text here reveals what will happen once the thousand years have run their course. According to this text, what happens to Satan (and his angels) at this point, and what do they do?

But what happens to them?

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After this final attempt, where will be their eternal abode?

Continuing in Revelation:

Revelation 20

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

And after Satan and his angels are finally and *forever* dealt with, having been cast into the Lake of Fire, what happens next?

In short, the Great White Throne Judgment is the final judgment of *all unsaved mankind* from the creation of Adam to this point in time – the entire 7,000 years of man's complete history on the earth. These unsaved individuals will be resurrected in order to be judged according to their deeds, and then will also be cast into the Lake of Fire, which will also be their eternal abode.

When the events in chapter 20 are completed, chapter 21 draws a word picture of what eternity future will hold:

Revelation 21

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

In vv. 1 and 2, what did John see?

And in v. 3, what did John hear?

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Again, this is at the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth. With that in mind, let's consider some of what we see in v. 4. And in v. 4, what does God do at this point?

What will there be 'no more' of?

How should we understand there being 'no more sin'? Why? (Hint: See Rev. 20:13-14)

From what we have learned in our study concerning whose eyes would God be wiping tears away from?

The last half of v. 4 tells *why* there will be no more tears. Why is it?

What *death* will be done away with?

We can read another passage that deals with this exactly:

I Corinthians 15

25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

Remember, death is *separation*, and **not** a *ceasing to exist*. So, once the eternally *unsaved* people are judged and cast into the Lake of Fire – which is their second death (an eternal death, an eternal separation from God, seen in Rev. 20:11-15) – *then* what God reveals in His Word thereafter is *what is to take place for saved people who will have been found unfaithful at the Judgment Seat of Christ and therefore separated from Christ and His glory during the previous millennium*. This death (which we looked at yesterday), is dealt with in Revelation 21:4 and I Corinthians 15:26, and is the death (the separation) that is done away with for all of eternity. And *this* is the reason all tears are wiped away at this point – tears of *saved* people who had previously been judged unworthy to rule and reign with Christ during His Kingdom. But now, all things are made new. Now, all the eternally saved can *experience life* into the ages with the Triune God. Now, all saved mankind will rule with God and with the Lamb from the New Earth, with the Heavenly City resting upon the New Earth, and all rulership over the *entire Universe* emanating from this location. God will have made His dwelling place with Man.

At this point, the text in Revelation chapter 21 drops back into the period of the thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth, in order to give more information about this period, including a description of the Heavenly City, which during Christ's Kingdom will be in the heavens above the earth. This is seen in Revelation 21:6ff. This is the same City that will rest upon the New Earth during all of the eternal ages.

But then, at the beginning of the following chapter, the text is clearly dealing with things beyond the 1,000-year reign of Christ over the earth.

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Revelation 22

1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. **2** In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. **3** And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. **4** They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. **5** There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

Please go back and underline the phrase *from the throne of God and of the Lamb* in vv. 1 and 3. Then underline the very last sentence in the text. These are *clear* indications that the text has moved beyond the Coming Age and is now describing how things will appear during the eternal ages to come.

During Christ's Kingdom, Jesus will sit on His own throne ruling with His Wife from the heavens over the earth. But at the end of this period, Jesus, having brought perfect order to the earth, will offer up His Kingdom to the Father that *God may be all in all* (I Cor. 15:26-28) At that point, God will bring about a 'new heaven' and a 'new earth' upon which the *Heavenly City* will rest for all of eternity. Then, in the eternal ages *beyond* Christ's Kingdom, rulership over *all of creation* will emanate from the Heavenly City which now rests upon the new earth with there being a dual Throne, so to speak – *the throne of God and of the Lamb*. And *all saved mankind* will rule with God the Father and God the Son over all of creation...for all of eternity.

Well, this brings us to the *end of our study*. I am not sure that these is a better passage to end this study than the following one. So, I will leave you with this:

II Peter 3

1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), **2** that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, **3** knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, **4** and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." **5** For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, **6** by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. **8** But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9** The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord [the Coming Age] will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God [see timeline below], because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

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Because of all that we have learned, *what manner of persons ought you to be?*

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless...

Please strive to be that *manner of person!*

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