**“MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM”**

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This is a full revelation of the doctrine of the Bride and the “My Gospel” of the Apostle Paul. It is a verse by verse exposition of many parables of our Lord explaining the mysteries, as well as a textual study throughout the Epistles of Paul. This in-depth study opens the eyes of the Christian to the stark reality of what God is saying to the Christian in this latter day.

“THE ADVENTURE AND THE TRAPS”

This book strives to show the experimental side of the Doctrine of the Bride. It reveals the path of growth, as well as the traps of the devil. In one of the traps, the modern-day fallacy of speaking in unknown tongues is expounded upon.

**FOREWORD**

The truths presented in this book are but a continuation of the Doctrine of the Bride as expounded upon in the book, “He That Hath Ears”. The focal point of this work is on the exposition of the seven parables of [Matthew 13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV). I have attempted to reveal the central truth of this great chapter, as well as expound upon its minute and accurate details. Two chapters were added to this exposition in order to complete its message. The first is chapter one, which attempts to ready the reader for the truths to follow. The second is chapter four, which was placed last in order to show the disposition of the parable’s central truth (Mysteries of the Kingdom).

When I finish this work, I will lay down my pen, satisfied that I have given all that God has commanded me. Yet, I will always be amazed at these truths. Amazed at their clarity and simplicity, while at the same time being obscure and foolish to those who are not permitted to see.

*“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection … And this we will do IF GOD PERMIT.”* ([Hebrews 6:1-3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.1-3&t=NKJV) [1a])

**CHAPTER ONE**

FIRST THINGS FIRST

As we make our entrance into the opening chapter of this book, the reader must become knowledgeable with regard to three subjects of paramount importance in order to form a foundation for all that is to follow. These are in this order: (1) The primary scheme of prophecy, (2) Terminology, (3) Introductory truths.

THE PRIMARY SCHEME OF PROPHECY

For clarity, this scheme is drawn up on a chart and enumerated in nine points in order that its truths may become crystallized in the mind of the reader (see [figure 1](#Fig1)).

Number (1) on the chart is placed between the cross and the opposing arrows and represents a space of time called the church age (approximately 2,000 years long). ([Ephesians 3:1-7](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.1-7&t=NKJV); [Matthew 16:18](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.18&t=NKJV), [Colossians 1:25-27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.25-27&t=NKJV); [Revelation 2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV))

Number (2) on the chart is placed on the opposing arrows and represents the rapture of the church. This will occur at the end of the church age when the Lord returns in the air to secretly catch out all who have been saved during this time. Those whose bodies have died shall be resurrected, and those who have not died will be translated. ([I Thessalonians 4:13-18](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Thessalonians+4.13-18&t=NKJV); [I Corinthians 15:51-53](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+15.51-53&t=NKJV))

Number (3) on the chart is placed between the opposing arrows and the single arrow pointing down and represents the tribulation period. This is a period of seven years after the rapture during which time the earth and its inhabitants will suffer judgment from God, both natural and supernatural. Also during this time the Anti-Christ (a man incarnated by Satan) will rule the world unhindered and attempt the annihilation of Israel. The world will be decimated to a fraction of its population during these terrible times. ([Daniel 9:27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+9.27&t=NKJV); [12:1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+12.1&t=NKJV); [Jeremiah 30:4-7](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+30.4-7&t=NKJV); [Matthew 24:15-21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.15-21&t=NKJV))

Number (4) on the chart is placed over number (3) and represents the Judgment Seat of Christ in heaven during the time of tribulation on earth. All of those who will be raptured will be assembled at this great event for the purpose of testing their works. Some will gain reward, and some will suffer loss. ([I Corinthians 3:9-13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+3.9-13&t=NKJV); [II Corinthians 5:10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=II+Corinthians+5.10&t=NKJV); [Romans 14:10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+14.10&t=NKJV))

Number (5) on the chart is placed on the arrows pointing down and represents the revelation of the Lord when He returns to earth, publicly and visibly to destroy the gentile nations and punish the Anti-Christ. ([Matthew 24:29-30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.29-30&t=NKJV); [II Thessalonians 1:7-10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=II+Thessalonians+1.7-10&t=NKJV); [Zechariah 14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+14&t=NKJV); [Philippians 2:10-11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+2.10-11&t=NKJV); [Revelation 19:11ff](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11ff&t=NKJV); [Joel 3:9-16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+3.9-16&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 63:1-6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+63.1-6&t=NKJV))

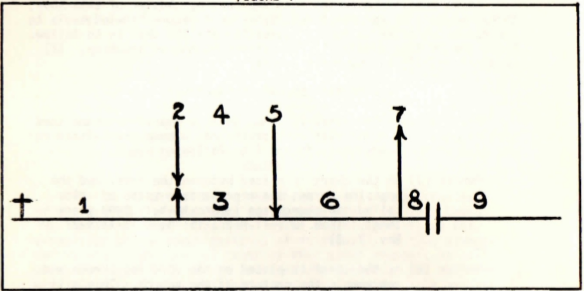
Number (6) on the chart is placed after the revelation of the Lord and represents the rule and reign of Jesus Christ, with His Bride, here on earth for a period of 1,000 years. ([Revelation 20:4-6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.4-6&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+11&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 2:1-5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+2.1-5&t=NKJV); [Joel 2:21-27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+2.21-27&t=NKJV); [3:18-21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+3.18-21&t=NKJV); [Amos 9:13-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Amos+9.13-15&t=NKJV); [Micah 4:1-7](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Micah+4.1-7&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 35:1-10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+35.1-10&t=NKJV); [11:4-10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+11.4-10&t=NKJV); [Zephaniah 3:20](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zephaniah+3.20&t=NKJV); [Hab. 2:14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hab.+2.14&t=NKJV); [Jeremiah 31:27-34](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+31.27-34&t=NKJV); [33:12-26](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+33.12-26&t=NKJV); [Ezekiel 36:33-38](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+36.33-38&t=NKJV); [Zechariah 12:9-14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+12.9-14&t=NKJV); [14:4-11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+14.4-11&t=NKJV))

Number (7) on the chart is placed on an arrow pointing up and represents the end of Christ’s rule on earth and the beginning of the destruction of the earth by fire ([Revelation 20:7-9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.7-9&t=NKJV)). It also represents the time of the Great White Throne where all the lost will be judged ([Revelation 20:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.5&t=NKJV), [12-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.12-15&t=NKJV); [Acts 17:31](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+17.31&t=NKJV); [Revelation 20:7-9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.7-9&t=NKJV)).

Number (8) on the chart is placed in the space immediately after the arrow pointing upward and represents the end of all human history when the earth and the universe will be destroyed by fire. ([II Peter 3:10-12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=II+Peter+3.10-12&t=NKJV); [Revelation 21:1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.1&t=NKJV))

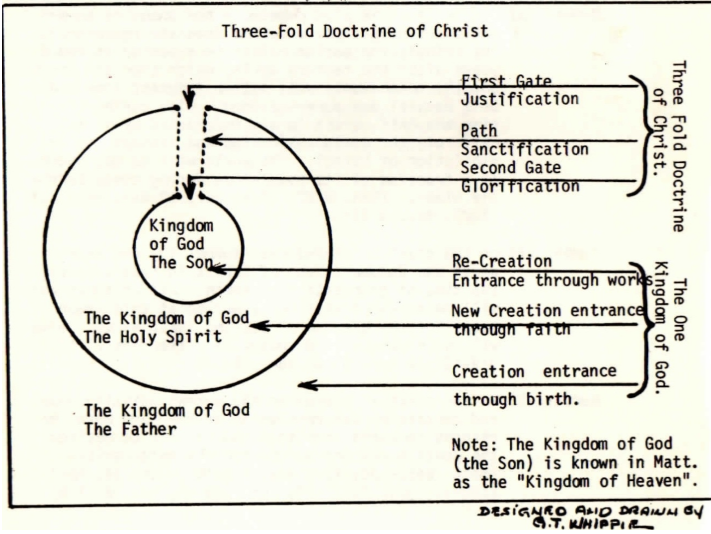
Number (9) on the chart is placed in a space after the destruction of the earth and universe and represents the New Heavens and the New Earth that will be established by God. ([Revelation 21:1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.1&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 66:22-23](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+66.22-23&t=NKJV))

Figure 1



([Return](#Figu1))

Figure 2



([Return](#Figu2)/[Return](#Figur2)))

TERMINOLOGY

The biblical terms along with the one coined term used in this book has already been expounded upon in my other books, “The Adventure and the Traps,” and “He That Hath Ears.” This is why it is desirable for the reader to study these other two as a pre-requisite to this volume.

However, at the risk of being repetitious, I have decided to give three abbreviated definitions of these three basic terms along with a chart to help in grasping their full meaning (see [figure 2](#Figure2)). Term One: “The Kingdom of Heaven” is a term used only in the Book of Matthew and its literal translation is “rule of heavens over the Kingdom”. It is called in the Hebrew language, “*Malikut Schamayim*” (Kingdom of the Heavens) and is a phrase used by our Lord Himself to identify the physical, literal, Messianic Kingdom that will come on earth. In other books of the Bible reference is made to it only as the Kingdom of God, depending on the context (see [Acts 14:21-22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+14.21-22&t=NKJV)).

The reader is reminded that the Kingdom of God is in three aspects, (1) Kingdom of God the Father (King over all creation), (2) Kingdom of God the Holy spirit (King over all the new creation), (3) Kingdom of God the Son (King over all the re-creation). All three aspects, while being operative in a different sphere, are at the same time one kingdom. Thus, the Kingdom of God is a Trinity even as its King (God) is a Trinity. (See [figure 2](#Figure2)). The term Kingdom of God, then, could have its meaning in any one of its three aspects when mentioned in Scripture. Only its context decides which. However, the term “Kingdom of Heaven,” without exception, always speaks of the Kingdom of God in its third aspect, which is the physical, literal, and visible Kingdom of Christ that will be set up here upon this earth for a period of 1000 years (see [figure 2](#Figure2)).

Term Two: “The Gospel of the Kingdom” is a term used to describe one of the five aspects of the gospel of our Lord. It was preached to Israel before their rejection of Jesus as Messiah. Its objective was to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Its purpose was for Israel to recognize Jesus as King together with His authority and power. The message was, “Repent ye and believe this gospel”. The Good News of the coming Kingdom of our Lord is still being preached but its title is now changed and its objective is different. This is so because Israel has been set aside. While the Kingdom was proffered to Israel on the basis of national repentance it was called the gospel of the Kingdom. But now it is called the “Word of the Kingdom.” While Israel was still in favor with God, its objective was to establish the Kingdom of God then upon the earth, but now its objective is to serve as an incentive to holy living for the church, as it looks ahead in hope and in readiness to its future establishment. After the Lord raptures the church and begins to once again deal with national Israel, this gospel will resume and be preached throughout the world.

“*Repent ye for the Kingdom is at hand*.” ([Matthew 24:14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.14&t=NKJV))

Term Three: “The Three-Fold Doctrine of Christ” is a term coined by the author to describe the three-fold work of Jesus Christ in the life of an individual. This work includes a person’s salvation (Justification), his fullness of the Holy Spirit (Sanctification), and his reward in the coming kingdom (Glorification). All three works are experimental in this life and are necessary for fruition in the Christian life.

INTRODUCTORY TRUTHS

The following enumerated thoughts need to be grasped by the reader in order to introduce him to the truths of [Matthew 13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV).

(1) When our Lord first began His public ministry, the aspect of the Gospel of the Kingdom was preached. The message that went forth was wholly to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Its offer was to bring in the Kingdom of Heaven on the condition of national repentance ([Matthew 3:2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.2&t=NKJV); [4:17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4.17&t=NKJV)). Unfortunately, the nation of Israel refused to repent and as such rejected their King. Because of this, the Lord God turned from Israel and scattered them among the nations, fulfilling the warning of Moses in [Deuteronomy 28:63-68](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+28.63-68&t=NKJV) and of the prophet Isaiah in [Isaiah 6:9-13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+6.9-13&t=NKJV). In [Acts 28:28](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+28.28&t=NKJV) we see the dispensational boundary line where God, chronologically speaking, shelved Israel and turned to the Gentiles. Thus, the Kingdom of Heaven was postponed until the King would once again make His appearance. The Kingdom was proffered to Israel on the basis of national repentance, but they rejected it. Now it is offered to a new nation – the Gentiles ([Matthew 21:43](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV)). The prophetic teaching so Gods Word tells us that one day He will return to set up His Kingdom and, with this, He will resume His covenant relationship with Israel, gathering them and saving them ([Romans 11:25](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.25&t=NKJV)). But in the meantime (2,000 years), our Lord is busily gathering out of the Gentiles a Bride for Himself. A Bride that will share His throne during His millennial reign ([Acts 14:14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+14.14&t=NKJV)).

(2) There are two favored groups of God’s people. One group, called the Bride, is a people taken out of all the saved during the church age and constitutes God’s heavenly people. The second group, called Israel, is a people taken out of all the Jews before the church age and during the tribulation period, and constitutes God’s earthly people. It is these two groups of people that our Lord refers to in His seven parables as the “Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

(3) Contrary to popular belief, it requires more than salvation to be numbered with the mysteries. Those that aspire to this high calling, both of the Jews and saved Gentiles, must be fruit bearers. In order for this to be, a three-fold action in the life of the individual must take place. First, he must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (initial salvation) which corresponds to the first gate (see [figure 2](#Figure2)). Second, he must be obedient unto all good works (fullness of spirit) which corresponds to the path. Third, he must be spiritually motivated by the hope of glory in the reality of the coming kingdom of our Lord (word of the Kingdom) which corresponds to the hope of the second gate or the third rest.

(4) Our Lord assigns to these two groups the term “Mysteries” because they were kept a mystery from the foundation of the world, only to be revealed in this latter day. Also, qualifications for entrance into their respective groups have been kept a mystery. Consider this: As the new birth was a mystery to the Jews ([Joel 3:3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+3.3&t=NKJV)), so is the coming kingdom a mystery to the popular church today. As the first advent of our Lord was a mystery to the Jews, who saw the second advent only, so is the second advent of our Lord a mystery to the popular church today, which can see only the first advent. As the doctrine of faith was a mystery to the Jews who taught works only, so are works a mystery to the popular church today, which teaches faith only.

(5) The position of Jesus sitting on the seaside and in a boat on the sea during the discourse of the first four parables informs us of the failures of Christendom. This is so because the seashore is always an emblem of National Israel. ([Genesis 22:17b](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22.17b&t=NKJV); [32:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+32.12&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 10:22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+10.22&t=NKJV)), and the sea is a type of the nations ([Revelation 17:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+17.15&t=NKJV)). However, His change of position from the seashore to the house at the end of the fourth parable informs us that the remaining three parables speak of the success of Christianity in view of the fact that He was in the presence of His disciples only. Thus, it is in the last three parables that the “Mysteries of the Kingdom” are fully revealed.

(6) Our Lord spoke these parables specifically so that rejected Israel may not know the mysteries of the Kingdom and adversely so that those who were of the church would know. ([Matthew 13:10-11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.10-11&t=NKJV)).

(7) The seven parables before us are given to the church. They are clearly history written in advance, since they cover the whole of this dispensation. They not only point out the failure of Christendom, but they reveal its success through the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

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**CHAPTER TWO**

THE DEVELOPING MYSTERIES

I. PARABLE OF THE SOWER

[Matthew 13:3-8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.3-8&t=NKJV), [19-23](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19-23&t=NKJV)

The key to this parable is found in the first of the 19th verse. It is here that the seed, sown by the sower, is named:

*“When any one heareth the WORD OF THE KINGDOM, and understandeth it not…”* ([Matthew 13:19](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19&t=NKJV))

The seed, then, is the word of the Kingdom. That is, it is the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, when He shall set up His earthly Kingdom and crown all of those Christians who have looked for Him by living the life of obedience to His Word. It is not the new birth that is in view here as so many have tried to show. It was not written to lost people or about lost people finding initial salvation, but rather it is a fruit-bearing parable written to saved people showing those who will produce fruit, and, as such, win a reward. Jesus, then, is the sower, the seed that He sows is the word of the Kingdom, and the four types of soil are four types of Christians.

The first soil, which is called the wayside soil, typifies those Christians who are not in the way of the path or walking with Jesus. They are saved, but are not interested in getting involved in the service of the Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when this group hears the word they do not understand it, and as a result Satan takes away the seed before it can root itself in the heart. These people generally are already set in their theological belief, which leaves out the doctrine of the Kingdom. They are found in the teaching staff of many theological schools and their number is greatly increasing in the pulpit and the pew. Invariably, it is this group that purposely injures a ministry when, upon hearing this word and not understanding, it turns and rends the one who has cast his pearls before them. ([Matthew 7:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+7.6&t=NKJV)).

The second kind of soil is called the stony places and typifies those Christians who hear the word of the Kingdom and at once receive it with joy, but because they have no root in their heart for the Kingdom (perseverance) they become offended. These are Christians who readily receive the strong meat and by their immediate joy appear to have great promise of becoming a fruit-bearing Christian, but, alas, when they begin to put to work practically the power of this great revelation they become stymied because of the tribulation and persecution that arises ([Matthew 13:20-21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.20-21&t=NKJV)). It is to this effect that they become offended, for the stones of persecution and tribulation that keep them from becoming deep rooted are usually placed in their life by Satan through those others who do not understand.

The third type of soil in this parable is called the thorny ground soil. This typifies those Christians who hear the word of the Kingdom, and before it can root itself in their heart, it is choked out. Notice that the Scripture does not say that this type of Christian had any growth whatsoever. By this omission we are made to understand that the seed did not root itself in the heart, nor did it have the chance to. The reason for this is that this type of Christian is still concerned with the cares of THIS world and deceitfulness of riches ([Matthew 13:22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.22&t=NKJV)). It is spiritually impossible to receive the things of the future world when one has not yet given up the things of this world. Notice also that it was not said that this type of hearer remained lost because of the choking of the seed, but rather it states only that he became unfruitful. This again is proof that this parable speaks of fruit-bearing only, which is symbolic of works after one is saved.

The fourth type of soil is called the good ground soil. This typifies all Christians who hear and understand the word of the Kingdom, and as such bring forth various amounts of fruit according to their talents. Notice here, that in order for one to receive the seed so that it roots itself deep he must clearly UNDERSTAND the word of the Kingdom. This revelation is not only the key to fruit bearing but also the key to becoming an OVERCOMER. This is made clear when we study the causes of defeat for the first three types of Christians. The wayside hearer did not understand the word and as a result was defeated by SATAN. The stony ground hearer had enough understanding to give him joy, but not enough to give him deep roots, and as a result of tribulation and persecution he was defeated by THE FLESH. The thorny ground hearer had no understanding, and as a result of the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches was defeated by THE WORLD. It is these three powers that one must overcome in order to bear fruit, become a King and a priest in the future Kingdom, and be identified with the “Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

*“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in His throne.”* ([Revelation 3:21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV))

*“And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron;…”* ([Revelation 2:26-27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-27&t=NKJV))

Finally, we need to see that the fruitless Christians of this parable were not in the will of God because of their position outside of the path of Jesus. It is impossible to have stones or thorns in the middle of a well-trodden path, for it was here that the personal presence of Jesus kept the path clean and made its soil good ground.

COMPARING THE PARABLE

It is amazing to me how many well-grounded expositors insist on interpreting this parable as one that teaches initial salvation. Their problem is not the desire to teach the new birth, but rather to use the [Matthew 13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV) text. Their need, then, is to see that God has already made provision for this teaching, by this parable in another gospel. Let us not part what God has joined together, and let us not join together what God has parted. In comparing the three recordings of this parable in the three different gospels, we see a marked difference in its setting and word construction. The Holy Spirit has purposely done this in order to give us a complete picture of the salvation of a Kingdom Man in triune form. Like a spiritual overlay, Luke’s parable gives us the beginning as it teaches justification. Mark adds sanctification, and Matthew completes the picture with glorification. It is these three redemptive acts of God on the lives of individuals that constitute the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. To clarify this, I will draw a few of the many points of comparison between its three recordings found in [Mark 4](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+4&t=NKJV), and [Luke 8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8&t=NKJV). (1) Whereas, Matthew’s parable is burdened with the message of the Kingdom, Luke’s is the message of salvation and Mark’s the message of power. (2) Whereas, Matthew’s parable is pointing to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, Luke’s is rooted in the first coming, and Mark’s in the spiritual filling. (3) Whereas, Matthew’s parable is interested in the fruit-bearing of a Christian through “receiving the word of the Kingdom,” Luke’s is interested in fruit-bearing by emphasizing that one must first “receive the Word of God,” Mark completes this tri-unity of interest in fruit-bearing by emphasizing the receiving of the “word.”

WAYSIDE

(4) In the word construction of this parable, the wayside hearer of Matthew is a Christian who rejects with mind and heart the doctrine of rewards in the coming Kingdom. In Mark he is a Christian who rejects with mind and heart the doctrine of the filling of the Holy Spirit. And in Luke he is a lost individual who rejects with mind and heart the doctrine of the new birth. (5) Again, Matthew’s wayside hearer rejected the word, “by not understanding it” ([Matthew 13:19](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19&t=NKJV)). Mark’s by not being interested in it and thereby allowing Satan to “immediately” take it away ([Mark 4:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+4.15&t=NKJV)); Luke’s by despising it and thus trodding it underfoot ([Luke 8:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.5&t=NKJV)).

STONY GROUND

(6) The stony ground hearer of Matthew is a Christian who with mind and heart receives the doctrine of reward in the coming Kingdom, but because his life is shallow, he does not retain the doctrine. In Mark, he is a Christian who with mind and heart receives the filling of the Holy Spirit, but falls back because of no depth to his heart. In Luke, his is a lost man, who with mind and heart receives salvation, but never grows in the Lord because of the lack of power from the Holy Spirit.

(7) Again, both Matthew’s and Mark’s stony ground hearers did not wither until after the sun arose and scorched them (see [Matthew 13:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.6&t=NKJV) and [Mark 4:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+4.6&t=NKJV)). This is indicative of the Judgment Seat of Christ, since the rising sun in Scripture is always an emblem of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The stony ground hearer, then, in these two gospels fared well as long as they were in the night, which is characteristic of our present dispensation. But when the sun of righteousness made his appearance neither could withstand, for their shallow life was found wanting. Thus, they were scorched in the fiery trial of the Lord and suffered loss. This harmonizes with the context that says,

*“For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.”* ([Mark 4:25](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+4.25&t=NKJV)*)*

On the other hand, we notice in Luke’s parable no such description of being scorched. This is so in keeping with the unerring Word of God, for no Christian will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ as to his SALVATION, since that is a free gift of God that cannot be taken away. Rather, His judgment is [with regard] to works produced by the “root,” or Holy Spirit, from a life that has depth.

(8) Again, both Matthew and Mark use the figure of stony places or stony ground, whereas Luke records that the seed fell upon “a rock” (see [Luke 8:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.6&t=NKJV), [13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.13&t=NKJV)). Why is this? Did the Holy Spirit record this in this manner just to break up repetition? No. Never. The Lord has a purpose for each word. Here the figure of a “ROCK” is used emphatically to show us that this individual was saved. Jesus in the typology of Scripture is always spoken of as THE ROCK. And anyone who is pictured on the rock or fallen on the rock is one who is saved. (See [Matthew 21:44a](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.44a&t=NKJV)). The reason this person failed to grow was the lack of moisture, or Holy Spirit. All he needed to do was speak to the rock, even as Moses was commanded to do, and water would have flowed from the rock. Notice, nothing is said about the lack of earth, only moisture. Thus it is with every Christian who never advances beyond their first experience of brokenness on the rock of Jesus.

(9) Still again, both Matthew and Mark’s stony ground Christian fell back because of tribulation, affliction and persecution. However, none of these reasons are mentioned in Luke. This is so because here they would have had the opposite effect. Tribulation, affliction and persecution are only used by Satan in respect to the Christian’s works, never his salvation. His method of keeping a newborn Christian from growing is through temptation.

THORNY GROUND

(10) The thorny ground hearer of Matthew is a Christian who receives the word in the mind only but never commits his heart to it. Likewise, with Mark and Luke with their respective teachings. All three gospels show a superficial reception of the word, because there was a knowledge only and no commitment.

(11) Again, notice in all three gospels the omission of the word “receive.” This is so because none had any commitment to the word. Notice, also that the seed in all three gospels never “sprouted”. It was sown only, and was choked out before it sprouted.

(12) Still again in Matthew and Mark the “WORD” is choked, whereas in Luke the “INDIVIDUAL” is choked.

(13) Still again in all three gospels the Greek word for choked means completely strangled.

(14) Still again it was initially the same sins that caused the choking with this exception. Whereas, Matthew and Mark’s thorny ground hearer has devoted his life in seeking those sins. Luke’s thorny ground hearer already has it and doesn’t want to give it up.

(15) Still again in Luke, the thorny ground hearer went forth in service just as soon as he received the head knowledge of salvation. However, it was not lasting since he had no spiritual experience. This type of individual can easily be confused with the rock Christian in that both have immediate outward appearances of Christianity. The rock Christian “SPRINGS UP” whereas the thorny ground’s lost man “GOES FORTH”. Both in time fall back. Not knowing the heart of the individual, we cannot judge as to who is saved and who is not. Only God knows the rock Christian from the thorny ground church member.

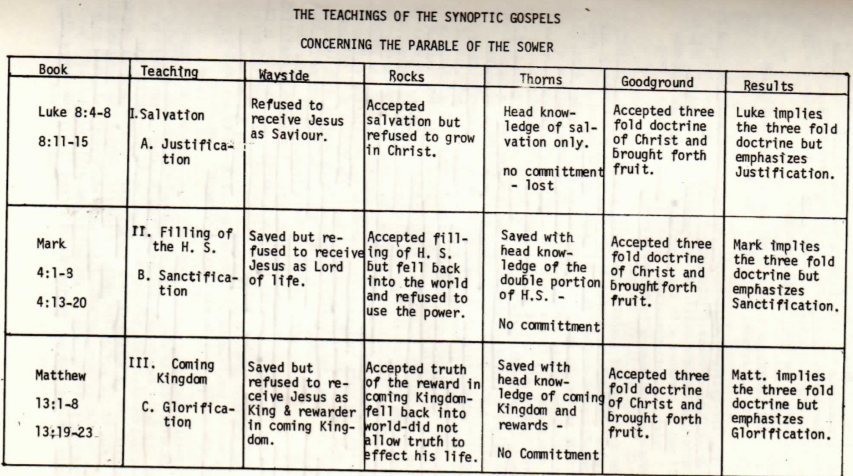
GOOD GROUND

(16) In Matthew, the good ground hearer brought forth fruit because he heard the word of the Kingdom and understood it (fully committed self); in Mark’s [gospel], because he received the word, or was filled with the Holy Spirit; in Luke’s [gospel], because he had an honest and good heart. These three descriptions give one perfect picture of a Kingdom Man. In Luke, the INDIVIDUAL is in view with an honest and good heart. In Matthew, the MESSAGE is in view with clear understanding. In Mark, the POWER is in view, which gives to the individual the UNDERSTANDING of the message so that he keeps it and brings forth fruit with patience.

(17) Again, only Luke merely states that fruit was brought forth, whereas Matthew and Mark state how much fruit was brought forth. This is so because Matthew and Mark were interested in the fruit brought forth by the individual’s talents, whereas Luke’s interest lies in the fruit brought forth by the individual’s salvation power (Holy Spirit).

(18) In Matthew, the “MYSTERIES” of the Kingdom of Heaven” speaks of those individuals who will rule with Jesus Christ in the third aspect of the Kingdom of God. In Luke, the MYSTERIES of the Kingdom of God refer to those same individuals, who are now being chosen out of the second aspect of the Kingdom of God and into the third. In Mark, we find the omission of MYSTERIES and instead find the word in its singular form, which is “MYSTERY of the Kingdom of God.” This is reference to the power of the individual (of the Holy Spirit inside the individual.) In [Colossians 1:27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.27&t=NKJV) this MYSTERY is called “Christ in you.”

(19) In [Luke 8:21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.21&t=NKJV), Jesus makes a statement that bears out the teaching of His parable – *“My mother and my brethren are these which HEAR THE WORD OF GOD AND DO IT”* (see [I Peter 1:23](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Peter+1.23&t=NKJV)).In Mark, two things are in evidence that point to the teaching of the filling of the Holy Spirit. One is a reference to wisdom in order to interpret all parables found in [Mark 4:13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+4.13&t=NKJV). Here Jesus indirectly tells us that the parable is a teaching on the Holy Spirit. The other reference is found in [Mark 4:26-29](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+4.26-29&t=NKJV), where He tells us of the unconscious growth of the fruit of the Kingdom Man because of the Holy Spirit with Him.



II. THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND TARES. FIRST DIVISION

[Matthew 13:24-30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24-30&t=NKJV), [36-43](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.36-43&t=NKJV)

Since the second parable is interpreted in two divisions, and since Jesus did not Himself interpret this parable to His disciples until after He left the multitude and entered into the house, then I shall not be burdened with the exposition of the second division until I reach His interpretation. I shall only busy myself here with the first, which ends in [Matthew 13:40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40&t=NKJV). In beginning the exposition of this parable’s first division, we need to reflect back on the parable of the sower in order to see the connection between the two. The first observation noted in this connection is the desire of the Lord to show us the three basic teachings of the Bible, and also the four types of recipients of those teachings.

It is noteworthy that all preaching and teaching inspired by the Holy Spirit must fall within these three basic teachings which are the salvation, the filling, and the reward, together with the classification of all hearers into four groups. With this knowledge He gives us a continuing view of the Kingdom Men through the second parable.

Second, there is an observation by way of comparison. In the first parable, we notice the omission of the phrase “The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto…”, whereas it is added to the remaining six along with many others. The answer to this mystery is three-fold and is as follows:

First, it was omitted in the first parable because it had not yet been defined. It was included in the remaining six after its definition in the first. Therefore, since the “Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven” was defined as the fruit bearers, all remaining parables are identified with and connected to this teaching by this phrase.

Second, it is omitted because the first parable is not numbered in chronology with the remaining six. For whereas each of the others are represented in history to specify times with respect to the dispensational view, the first is a general parable removed from chronology and representative of all the hearers in this dispensation whenever they hear the Word of the Kingdom.

Third, while the first parable is a general parable removed from chronology, it is at the same time indicative of the aspect of the “Gospel of the Kingdom” preached to the Jews by Jesus personally while He was here upon earth.

*“Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field.”* ([Matthew 13:24](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24&t=NKJV)). The first division of this parable is not hard to understand by the child of God, for in [Matthew 13:32-39](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.32-39&t=NKJV) God identifies the principles of the parable for us. The sower is Jesus, the field is the world, the seed are the children of the Kingdom, the tares are the children of the wicked one, the enemy that sowed them is the Devil, the harvest is the end of the world (Age), and the reapers are the angels.

Notice that the seed is not the same as in the first parable. There it was a doctrine, here it is individuals. Notice also the title given to the seed – “The Children of the Kingdom.” This title is indicative of all those who have been born again. The Lord did not use “Sons” but children, the reason being that we do not come into sonship until we reach the Judgment Seat of Christ. This title of “Children,” then, represents all four hearers in the first parable since all of them were saved. They are seen being sown in the beginning of this dispensation for the purpose of producing fruit, and taken out in the harvest at the end of the dispensation in order to give an account of that fruit. However, only one-quarter of them will realize their purpose. These are the good ground hearers. *“But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.”* The Lord at the beginning of this dispensation began sowing in the world the “Children of the Kingdom.” Their purpose was to bear the fruit of the wheat so that through them the bread of life would appeal for all who were spiritually hungry. This again is proof that fruit bearing is caused by the personal presence of Jesus living through the life of a Christian.

After the sowing, the Scriptures record that “while men slept,” the Devil came and sowed tares, which are his children. This portion of Scripture is indicative of the time when the church went to sleep in the third century under “Romanism” and spiritually slept through the Dark Ages until the dawn of the Reformation. It was during this time that the Devil sowed his tares. It is interesting to note that before this time the Devil attacked the church from the outside with the results of only spreading it. In the third century, however, he decided to join the church and attack it from the inside; thus, history records the marrying of the church and the state under Emperor Constantine which gave a wholesome license for any pagan to join the church. It was from here on until Martin Luther that the plan of salvation through faith was lost. The men, spiritually speaking, went to sleep and the Devil went to work creating his counterfeit Christianity. Today, nineteen centuries later, we are still in that mixed state of affairs, the false and true side by side, for whereas the tares had their start in Romanism, they are now in every denomination and church and more so, even to having their own separate sects.

Satan has ever been an imitator. He has never been the originator. It is here in this parable that a remarkable exposé of his methods is given. First he has an imitation gospel whose foundation rests upon the worship of angels, saints, etc. This is clearly stated in [Galatians 1:7-9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.7-9&t=NKJV). Second, he had imitation ministers preaching from the pulpits of churches. This is plainly intimated in [II Corinthians 11:13-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=II+Corinthians+11.13-15&t=NKJV), where they are called, *“False apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”* Third, he has an imitation righteousness founded upon works. ([Romans 10:3-4](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+10.3-4&t=NKJV)). Fourth, he has an imitation church so cleverly disguised that the entire world is fooled into thinking and calling it “The Church.” Fifth, Satan will produce an imitation Christ in the Tribulation Period. Known in the Scriptures as Anti-Christ, he will cause the whole world to worship him. This will be his masterpiece.

The Lord, in showing us these imitations, uses the figure of a tare. Tares are degenerate wheat and as such cannot be distinguished from the wheat until it comes to fruition. Since they were sown while men slept, we are led to believe that the teaching primarily identifies the Roman Catholic Church that was sown by the Devil. It is not however restricted to Romanism, for as history bears out that the tares moved out into Protestantism and into the many and varied sects, prophecy records that they shall all be returned and gathered under the wings of Rome in the Latter Days.

*“But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.”* ([Matthew 13:26](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.26&t=NKJV))

The minute accuracy of the Scripture is demonstrated here. In this verse the tares did not make their appearance until after the wheat had sprung up and brought forth fruit. This has a reference, dispensationally speaking, to the time after the Reformation, for no fruit was brought forth from the whole field until after this time. Notice that it is not said that the tares came up, but “appeared,” thus pointing out the fact that they could have already been there but not recognized as tares until the wheat bore fruit that they could not match. The tare, also known as the darnel, could only produce a purple flower that in turn produced a poison substance that is harmful to the wheat when spread by the wind.

It is here again that I am convinced that the Lord is pointing to the Roman Church as the fountainhead of all false systems. They purposely draw and deceive the millions with their external religious trappings (symbolized by the purple flower). They promise the bread of life, when in reality their fruit is poison to the genuine wheat. Even the color of their flower is one of the colors chosen for the papacy. *“But when the blade was sprung up….”* The word “sprung” here is emphatic and points to the reformation which sprung through the world. Up to this time, the Roman church had enjoyed her imitation role through keeping the people ignorant. In the Middle Ages, however, the Renaissance Period began, which was primarily a revival of learning.

This period served as the vestibule to the Reformation under Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox. The printing press was invented and the Bible printed. Millions read the truth of God’s love through faith. The blade sprung up, thus revealing the tares, and it would not be long until the ear and then the full corn in the ear would appear.

*“So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?”* ([Matthew 13:27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.27&t=NKJV))

In this portion of the parable the Lord informs us that all of His servants have spiritual wisdom to recognize the fact that there are tares in the field. But not enough wisdom to know who all the tares are. Therefore, they are instructed to leave them alone lest they root up the wheat.

It is amazing with the clear cut teaching of this verse how many have violated and are still violating it. From the Reformation until now, servants of the Lord have hunted down and rooted up what they thought at the time were tares and as a result many wheat have suffered. We are not to be heresy hunters that murder the physical body, or the reputation of a person, though we are to be watch-dogs standing guard against the wolf, and warning the sheep. Again, we have not enough wisdom to tell in every instance the difference between wheat that does not produce fruit and a tare that cannot produce fruit.

Even in the harvest, they cannot be separated except by the angels.

*“…Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”* ([Matthew 13:30b](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.30b&t=NKJV))

There is much prophetic instruction to be gained from this 30th verse. First, the Lord has promised a harvest. This shall occur when He takes out all of the Christians at the Rapture and gathers them to His barn (Heaven); this corresponds with [I Thessalonians 4:16-17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Thessalonians+4.16-17&t=NKJV). However, before the harvest is come He will have already gathered the tares together and bound them. In this operation of God, the Scripture does not speak of them being rooted up, but rather gathered together, bound into bundles, and left standing in the field. Second, the tares will be burned while standing in the field. Even though the Lord resolutely decrees the final punishment of the tares in the Lake of Fire, that punishment is not in view here and is reserved until after the Great White Throne of Judgment. Here, the burning stands for the wrath of God that is to fall upon the world during the Tribulation Period, and after the Rapture of the Church.

Finally, the binding signifies a three-fold separation of the tares. First, they are bound and separated in preparation for the Tribulation. Second, [they are bound] that they may be numbered as the Anti-King Men. Third, [they are bound] that they may be damned to eternal retribution.

In the first signification, we know already that the binding of the tares into bundles is rapidly proceeding in various directions. In the commercial world, the tares are being bundled into organizations, trusts, cooperatives, syndicates, combines, etc. In the social world, the bundles are called clubs, fraternities, guilds, etc. In the ecclesiastical world, [they are called] the ecumenical movement, the national and world council of churches, etc. All these bundles are being formed so that they may return to their fountainhead during the Tribulation. For it is then that Anti-Christ will come to power and use the false church at Rome, along with the organizations of finance, commerce, and the many other bundles, to further his own Kingdom.

In the second signification, the tares are called “children of the wicked one” ([Matthew 13:38](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV)). It is obvious that the Holy Spirit used this word “wicked one” rather than the word “Devil” for the purpose of connecting it to the counterfeit Kingdom. This is so because the Anti-Christ is called “That Wicked” in [II Thessalonians 2:8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=II+Thessalonians+2.8&t=NKJV):

*“…and then shall that wicked be revealed…”*

Therefore, as the Christians are children of the coming visible Kingdom ruled over by Christ, so are the tares children of the coming visible Anti-Kingdom, ruled over by Anti-Christ. Their gathering and binding then represents a separation or anti-rapture into the Kingdom of the Wicked One.

In the third signification, the binding stands for the impossibility of salvation after the Rapture. If one hears the gospel and rejects it before the Rapture, the Lord arranges it so that it is impossible for him to be saved after the Rapture. This is pointed out in both II Thessalonians, and the book of Proverbs.

*“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”* ([II Thessalonians 2:11-12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=II+Thessalonians+2.11-12&t=NKJV))

*“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the [fear of the] Lord.”* ([Proverbs 1:24-29](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+1.24-29&t=NKJV))

The Tribulation saints, spoken of in Revelation, then, are those people who never heard the gospel before the Rapture. As we survey current events in the light of [Matthew 13:30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.30&t=NKJV), we conclude that the order to bind up the tares has already gone forth, and all that is left now is the harvest.

III. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

[Matthew 13:31-32](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.31-32&t=NKJV)

Fewer passages, if any, have suffered more at the hands of commentators than the third and the fourth parables of [Matthew 13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV). The main cause of this error is the misunderstanding of the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who have misinterpreted have done so on the basis that the Kingdom of Heaven means Christianity, when in reality it speaks of the third and visible aspect of the Kingdom of God. Because they do not believe in the third aspect and as such equate all Scripture that speaks of the Kingdom with the second aspect, they necessarily turn the parable upside down and make it mean the very opposite of what the Lord taught.

I can remember in my early theological training, one of my professors taught this wrong view. He stated that the third parable taught the announcement of the glorious success of the gospel. The tree that grew from the mustard seed was a portrayal of the rapid growth of Christianity until it covered the earth. Even at this stage of my ministry, I knew that this was wrong simply because it was not compatible with the overall teaching of the Bible concerning the church. It is taught that the church and Christianity will not generate until it covers the earth, but rather degenerate until it is unnoticed upon the earth.

*“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs and becometh a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”* ([Matthew 13:31-32](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.31-32&t=NKJV))

In the beginning of this dispensation, our Lord planted the mustard seed in the field. Since the field is interpreted as the world in [Matthew 13:38](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV), then the sowing was to all of the world. This seed represents the three-fold seed of the first parable, that is, the word of Salvation, the word of the Spirit, and the word of the Kingdom. Its purpose was to grow into a mustard bush which is an emblem of all the Bride of Christ. But instead it grew into a monstrosity that the Scriptures call a great tree. Since the mustard seed when grown is an herb and herbs grow into bushes only, then it is clear that the Lord is teaching us that Christianity became something that was against its nature. To obtain a complete understanding of what happened, we need to interpret the two central figures of the parable. First, we have the great tree. When the true interpretation of this figure is found, it should at once expose the fallacy of the popular interpretation fostered by the theological intelligencia of our day. We will discover that it is not a symbol of glorious success of the gospel. This is so because the gospel’s nature is to produce lowliness, meekness, and suffering, not [the] loftiness and prominence that is spoken of by the tree. It is to produce an invisible body, hated by the world, not a visible body lauded by the world. Certainly, the Lord would not permit the use of a figure that would show His bride rooted in the world, with its branches in high places. The Lord has solemnly expressed that the Kingdom Man is not of this world. In [Daniel 4:10-12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.10-12&t=NKJV) and [Daniel 4:20-22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.20-22&t=NKJV), we learn the interpretation of the great tree.

*“Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.”* ([Daniel 4:10-12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.10-12&t=NKJV))

*“The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sigh thereof to all the earth; Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: It is thou, O king, that art gown and become strong, for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.”* ([Daniel 4:20-22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.20-22&t=NKJV))

Thus, the great tree stands for the great earthly kingdom of Babylon. Second, we have the birds of the air. In [Genesis 15:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+15.11&t=NKJV), we discover that they are Satan and his agents, for Abram had to drive them away after they sought to nullify the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ typified in carcasses (sacrifices). Again, in [Revelation 18:2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+18.2&t=NKJV), we are told that the birds are identified with the “habitations of demons” and “every foul spirit.”

Still again, without going outside of [Matthew 13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV), we discover in the first parable that they are agents of the Devil, taking away the seed that was sown by the wayside. By putting these two interpretations together, we find that the seed grew and developed into a great earthly Kingdom connected with Babylon, with agents of the Devil finding shelter within it. This changing of the constitution and nature of the herb that caused it to grow from a bush to a tree began historically when Roman Catholicism came into being. The purpose of the seed was to produce the Bride of Christ. But after it was apostatized and changed, it produced instead the Bride of Anti-Christ. This false church has now grown into a world-wide Kingdom, for their branches have covered the earth. They are still identified with Babylon by the marrying of Christianity with the beliefs and rites of the ancient order of the Mystic Babylonian cult in the third century. It is this same connection with Babylon that identifies her as the harlot woman of [Revelation 17:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+17.5&t=NKJV), *“Mystery Babylon The Great, The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.”* Also, within her folds she gives shelter and safety to the agents of Satan. They are in the branches, which symbolize high places or the hierarchy. Thus, we see the outcome of the tares as they continue on in this dispensation. For when men slept, they changed the nature of the mustard seed by changing its teaching. No longer was the teaching of salvation by grace through faith, for this was changed to works.

No longer was the teaching of power to serve by the filling of Holy Spirit, for this was changed to fear. No longer was the teaching of the coming Kingdom, for that Kingdom was counted as already in this world, with its realization in the coming of Anti-Christ who will allow Rome to rule the world for a short time. The true Bride of Christ is out of the sight of men. It is an herb bush that provides seasoning and medicine for this polluted and sin sick world. It is shown as it should be in [Mark 4:30-32](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+4.30-32&t=NKJV). Here it remains a bush and gives only shade to the fowls who rest under it. They are in the world but the world is not in them. It is the make-up of all the individuals in this dispensation who are called by our Lord “The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Finally, the Lord would have us examine and compare this parable in the light of another context. Let us turn to [Luke 13:18-19](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+13.18-19&t=NKJV), and read,

*“Then said he, unto what is the Kingdom of God like? And whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.”*

Our Lord’s use of the parable here is not the same as in Matthew. For here He is speaking to Israel only, whereas in Matthew His message is to who-so-ever. Here He offered Israel the privilege of becoming partakers of the Kingdom, whereas in Matthew His offer was to the Gentiles.

Let us first notice the context. In the [Luke 13:14-16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+13.14-16&t=NKJV), Jesus has attacked Jewish legalism, which was the foundation on which Israel of that day rested. The Lord has judged this system of works through the ruler of the synagogue, who in [Luke 13:14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+13.14&t=NKJV) berated the Lord with indignation for healing on the Sabbath. In [Luke 13:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+13.15&t=NKJV) the Lord calls him a hypocrite. In [Luke 13:18-21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+13.18-21&t=NKJV), He widens His judgment to INCLUDE ALL OF ISRAEL. In this parable of the mustard seed the judgment is the same that it is in Matthew. It is three-fold with emphasis on the “Word of the Kingdom.” The place that it was sown, however, is different. Here it is cast into the sower’s own garden, whereas in Matthew it was sown in a field (world). Since the mustard plant is an herb, we must seek out the interpretation of the word “garden” by seeking Scripture that speaks of a “garden of herbs.”

By employing the law of first mention in the Scriptures, we notice in [Deuteronomy 11:10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+11.10&t=NKJV) that the Lord calls Egypt His garden of herbs.

*“For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sewedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs.”*

Thus, when the Lord CAST the seed into His own garden He is making reference to when He cast the seed into Egypt in order to develop a Holy nation, set apart to be partakers in the coming Kingdom.

Now, let us examine the word “CAST.” The first time that it is used in connection with Egypt is when Joseph was cast into the pit in order that he may become a slave of the Egyptians ([Genesis 37:22-24](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+37.22-24&t=NKJV)). Therefore, the seed is Joseph, who was cast into Egypt, for all of the Israelites who came out of Egypt later did so because Joseph went there first. Now, one may say, “But I thought that the seed represented the three-fold message of Christ, and not an individual.” The answer, of course, is that it does represent the three-fold message and the individual at the same time. However, the individual in this sense is Christ Himself. This is so since Christ and His message are the same. Consider this: Christ is Salvation, Power and Rewards. His is justification, sanctification, and glorification. He is prophet, priest, and King. He is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. When one receives the three-fold message, THEY RECEIVE HIM and [they] bear fruit. When one rejects a portion of the three-fold message, they reject a portion of Him, and therefore, cannot bear fruit. Now, I think I hear again one saying, “But what does Christ have to do with Joseph?” Very simply this, Joseph was a type of Christ.

This is borne out by making a comparison of the two.

(1) Even as Joseph claimed that one day he would rule over his Jewish brethren, so Christ also claimed that He would rule Israel.

(2) Even as Joseph was rejected and sold by his Jewish brethren for 20 pieces of silver, so was Jesus rejected by His Jewish brethren and sold for 30 pieces of silver.

(3) Even as Joseph was cast into the pit, so was Jesus crucified on the cross.

(4) Even as Joseph was stripped of his coat of many colors, given to him by his father, so was Jesus stripped of His glory, given Him by His Father.

(5) Even as Joseph went into a foreign land as a result of the pit, so did Jesus go into Heaven as a result of the cross.

(6) Even as Joseph became King of the foreign land, so is Jesus King of Heaven.

(7) Even as Joseph saved the world from a famine by giving them bread, so is Jesus in the business of saving the world from spiritual famine by giving spiritual bread.

(8) Even as Joseph’s brethren finally recognized him as King, so will Jesus’ brethren (the Jews) finally recognize Him as King.

With all of the above comparisons, three points stand out. They are: The crucifixion by His being cast into the pit; the power, by His authority to give bread to the world; His Kingship, by His position in Egypt. I am convinced that the Holy Spirit used the word “cast” in the parable in order to connect the seed through Joseph to his anti-type, the Lord Jesus Christ. By using this word, He also draws attention to the first message of the seed, even the death of our Lord on the cross of Calvary.

In the parable, the Lord shows us that He cast this seed into Egypt. It was supposed to have grown into a bush (emblem of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven), but the Jews changed the teaching of the seed so that it grew into a great tree with birds finding shelter in its branches. They were not satisfied with a heavenly Kingdom, they wanted one that was completely earthly. Thus, they received only that portion of the seed that speaks of the word of the Kingdom and rejected that portion that speaks of salvation and the power of [the] Holy Spirit. When Jesus came, they wanted His Kingdom but not Him as King. Therefore, He rejected them and offered the seed to the Gentiles.

It is a sad commentary to say that the majority of the Gentiles have also rejected the seed. They, too, have gone the way of the Jews. All that they are interested in is a great world-wide Kingdom (church) without Jesus as its King. They not only have rejected Him as King of His Kingdom, but they have rejected Him as King of the heart. Individually, they have become “tools” of the Devil and as such are called tares. Collectively, they are the great tree which represents the false church and the false Kingdom. All tares will eventually return to the mother-church at Rome and [will] one day suffer the wrath of God.

([Return to Contents](#FOREWORD))

**CHAPTER THREE**

THE REVEALED MYSTERIES

IV. THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

[Matthew 13:33-35](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33-35&t=NKJV)

In an effort to interpret the fourth parable in the framework of modern theology, the majority, in the community of so-called Scripture authoritarians, have done irrevocable damage to its message. In giving its true exposition, let me first categorically refute the popular interpretation that is being taught.

The popular interpretation says that the leaven represents the gospel and its power, the meal the human race, and the woman the church. As the woman hid the leaven in the meal until it was all leavened so will the gospel hidden in the world by the church, spread until reaches all of mankind.

First, if the popular view be the correct teaching, then it follows that ultimately all of the human race will be evangelized, but this is not so. God has already stated that He is taking out of the world a small group called His church. He speaks of the broad way that leads to destruction, thus emphasizing the majority who will go down to Hell.

Second, if the popular view be correct, then Christ was in error in the choice of His figures.

(1) Jesus has never committed the preaching of the gospel to woman.

(2) The nature of Leaven is to work by itself with no help. One is to leave it alone. But this is not a picture of the gospel, for it moves on the vehicles of burdened hearts for lost people.

Third, if the popular view be correct, then the picture of the results of the work of the leaven is in error. This is so because leaven puffs up the meal and this action is symbolic in the Scriptures as sinful pride. How then can a figure for evil be at the same time a figure for the successful evangelizing of the world?

Fourth, if the popular view is correct, then God has contradicted Himself in the second parable. For it is there that He gives a picture by the wheat and tares of Christianity being apostatized instead of evangelized.

Fifth, if the popular view is correct, then the word “leaven” is a symbol of good throughout the bible. Thus, the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees that Jesus warned of is good not bad. What the popular view seems to forget is that, according to the law of first mention, once a figure’s meaning is established it cannot change. Leaven has always been an emblem of evil in God’s Word without one exception. In [Exodus 34:25](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+34.25&t=NKJV), He warned against using it with blood offerings. In the Levitical Law, He excluded it with all offerings ([Leviticus 2:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+2.11&t=NKJV)). In [Leviticus 23:17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+23.17&t=NKJV), He types it as the “Old Nature” of both Jewish and Gentile converts to Christ. In [Amos 4:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Amos+4.5&t=NKJV), it is the language of irony, which means the opposite. We know this by the context, determined by [Amos 4:4](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Amos+4.4&t=NKJV). In [I Corinthians 5:6-7](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+5.6-7&t=NKJV), He warns us to purge out the old leaven. In [Galatians 5:7-9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.7-9&t=NKJV), it is pictured as hindering men from obedience to the truth.

*“Another parable spake He unto them: The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”* ([Matthew 13:33](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV))

I shall first interpret the parable and then elaborate on its principles. The woman is the Roman church. The meal is Christ, and His doctrine. The leaven is legalism or salvation by works. Even as the woman hid leaven in the meal and thus leavened the whole, so did Romanism hide the doctrine of works in the doctrine of Christ till it has permeated all of mankind.

In elaborating on its three principles, we immediately see that it teaches a continuation of the third parable through a different view. For whereas “The Great Tree” symbolized the appearances of the false church, this parable symbolizes the inward view, its false doctrine. Whereas the third revealed what is visible to the eye, the fourth shows what was hidden to the eye. Whereas the third reveals the institution, the fourth shows the teaching of that institution.

When we connect the tares in the second parable to the great tree in the third, and the leaven in the meal in the fourth, we get an unmistakable picture of the apostatizing of this dispensation. When the tares were sown in the third century, the leaven was placed in the meal, and the nature of the mustard bush was changed at the same time. When the Lord returns He will find tares, a great tree, and a leavened doctrine all filling the earth, but not much wheat.

*“Another parable spake He unto them: The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto leaven…”* Leaven, in the days of Jesus’ earthly ministry, was made by the woman of the house. She did this by taking out a portion of dough from its batch and letting it set overnight. The following day, she would then mix into a new batch that portion of the old. Thus, by sitting out that day and that night the old portion received a change in its nature that caused a change in the new batch when it was mixed in. This change we call bacterial action. By using this figure of leaven, the Lord is showing us exactly what happened in the third century when the Roman church came into being.

Consider these points:

(1) The doctrine of Christ was offered to Israel in the first batch.

(2) Israel changed the nature of this doctrine by legalizing it.

(3) Their doctrine was cast out of the batch, where it gathered the bacteria of Satan.

(4) The Gentiles were then offered the new batch of meal and became the church.

(5) The church, under the influence of Satan in the third century, once again managed to mix that portion of old into the new batch of meal, “while men slept.”

(6) Its permeation of the new has caused the church to set up a “Priesthood” to practice idolatry, to change grace to law, and faith to works.

It is these practices that God calls hypocrisy ([Luke 12:1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+12.1&t=NKJV)) and thus is the doctrine of the tares. The figure of “a woman” in this parable is God’s way of describing the Roman church. This is so since she is the counterfeit church and the counterfeit bride, and thus the bride to the counterfeit Christ. In this state she is pictured in [Revelation 17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+17&t=NKJV) as a woman. Here she is called the *“woman drunken with the blood of the saints”* ([Revelation 17:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+17.6&t=NKJV)). She is also called the *“whore,”* ([Revelation 17:16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+17.16&t=NKJV)). Another reason is that Satan can use a woman easier than a man in starting and spreading false doctrine. Consider many of the false doctrines. Christian Scientism was started by Mary Baker Eddy, and Spiritualism by the Foy sisters, and if it were not for the women, Jehovah’s Witnesses could not profitably function.

The figure of the meal is most beautiful in this parable, for it pictures bread, which is the emblem of Jesus. However, the words, *“three measures”* have confused many as to its meaning. What does it mean? Only after we have studied the first parable in relationship to its three teachings can we understand that it stands for none other than the threefold doctrine of Christ. It could be nothing less, since it takes this to produce a fruit-bearing Christian. The meal, then, is the “word of salvation, the word of power, and the word of the Kingdom.”

To sum up this parable, the Devil has managed to apostatize all of the threefold doctrine of Christ in this age. He has accomplished this by using the Roman church as his chief tool. This teaches us that this age will not end in a great spiritual revival in which the world will turn to God. Nor does it teach that the church will be revived, but rather it will end in apostasy by false doctrine. Do we not see this great falling away now? It is my opinion that the Lord is at the door now, preparing to once again make His entrance into human history.

In finalizing this parable it is interesting to compare it with its other recording found in [Luke 13:20-21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+13.20-21&t=NKJV), for here it follows the parable of the mustard seed even as it does in Matthew. What does it mean? It is God’s way of telling the Jews that they were the first to reject the Lord and apostatize (leaven) His threefold doctrine. This is proof that the leaven of the Roman church is the same leaven that completely leavened Israel. However, even though Rome is a product of this first leavened loaf, their three measures of meal was leavened in the opposite order as that of Israel’s; that is, where Rome leavened the meal through first apostatizing the word of salvation, then the word of power, and finally the word of the Kingdom, Israel first leavened the Word of the Kingdom, then the Word of Power, and finally the Word of Salvation.

PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND TARES: SECOND DIVISION

[Matthew 13:40-41](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40-41&t=NKJV)

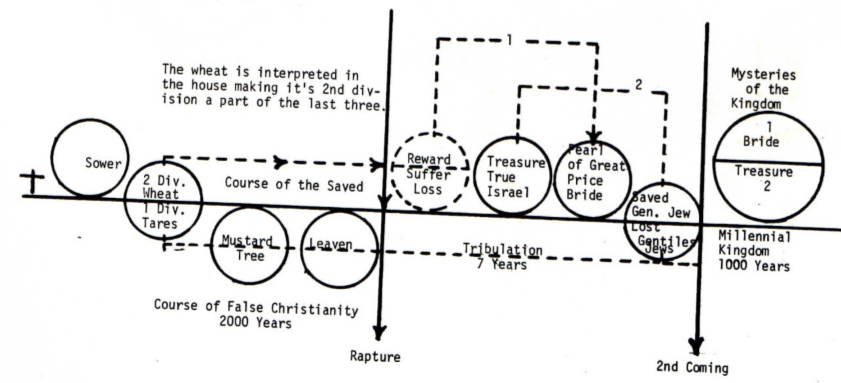
*“Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and His disciples*

*came unto Him, saying, declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.”* ([Matthew 13:36](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.36&t=NKJV)).

The reader will remember that this parable is in two divisions. The first has already been interpreted, and now the second lies before us.

However, before we can begin its exposition it is needful for us to first see its position among the other six. In the beginning, we noted that there were seven parables that made up the [Matthew 13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV). The very fact that they were recorded in this number reveals to us its divine autograph, for this number is God’s number in His relationship to the whole world. It is made up of 3 and 4. The [number](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=number+3&t=NKJV) 3 stands for the triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – while the [number 4](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=number+4&t=NKJV) stands for this world. This is so because the number is its prominent figure.

The world is divided into 4 directions – North, East, South and West. It is also made up of four major elements – fire, water, earth and air. Along with this we see 4 seasons, 4 weeks to the month, etc., just to mention a few.



Now, as we fully understand this, the Holy Spirit divides the parables into two groups in order to further clarify its message. The method of this separation is seen in the [Matthew 13:36](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.36&t=NKJV). Here, it is revealed that Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. This action shows that He spoke only four parables to the multitude and reserved the remaining three exclusively for His intimate few inside the house. In this sense, the first four were given to identify the world [as] to its content, and the apostasy of the threefold doctrine of Christ. Whereas, the last three are given in the house in order to identify the true church with its content and the reward of the threefold doctrine of Christ.

There may be an objection to this teaching on the grounds of what has already been said. Since we recognized that the multitude stood primarily for Israel at the beginning of this chapter, we ask, “How can it stand for the world here?” This difficulty may be removed when we notice in [Matthew 13:2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.2&t=NKJV) that there was more than one multitude, for it is recorded,

*“And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him…”*

This is indicative of not only Israel but of all false religion, whose leaven originates with Israel’s false doctrine.

As this truth explodes upon our hearts, the Lord desires to reveal to us still another division of the seven. In this further division, He divides the seven into 5 and 2. His method of separation here is revealed by the position of the second parable, for it is not only numbered with the four by being proclaimed to the multitudes, but it is numbered with the three by being interpreted to the disciples. This, then, connects the first two with the last three, omitting the third and fourth. Thus, we have a group of five and a group of two. Through these two groups God is further enlightening to us His overall message of the seven. Two is the number of witness, and as such stands for the unregenerate. This is so because every saved individual is a trinity of body, soul and spirit, whereas every lost individual is a duo of body and soul with his spirit dead. One day at the Great White Throne, his body and soul will be a witness against him before he is consigned to the Lake of Fire.

The number five is the number for Grace and is made up of three (God’s number) and two (unregenerate man’s number). Thus, the five parables reveal to us the progression of God’s grace starting with the sowing of the seed and its interpretation, which connects it to the wheat, which likewise when interpreted in the house connects it to the treasure, pearl, and dragnet. Contrary-wise, the two remaining parables show the folly of rejection of the Lord and as such stand as a witness against them by revealing the works of man.

There is yet one more division to be seen, and that division is in the second parable. This is the subject before us. In the exposition of the first division we left off at the end of [Matthew 13:40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40&t=NKJV), the reason being that all that follows ([Matthew 13:42-43](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42-43&t=NKJV)) belongs to the second division. In the exposition of the first division, the emphasis was on the reward of the tares as they are separated unto the coming Anti-Kingdom; whereas, in the exposition of the second division, the emphasis is on the reward of the wheat as they are separated unto the coming Kingdom of Heaven. It is in the attempt to expound this parable in one division that many expositors have failed. The very fact that it is numbered with both the 4 and the 3 gives evidence that it has two divisions.

Let us pick up the interpretation by quickly reviewing [Matthew 13:40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40&t=NKJV).

[Matthew 13:40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40&t=NKJV) gives us a complete picture of what will happen to the tares. They shall be gathered and burned in the field at the end of this age. Now, dear reader and would be expositor, we have no authority to connect [Matthew 13:40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40&t=NKJV) with [Matthew 13:41](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.41&t=NKJV). In [Matthew 13:40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40&t=NKJV), the Lord made an emphatic statement that was concise and complete. We have no right to interpret [Matthew 13:41-43](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.41-43&t=NKJV) as a repetition of [Matthew 13:40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40&t=NKJV). The words of verse 40 have been spoken and all that was to be said of the tares has been said. This ends the thought and the subject, and we are not to carry it over into

[Matthew 13:41](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.41&t=NKJV).

*“The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;”* ([Matthew 13:41](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.41&t=NKJV))

In the beginning of this verse, the Lord shows us a great gathering out. Is it the tares? No, for the tares have already been gathered, bound, and burned in [Matthew 13:40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40&t=NKJV). Is it the loss of the world who never professed Christianity? No, for they are of the world and in the world, but these are not of [the] world, but of the Kingdom. Notice that they are gathered out of the Kingdom not because of unbelief, but because of their works of iniquity. In this connection, not only is the individual gathered out, but all his works (“all things that offend”). Therefore, if the Angels are the reapers, and they have ready gathered the tares, then this must be a detailed picture of the rapture and separation of the wheat before it is stored in the barn ([Matthew 13:30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.30&t=NKJV)). This, then, is the Judgment Seat of Christ.

*“And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*.” ([Matthew 13:42](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV))

Many born again people may be offended at this verse, but they should not be, for it is an excellent description of the testing of works at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The furnace of fire is not Hell, but rather the all-consuming fire of God at the Judgment Seat. The furnace of fire in the Scriptures always stands for a place of refinement. That is, when one wanted to refine his gold or silver by separating the impurities from it, he would place his gold or silver into a furnace of fire, which in turn would burn off the worthless dross and make his precious metal pure ([Proverbs 17:3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+17.3&t=NKJV); [27:21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+27.21&t=NKJV)). There are only a few places in the Scriptures that the word furnace has references to Hell or total destruction, but in each case it is not mentioned as a FIREY FURNACE but a SMOKING FURNACE (see [Genesis 19:20](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.20&t=NKJV); [Revelation 9:2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+9.2&t=NKJV)).

The apostle Paul gives us a clearer understanding of this in [I Corinthians 3:12-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+3.12-15&t=NKJV).

*“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire: and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

Here he shows us that all Christians must be tested as to their works, and this test will be by fire ([I Corinthians 3:13](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+3.13&t=NKJV)). If one’s works shall be burned up

*“he shall SUFFER LOSS; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by (through) fire.”* ([I Corinthians 3:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+3.15&t=NKJV))

If one’s works are not burned he shall receive a REWARD ([I Corinthians 3:14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+3.14&t=NKJV)). Notice that both the believer and his works will go through the fire. However, it is possible only for his works to be burned, for he himself is saved and the fire cannot touch him. John the Baptist spoke of this passing through the fire that every Christian must endure, in [Matthew 3:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.11&t=NKJV); here he says that Jesus baptizes (immerses) with the Holy Ghost and with FIRE.

Another objection in this verse for many Christians is the phrase *“wailing and gnashing of teeth.”* This is primarily so because of the indoctrination from the modern pulpit. They are taught that there will be no pain or sorrow in Heaven and everybody will be happy. This is why many refuse to believe in rewards. They reason to themselves that they will be happy in Heaven so why waste time here working for rewards? After all, can’t one be saved and still enjoy a little of the world? It is true that the eternal council of the Godhead has already predetermined the position of every child of God in the eternities (Kingdom of the Father), and that all sorrow, pain, sickness and death will be wiped away, but the Judgment Seat is not considered Heaven, nor the Kingdom of Heaven, but rather the place of induction and assignment of position into the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is here that one may “suffer loss” when his works are burned up and he fails to win a reward in the coming Kingdom of Heaven. This startling realization of being assigned the position of subject, rather than sovereign will bring “wailing and gnashing of teeth.” The apostle Paul, in using the phrase “suffer loss” in [I Corinthians 3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+3&t=NKJV), backs this up.” The Greek word is “zemioo” which means to injure, to experience detriment, be cast away, receive damage. It is plain that a lost man cannot suffer loss in the same way since he has nothing to lose.

*“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their father…”* ([Matthew 13:43](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.43&t=NKJV))

This last verse views past the Kingdom of Heaven to the Kingdom of the Father, which comes after the Millennium.

The apostle Paul speaks of it in [I Corinthians 15:24-25](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+15.24-25&t=NKJV);

*“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath all enemies under his feet.”*

The content of our verse is a grand finale to the parable which gives great glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. The parable teaches separation. First there is the separation of the wheat from the tares; second, the separation of the wheat of those who gain reward from those who suffer loss; third, the separation of all [the] righteous from all of Christ’s enemies, with the righteous entering the Kingdom of the Father.

This last and final separation takes place after the thousand-year reign of Jesus here on earth with his Bride. It is here, that he rules and puts all enemies under his feet. However, the last enemy to be defeated by our Lord will be death, after the Lord’s earthly reign is over, and this will take place at the Great White throne of Judgment ([Revelation 20:14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.14&t=NKJV)). The Kingdom of the Father shall commence together with eternity: all those who have ever been saved will be there and regardless of their rank and station will shine forth as the sun. Only here will all sorrow, pain, tears and death be wiped away ([Revelation 21:4](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.4&t=NKJV)).

It is only fitting that this parable, which was delivered both to the world and to His own privately, show the utter defeat of His enemies, and glorious victory of His own through The Church Age, The Kingdom Age, and the Age of Ages.

V. PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

[Matthew 13:44](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.44&t=NKJV)

The popular interpretations of the 5th and 6th parables are products of the three-fold meal, ruined by the leaven. It is no less than amazing how much the leaven has crept into the teachings of Scripture, causing infinite violence to sound exegesis. Even those who call themselves “Conservative” have in many cases fallen victim to this doctrine of Hell. Let us once again put the spotlight of God’s Word on these erroneous teaching in order to expose them for what they are.

The popular interpretation makes the Treasure and the Pearl salvation. When the buyer of the field finds the Treasure, and the merchant the Pearl, it is a figure of a sinner finding salvation. The only difference is, the man in the field ACCIDENTLY finds it, whereas the merchant SEEKS to find it. If this interpretation sounds plausible, that is exactly as the Devil planned it, for by giving it [*i.e*. this interpretation] he destroys the plan of salvation.

Consider this.

(1) Men never seek after salvation, it is God that does the seeking.

(2) Salvation is not hidden in the world, but is separate from the world. If anything is hidden, the gospel is hidden from the world by Satan, who has blinded the eyes of the world.

(3) When one finds salvation, he does not hide from it in the world, but rather he lets it so shine in his separated life that the world may see it.

(4) When one finds salvation, he does not purchase it, for it is a free gift.

(5) When one finds salvation he does not sell all that he has in order to purchase it, for he has nothing to sell.

(6) Also, he does not purchase the field, for the field is the world.

*“Again the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”* ([Matthew 13:44](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.44&t=NKJV)).

One of the keys that will help us understand this parable and the two that follow it is the identification of those to whom he spoke those words. Since we have already recognized that Jesus left the multitude and went into the house in order to teach these last three parables, we are made to believe that he spoke these last three, which represent the “Mysteries” of the Kingdom of Heaven, to his disciples.

With this in mind, we know that the last three parables are for and about this intimate few. This truth also is backed up in these last three parables by the omission of the phrase, *“Another parable put he forth, or spake he, unto them.”* This phrase marks the beginning of the first four, but is substituted in the last three by the word “again.” Why is this? First, it is omitted to show he was no longer speaking to the multitude.

The Scripture indicates that he always spoke to Israel by parable when he was out of favor with them, so that seeing they might not see and hearing they might not hear, but here he left off talking with them and went into the house to speak to his intimate few.

Therefore, teachings inside the house are not parables even though they follow a parabolic form and are numbered with the seven. No one inside asked Him to interpret any of His teaching simply because they had no need to. They knew what he was teaching, as all members of the mysteries in this dispensation know (see [Matthew 13:51](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.51&t=NKJV)).

Second, the word “again” is substituted for the phrase *“Another parable spake he unto them”* at the beginning of the last three parables in order to connect it with the second division of the wheat and tares, ending in [Matthew 13:43](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.43&t=NKJV). Thus, the last three parables give us a clearer view of the “mysteries” that were tried and rewarded in the fourth parable.

*“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto treasure…”*

There is no problem in discovering the meaning of the principles of this parable. The field has already been interpreted in the second parable as the world. The word “man” stands for the Lord Jesus Christ and the treasure, “true Israel”. We see this by applying the law of first mention again. In [Exodus 19:5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+19.5&t=NKJV), we read,

*“Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar TREASURE unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.”*

Notice, that this statement of the Lord did not automatically include all Jews as His peculiar treasure, but those that met two requirements. These were obey His voice, and keep His covenant. Since the voice of God is the Lord Jesus (called in other Scriptures the Word of God), they must obey the Lord Jesus through faith. This is connected to His first coming. Then they must keep His covenant by works, which is connected to the second coming and the Kingdom promised through the Abrahamic covenant. These two requirements are part of the three-fold doctrine of Christ, with the third being the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the word OBEY is the word of salvation, KEEP, the word of power, COVENEANT, the word of the Kingdom. The Lord, then, is calling all Jews who have the three-fold doctrine of Christ His peculiar TREASURE.

*“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.”*

Let us expound on this verse point by point.

First, the treasure was hidden. This has reference to the beginning of Israel’s national history in Egypt, for it was there that they were slaves in the brick kilns, hidden in the world literally and typically, for Egypt is a type of the world. Also, the ten tribes of Israel were so hidden in the world by God through the Assyrian captivity that they are still hidden, and as such are referred to as the ten lost tribes of Israel.

Second, the Lord found this treasure when He came to fulfill His earthly ministry. In this word “found,” the meaning is not extended to the ten lost tribes but to their representatives, the Jews. If Israel had accepted the Kingdom that was offered by their King, then the remaining ten tribes would have been made a part of that Kingdom. This is proved out in the prophetic scriptures of [Ezekiel 37:15-28](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.15-28&t=NKJV). Here the Lord promises, through the sign of the two sticks, that all twelve tribes will be brought back together and dwell together in the coming Kingdom.

Third, our text tells that, *“…when a man hath found he hideth…”* If one is not careful, he will misinterpret at this point. Notice, the Scripture does not say that “he hideth it back in the field” but that *“he hideth”*. It is, of course, necessary for us to recognize that the Jews were scattered throughout the world after they rejected Jesus. However, this is not the primary teaching in view here. The word “hideth” in this verse refers to “the man,” for after he found the treasure he HIDETH HIMSELF.

The prophet Isaiah makes reference to this in [Isaiah 8:14-17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+8.14-17&t=NKJV).

*“And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the house of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.”*

Notice in [Isaiah 8:17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+8.17&t=NKJV) that the Lord prophesied that he would hide his face from all twelve tribes because of their rejection of Him. Also, in [Isaiah 8:14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+8.14&t=NKJV) the Lord God spells out that rejection in terms of the crucifixion by using two terms – “A stone of stumbling” and “a rock of offense.” The Lord chose these two terms to show that the crucifixion is OFFFENSIVE and a STUMBLING BLOCK to the Jews, since nationally they cannot accept the fact that their Messiah was crucified (see also [Romans 11:7-12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.7-12&t=NKJV)). Also, the word “hideth” has reference to Jesus purposely hiding himself while in His earthly ministry so that only those who repented to God would have their eyes opened to his person.

Fourth, our text says that

*“…he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath…”*

Our Lord, through His sovereignty, looked forward to that day in which he would claim His peculiar treasure, and therefore with joy he sold all that he had on the cross of Calvary in order to purchase the object of His joy. Notice that the hiding came before the crucifixion, for He first “hideth” and then went and sold all that he had. This is proof that the word “hideth” does not refer to hiding the Jews back into the world, as this occurred after the crucifixion.

Fifth, our text says,

*“…selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.”*

There are two views that must be seen here. The word “joy” in the fourth point makes reference to the elect or the Jewish portion of the “mysteries” of the Kingdom of Heaven through the aspect of God’s secret Will, whereas, the word “world” makes reference to all of the Jews through God’s revealed will because God is willing that none should perish.

Therefore, His revealed Will caused him to pay the sin price for the whole world in order that His elect may be saved. Also, we must notice in the text that buying the field does not only refer to the Jews but to all of creation. This is so because creation fell with man when he first sinned, and is now awaiting its redemption at the coming of the Lord, when He shall renew all things (see [Romans 8:22-23](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.22-23&t=NKJV)). It was at the cross where Jesus sold all that He had, even Himself, to purchase the world and the treasure in the world.

One day He shall break the seven sealed title deed in Heaven and cast out Satan and take possession of what is rightfully His. Notice that our text does not reveal the possessing of Israel, only the purchase. Further, it is not said that our Lord possesses the world here, though He will at His coming. This is additional proof that the treasure is Israel – God’s earthly people, for they are outside the scope of this dispensation. Those who are saved now are not members of the treasure but of the church. When the Lord completes His body in this dispensation, He will rapture His church and again deal with His “peculiar treasure,” Israel.

In this fifth point one final thought is needful in order to complete our exposition. Our text makes no mention of saving His peculiar treasure out of the world, but rather leaving the treasure where it is and buying the world. This teaching is to show that Israel is God’s earthly people, purposed to inhabit the Kingdom of their Messiah on this earth at His return. Thus, His peculiar treasure, which has the three-fold doctrine of Christ, is numbered with the mysteries in the last three parables, and is identified specifically as that EARTHLY PORTION.

VI. PARABLE OF THE PEARL

[Matthew 13:45-46](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.45-46&t=NKJV)

In the parable of the pearl, there are two different modern-day interpretations being taught. Both of these views, to one degree or another, are in error. The first is the popular view, which represents gross error and ought to be called the “ridiculous interpretation”. It is called, however, the popular in order to point to the seminaries and majority of pulpits in which it is taught. Like the parable of the treasure, the popular view is a product of the leavened three-fold doctrine of Christ, which has spread throughout the theological world. It is a doctrine of Hell and violates all the cardinal principles of salvation.

Like the parable of the treasure, it teaches that salvation can be bought by the sinner. It teaches also that man seeks after God, rather than God seeking after man, and that man has something to sell in view of the scriptural teaching that man is totally depraved.

The second interpretation is the conservative view, and is only in minor error. This view is the product of serious-minded Bible students who have not been deepened in the Scriptures, and thereby are in error only from the standpoint of shallowness. They properly identify the man as Jesus Christ, but wrongly identify the pearl as all of the initially saved.

In properly interpreting the parable, we must keep in mind two things. First, the parable of the pearl is in a group of three parables told to the intimate people of Jesus only, teaching the identity of the “Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Thus far we see two groups that make up those mysteries – the Treasure and the Pearl. Second, the Pearl cannot stand for all of the saved, as taught by the conservative view, as that has already been dealt with by the figure of the wheat.

Why would the Lord make repetition? The Pearl, then, necessarily takes up where the parable of the wheat lets off, and this is at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Its figure, then, can be nothing less than the wheat after it is tried and rewarded. Clearly, the Pearl is an emblem only of those few who will gain a crown at the Judgment Seat and does not represent those who are saved and will suffer loss. Here, then, is a beautiful picture of the Gentile portion of the mysteries, who will gain her position the same way true Israel will. That is, keeping the three-fold doctrine of Christ and bringing forth fruit. Thus, since she reigns with Christ in His coming Kingdom as queen consort, He calls her His “BRIDE’.

“*Again the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”* ([Matthew 13:45-46](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.45-46&t=NKJV)).

First, the parable shows us Christ seeking goodly pearls. Since his interest is in seeking more than one pearl we must conclude that the pearls (plural) stand for all of the saved, and is a figure of our dispensation of grace, since Jesus came *“to seek and to save that which was lost.”*

Second, the parable shows us Christ finding one pearl of great price among the other pearls. This discovery of the one pearl by Christ leads to a separation of the one from the many.

This symbolizes the division into two groups, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, of all those who are saved. [These two groups are] called the General Assembly and the Church of the Firstborn ([Hebrews 12:23](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.23&t=NKJV)), or the General Church and the Bride.

Notice that he found the one pearl before he bought it, thus showing the sovereign election of the Bride by the Lord. This is in harmony with Scripture that teaches that the Bride has been known and predestined by God from before the foundations of the world.

*“According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”* ([Ephesians 1:4-5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.4-5&t=NKJV))

Third, after Christ found the pearl, then He went and sold all that He had and bought it. This can mean nothing less than the finished work on the cross of Calvary in order to purchase His Bride. Notice that He sold all that He had. This has reference to the giving of His son, the Lord Jesus Christ, even to His death. The apostle Peter affirms this in [I Peter 1:18-20](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Peter+1.18-20&t=NKJV).

“*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot, Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”*

There may be an objection to this interpretation by the reader on the grounds that the Lord Jesus Christ died for all that are saved; however, the teaching of the general assembly of the saved is not in view here. The Lord is only interested in revealing that which was tried, refined, and rewarded at the Judgment Seat, that which is called the “Pearl of Great Price,” His Bride.

Let us now consider some of the points of contrast between the Pearl and the Bride, and the oyster and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, the Lord teaches us of the unity of His Bride (church) by using the figure of a pearl. The pearl is the only gem known to man whose unity cannot be broken without destroying it. One may take a diamond or ruby and cut them in two, and as a result have two gems. But to cut a pearl in half is to result in nothing, since it would be destroyed.

Second, the Pearl is formed from a living creature, and is a product of suffering. When a piece of foreign matter enters the oyster, it wounds its side and as a result is transformed into a pearl by the attempts of the oyster to cover it with the substance of its inner shell. With this truth, the Lord teaches us that the Bride likewise is formed by the living God and is a product of suffering. When the corrupt foreign matter of the sin-sick man enters by faith into Christ, his sins are covered by the blood of Jesus from his wounded side, thus transforming him into the Bride.

Again, notice that this process shows two works of the oyster. First, the entering in of the foreign matter and second the long, slow process of forming the pearl. Likewise, there are two works of God in forming the Bride. First, there is the act of justification by entering into Christ by faith, and second, the long, slow process of sanctification by having your sins covered daily. With this figure, it is beautiful to recognize that each pearl has a corrupt center, but cannot be seen by its owner since it has been covered up by the substance of the oyster. It has become a thing of beauty. Likewise, the bride began with a corrupt center that cannot be seen by God since it has been covered with the substance of Christ’s suffering.

Third, the pearl is formed on the inside of the oyster’s three-fold shell, and is made of the same substance as that of the inner shell. This shell is a beautiful emblem of Christ and His three-fold doctrine. The outer layer of the shell corresponds to the physical body of Christ and His first coming, and teaches of the word of salvation. There is no beauty to this shell. The middle layer of the shell is unseen, being between the outer and inner layer. This unseen layer is called the “Prismatic layer” and corresponds to the Holy Spirit and the filling of a Christian, and teaches of the word of power. The inner layer is made of solid pearl and corresponds to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and His second coming and teaches the “Word of the Kingdom”. It is from this inner layer called “the pearly inner layer,” that the pearl of great price is made. And since it is made from the same substance that is emblematic of the deity and kingly office of the Lord Jesus Christ, it then is also an emblem of glorification and kingly rule with Christ on His throne.

Finally, the pearl is formed in layers. This is accomplished by the oyster secreting a special substance called “nacre” around the foreign particle. When the particle first enters the creature it is encircled by a sac of the oyster called the “epithelium sac”. It then becomes coated by many thin sheets of pearl, and after many years of this process a lustrous pearl is formed. A pearl of great price not only has quality and color, but it must have many layers. Likewise, the Bride is formed by many layers or coatings of the work of Jesus, not of being constantly saved over and over, but constantly cleansed over and over. This then gives proof that the Pearl of Great Price is not an emblem of all the saved, but rather only those of the saved whose lives are made up of many layers of cleansing and re-commissioning by the Lord Jesus Christ because of the trials, tribulations and persecutions of the world, the flesh and Satan.

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* ([I John 1:9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+John+1.9&t=NKJV))

VII. PARABLE OF THE DRAG NET

[Matthew 13:47-50](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.47-50&t=NKJV)

*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels’ hall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.”* ([Matthew 13:47-49](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.47-49&t=NKJV))

The careful reader of the seventh parable will note the difference in its construction as opposed to the fifth and sixth parables. The fifth and sixth tell only the parable without further explanation; the seventh seems to interpret itself. Notice that we said “seems,” that is, it shows two divisions that speak of two entirely different subjects. Many expositors have failed to see this and as a result have greatly erred in its message. Like the second parable, then, it has two divisions, hidden from the casual inquirer, but revealed to those seeking truth.

The first division uses the figures of sea, seashore, net, and fishes. It begins with [Matthew 13:47](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.47&t=NKJV) and includes [Matthew 13:48](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.48&t=NKJV).  Its content is wholly Gentile and speaks of God’s dealing with the Gentile Nations during the coming Great Tribulation Period.  As opposed to this, the second division uses the figures of angels and a fiery furnace.  It begins in [Matthew 13:49](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.49&t=NKJV) and includes [Matthew 13:50](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.50&t=NKJV). Its content is wholly Jewish and speaks of God’s dealing with the Jews during this same period of time.

*“Again the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind.”*

At the beginning of this first division, we find no difficulty in interpreting the sea and the seashore. As we have learned earlier, the sea in prophetic language always speaks of the nations, while the seashore speaks of Israel. The symbol that is so difficult for most is the net.

Failing at this point has left many expositors and their readers in the darkness of misunderstanding. Some have erred when they tried to make this mean the rapture; others, when they tried to make it the return of the Jews to Israel. Of course, these errors become obvious when we hold up the figure of the dragnet to the light of scripture, for then we discover that it is an instrument used only in the tribulation period, by evil men, and always in connection with the nations. Let us choose a few scriptures at random.

First, we read in [Habakkuk 1:13-17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Habakkuk+1.13-17&t=NKJV):

*“Thou are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he? And maketh men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them? They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad. Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous. Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?*

In [Habakkuk 1:13-14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Habakkuk+1.13-14&t=NKJV), it speaks of the wicked devouring the righteous by making them as fish and catching them in their dragnet and slaying them. [Habakkuk 1:17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Habakkuk+1.17&t=NKJV) tells us that the fishes in the net are all the nations. [Habakkuk 1:16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Habakkuk+1.16&t=NKJV) tells us that the wicked will worship the net, or the device that catches and drags the fish to shore. This device is none other than the device of Anti-Christ spoken of in [Revelation 13:14-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.14-15&t=NKJV), and is a type of the image of Anti-Christ.

*“And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”* ([Revelation 13:14-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.14-15&t=NKJV))

Now let us read [Micah 7:1-2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Micah+7.1-2&t=NKJV) to see the time and method in which the net will be used.

*“Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man his brother with a net.”* ([Micah 7:1-2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Micah+7.1-2&t=NKJV))

[Micah 7:1](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Micah+7.1&t=NKJV) tells us that the time will be after the harvest or rapture of the church (summer fruits) and during the Great Tribulation (grape gleanings), when the righteous will greatly desire and cry out for the return of Jesus (first ripe fruits). The method of the “net” or device or Anti-Christ will be to cause men to betray their own brothers ([Micah 7:2](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Micah+7.2&t=NKJV)).

Now let us look at [Ecclesiastes 9:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ecclesiastes+9.12&t=NKJV).

*“For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.”* ([Ecclesiastes 9:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ecclesiastes+9.12&t=NKJV))

Here again, we see that the character of the dragnet is evil, and that it will be used against men in an evil time. This time is further disclosed as a time that will fall suddenly upon them. This corresponds to [I Thessalonians 5:3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Thessalonians+5.3&t=NKJV) that speaks of the Day of the Lord.

*“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”* ([I Thessalonians 5:3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Thessalonians+5.3&t=NKJV))

Notice in the passage before us two nets are mentioned. One a fish net, and one a bird net or snare. This is so because the writer is speaking of two groups of men, which are the Gentiles and the Jews. The dragnet is never used in connection with Jews, but rather the bird net or snare.

[Hosea 7:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+7.12&t=NKJV) reads thusly:

*“When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.”* ([Hosea 7:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+7.12&t=NKJV))

Thus, the writer of this passage shows that both the nations and the Jews will be caught in the evil times to come. Finally, we need to read [Ezekiel 32:3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+32.3&t=NKJV) to see the usage of the word “net” and then read the entire chapter.

*“Thus saith the Lord God; I will therefore spread out my net over thee with a company of many people; and they shall bring thee up in my net.”* ([Ezekiel 32:3](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+32.3&t=NKJV))

Here we are impressed with the providence of God, for even though the net of Anti-Christ, or the King of Babylon as used here ([Ezekiel 32:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+32.11&t=NKJV)), will cause the destruction of Egypt during the Tribulation, God says that it is His net, or overrule in all situations.

Let us take what Scripture has given us concerning the dragnet and place it within the framework of [Matthew 13:47](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.47&t=NKJV) of our parable. First, the net or devices of Anti-Christ will affect the whole Gentile world. None will escape. The net, which is an instrument of surprise and arrest will catch the evil as well as the good. It will be cast from the shore of Israel, where Anti-Christ will be, for it is in the Temple that he will proclaim himself as God. It will ultimately be drawn to the land of Israel, where the nations will assemble against the Jews. The parable tells us that every kind will be in the net. This speaks of none being left.

*“Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.”*

This verse switches our thoughts from the net to those that drew the net. Beautiful is His Word, for even as it tells of terrible times that will come upon the world by the device of Anti-Christ, He also tells us that the net will be cast and drawn to shore by the work of His providence. This is the meaning of the word “they,” which stands for the angels of God, who are workers of His providence. Here in this parable His eye is on the good fish that were made righteous through the preaching of the 144,000 sealed ones of Israel. He will not suffer them all to perish in the evil times. The net has been drawn to shore. The gathering of all nations is pictured here. On the physical level, the majority are there to participate in the battle of Armageddon, on the divine [level] they have been summoned to their execution by the Most High. On the physical [level] they are there to do the bidding of Anti-Christ, on the divine to be separated by Christ. On the other hand, the righteous cry out…

*”He took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.”* ([Psalms 18:16-17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalms+18.16-17&t=NKJV))

Let us notice the two words “sat down” in our text. This is ever the emblem of sovereignty showing the presence of the Lord, for it is here that He will judge the nations, separating the good fish from the bad.

For more light on this, read [Matthew 25:31-32](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.31-32&t=NKJV).

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”*  ([Matthew 25:31-32](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.31-32&t=NKJV))

Here the Lord speaks of coming in His glory with his ANGELS, SITTING on His throne of glory, GATHERING all nations and SEPARATING them. Those that are of the sheep nations shall inherit the “Kingdom of Heaven,” visible Kingdom here on earth ([Matthew 25:34](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.34&t=NKJV)). Those that are of the goat nations shall be executed. (This is brought out beautifully in the parable of the 10 pounds in [Luke 19:14-27](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.14-27&t=NKJV)). Now, this is not just the judgment of nations as some expositors would have you believe, but a separation of people. You cannot throw a nation into Hell, it must be individuals. Here the Lord casts the unrighteous into Hell ([Matthew 25:41-46a](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41-46a&t=NKJV)).

So many have labeled this event the judgment of the nations in the fear that someone may get it mixed up with the judgment of individuals at “The Great White Throne” ([Revelation 20:11-15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.11-15&t=NKJV)). Others have labeled it the judgment of the nations, with emphasis on nations, to repudiate those who believe that this is a general judgment.

First of all, the word “nations” is used here only to show that the whole world, or “all kinds” as our parable puts it, will be gathered there, with the exception of Israel, since Israel is not numbered with the nations.

Second, this is no judgment, but a separation. The Lord here isn’t judging whether or not someone is saved. That will have already been determined when the individual chose or rejected Christ. He is simply separating according to what people are, even as a shepherd divides sheep from goats. I don’t understand why it should be confusing. The Lord doesn’t open any books as he does at the judgments, and He doesn’t send them to Hell. He simply cuts off their privilege of entering the Kingdom by slaying them. They automatically go to Hell because they are unsaved. Later (1,000 years) they shall be raised and judged individually at the Great White throne along with all lost, and sentenced to the Lake of Fire according to their evil works.

This separation of the people of the world should be no more difficult to understand than the rapture of the church, for in both cases the Lord separates according to what the people are. In the case of the rapture, He will separate the sheep from the goats, whereas, in the case of the gathered nations, He will separate the goats from the sheep. In the rapture, He will separate the saved from this world unto Heaven, whereas in the gathered nations He will separate the lost from this world unto Hell.

The basis for the separation of the nations is also taught in the parable. Notice that the good fish is separated from the bad and placed in vessels, whereas, the bad is cast away. How does the Lord know the good from the bad? On what basis does He separate? The answer is given in [Leviticus 11:9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+11.9&t=NKJV), where the law establishes what the marks of a good fish are. According to this verse the Israelites were only allowed to eat those fish that had scales and fins; all others were to be treated as an abomination ([Leviticus 11:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+11.11&t=NKJV)). The scales stand for armor and the fins power to swim.

Typically speaking, then, all men will be separated by the Lord on the basis of whether or not they have both the “full armor of Christ” (in Christ) and the power of the Holy Spirit to swim against the tide of evil (Christ in you). Those who are good fish and are put in vessels are those who are saved, and are privileged to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who are bad fish are cast away, and treated as abominable, by being slain and going down to Hell.

In [Matthew 25](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25&t=NKJV) we again see this separation on the basis of sheep and goats. Again, the Lord isn’t judging, He is merely separating. The sheep in Scripture is a symbol of the saved, whereas the goats [symbolize] the ones who will not be saved. In this passage, the sheep are separated from the goats on the basis of how they treat the brethren ([Matthew 25:40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.40&t=NKJV)). Since the word brethren speaks of the Jews, then those that treat them kindly must do so because they are saved. This will be most difficult for a Gentile during this time, since the Jews will be hunted by the Anti-Christ and proclaimed the enemy. Nevertheless, the sheep will be willing to suffer in order to show their love for God’s elect. The goats, on the other hand, will hate God’s elect and will join the armies of Anti-Christ in order to destroy them. It is the goats that will be slain at the coming of the Lord, during the Battle of Armageddon. This harmonizes with the prophecy of [Joel 3:9-16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+3.9-16&t=NKJV).

Notice here the call to battle, the assembly, the valley of decision, and their destruction by the Lord. Notice at the same time, the protection of both God’s people and of the Children of Israel from this destruction ([Joel 3:16b](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+3.16b&t=NKJV)). All these truths are in the first division.

SECOND DIVISION

*“So shall it be at the end of the world (age): The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.”*

We now enter into the second division of the parable that deals exclusively with the Children of Israel. Here at the beginning, we are once again reminded that the angels are the workers of God’s providence, and at the end of the Age (Great Tribulation) will come forth for the purpose of gathering all Jews ([Matthew 24:31](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.31&t=NKJV)), and separating the wicked Jews from the righteous Jews. We must be careful that we rightfully interpret the phrase *“sever the wicked from among the just”* in this verse. This is because it is so easy to make it say the opposite of its meaning. The verse does not teach the separation of the Jews from the Gentiles.

It did not say that the angels would sever the just from among the wicked, but rather to the contrary *“sever the wicked from among the just.”* Since this cannot mean that the Gentile (wicked) will be severed from among the Jews (just), as they are never among the Jews, then it must mean that the Jews are severed from themselves, the wicked from among the just. Notice that this will occur just before the coming of the Lord, by the phrase *“so shall it be at the end of the world (age).”*

Thus, we are given a picture of separation, predicated on the assumption that all the Jews have already been gathered at this time.

There is a parable given to us by the prophet [Ezekiel 5:1-5](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+5.1-5&t=NKJV) that clarifies how the Lord God will separate the wicked Jews from among the just Jews.

Ezekiel was told to cut and shave his hair which is symbolic of the gathering of all the Jews. Then he was told to divide it into three equal parts, and destroy two of the parts by smiting one part with a knife and the other by a scattering it to the wind, [symbolic of] causing them [the Jews] to become victims of the sword that God would send after them. The third part was to be placed in a fire and burned in the midst of the city, along with those that were bound in the skirts of his garment.

Now, to rightfully interpret this, we must realize that all of the events recorded here have not yet taken place. Therefore, it must be a prophetic picture of what will happen to the Jews during the Great Tribulation period. The one third that is scattered to the wind in the prophecy are those Jews who will still be scattered throughout the world at this time and will die by the sword on orders of Anti-Christ. (See [Ezekiel 12:14-16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+12.14-16&t=NKJV)). The one third killed in the land are those that shall be slain in battle and persecution. The remaining one third is the remnant which shall be at Jerusalem and go through the refining and trying fires of famine and pestilence. (See [Ezekiel 12:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+12.12&t=NKJV), [17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+12.17&t=NKJV)). This third group evidently will be the group in which true Israel will be numbered. [Ezekiel 12:4](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+12.4&t=NKJV) tells us that it is all the House of Israel. Whether all are saved of this group, with some being killed off, or some are saved with the lost being killed off is not clear. I personally believe that there will be some lost there and that they will suffer the loss of their lives. This is so because of the bits of hair Ezekiel was told to bind in the skirts of his garment and then to take it again and cast it into the fire. These pieces are evil and represent the Jewish leaders who have committed the acts of idolatry and spiritual fornication. We know this from where they are taken. Skirts are almost always an emblem of Israel’s evil in the Scriptures, and the bound hair speaks of being bound in this evil. (See [Jeremiah 2:34](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+2.34&t=NKJV); [13:22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+13.22&t=NKJV), [26](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+13.26&t=NKJV); [Lamentations 1:9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Lamentations+1.9&t=NKJV)).

For a clearer view of this separating and refining, let us turn to [Zechariah 13:8-9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+13.8-9&t=NKJV).

*“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver in refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.”* ([Zechariah 13:8-9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+13.8-9&t=NKJV))

Here we are allowed to see both the separating (the wicked from the just) and the refining (the remnant). Notice that the third part is not put through the fire until after the first two parts have been cut off. Also notice that the one third remnant will not only be refined but also tried. The refinement has to do with silver, which is a symbol of redemption and thus speaks of salvation and the work on the Cross at the first coming. Evidently those who are not found to be silver in this refinement will die. The trial portion has to do with gold, which is a symbol of the kingship at the second coming of Jesus. Evidently, all the refined silver (saved) will be tried as to their works, since gold tried in fire is symbolic of reward.

*“And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

By now I hope that the reader can plainly see that this furnace of fire is the identical furnace spoken of in [Zechariah 13:9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+13.9&t=NKJV) and is not a symbol of Hell, as so many have wrongly interpreted. I remind the reader once again that the furnace of fire is ever the emblem of refinement and trial and never of everlasting retribution. For as the church must pass through the fires of their furnace at the Judgment Seat to determine who will enter the Kingdom, Israel must also pass through the fires of their earthly furnace to determine who of their group will enter the Kingdom.

To further clear up any confusion as to the identity of the furnace of fire in our parable, let us turn to [Isaiah 48:10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+48.10&t=NKJV) and see there that God calls this same furnace the “furnace of affliction”.

*“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”*

Also in [Isaiah 31:9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+31.9&t=NKJV) He tells us the location of this furnace will be in Jerusalem.

*“And he shall pass over to his stronghold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.”*

These two verses describe the times of the Battle of Armageddon when the wrath of Anti-Christ and all the nations shall be vented against the one third remnant. A type of this is seen in the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar when the three children of Israel were placed in it for not worshipping the image of Nebuchadnezzar. They were saved by the presence of a fourth figure who had the form of the Son of God ([Daniel 3:19-25](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+3.19-25&t=NKJV)). Thus, the furnace of Israel will be the determined efforts of Anti-Christ to destroy Israel for their refusal to bow down and worship the image of the beast, but instead they shall be only refined and saved by a fourth who will be the Lord Jesus Christ Himself at His Revelation.

THE CONCLUSION

*“Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood, all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord, Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”* ([Matthew 13:51-52](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.51-52&t=NKJV))

It is profound thought indeed when we ponder why our Lord asked His disciples if they understood all the truths of the seven parables. It is equally profound to make the startling discovery that Jesus is not asking this question of His twelve disciples only, but rather of every scribe (pastor, preacher, Bible student, etc.) that would ever handle the Word of God. He seems to say that no one can know the deep things of God’s Word without understanding these parables. Likewise, every scribe who does understand has been properly instructed in the “Kingdom of Heaven” (meat) of the Scriptures. It makes no difference as to how educated a man may be, or from what seminary he has graduated or to what position he may hold in the denomination, without the understanding of these parables which teach identity of the “Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven,” he is ignorant of spiritual things and not instructed in the Word.

Now let us see one who is properly instructed in the Word. This is any scribe who takes out of his treasure things new and things old. What does this mean? It is the summation of truth in the seven parables. It is the understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a framework in which all the truths concerning the Kingdom of Heaven will fit. The treasure, the things new and the things old, make reference to the last three parables. Let us look closer at this summation of our Lord. Here, He is interested only in one thing and that is to finalize or show the extreme end product of the seven parables. These are The Pearl of Great Price and His Treasure, both having been refined in the fires of their respective furnaces and having the threefold doctrine of Christ. Along with this our Lord wants us to see the sovereign decreed position of one to the other, as well as their order of creation. Thus, the treasure of the fifth parable first gave life to the pearl of great price, for it was out of the teachings of the Old Testament that Christianity sprang forth. After this, the treasure in the last parable also brought forth the remnant of Israel to be saved in the Great Tribulation. Therefore, the new things stand for the Bride, and the first to come out of the treasure, with the old things speaking of the remnant of Israel, or the completion of the treasure.

Finally, by the Lord drawing our attention to this order of appearance (the new first, and the old second), He is teaching us of Israel’s rejection of the Lord and her loss of the first position. For like the firstborn who sold his birthright for worldly goods, so did Israel sell her birthright to be a heavenly people. Instead this was given [to] the Gentile bride, while Israel, God’s treasure, will have to take second best as God’s eternal earthly people.

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**CHAPTER FOUR**

THE HALL OF KINGS

I once attended an exposition at Florida’s Disney World entitled, “The Hall of Presidents”. I remember how impressed I was to see the thirty-six presidents of the United States sitting on the stage in front of me. The performance that these computer-controlled, lifelike figures gave also served to remind me of a coming time and stage in human history that could rightly be called the “Hall of Kings,” for it is at this future event that God will display and give sovereign authority to three different orders of kings. In order that we may get a clear view of the “Hall of Kings,” we need to see certain divisions within mankind and the ranks of the saints. The following are ten truths that need to be mastered by the reader, along with a chart that has been provided to help with the task. (See [chart](#Chart))

*Truth Number One:* The Bible divides all of mankind into three groups – The Church, Israel, and The Nations. The church is God’s righteous people who are made up of both Jew and Gentile, living during this dispensation (from the cross to the rapture). Israel is God’s righteous people, who are mostly the descendants of Jacob, living outside of the church dispensation. The nations are the unrighteous, living in all dispensations.

*Truth Number Two:* There are only two groups of the righteous – The church, God’s Heavenly people, and Israel, God’s earthly people. All of the righteous of mankind must belong to one group or the other. The dispensation in which they live decides which. Therefore, the righteous Gentiles, such as Naaman, who lived outside of the church dispensation, must be numbered with Israel, since they cannot be numbered with the church. With this second truth, we come to see that the two groups are opposites in composition, that is, while the church is made up predominately of Gentiles with a few Jews, Israel is made up predominately of Jews with a few Gentiles.

*Truth Number Three:* The Bible speaks of two resurrections, the first is for the righteous, and the second is for the unrighteous ([John 5:28-29](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.28-29&t=NKJV)). The righteous are raised before the beginning of the one-thousand year reign of Jesus on earth, and the unrighteous at the end of His reign ([Revelation 20:5-6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.5-6&t=NKJV)).

*Truth Number Four:* The first resurrection, or the resurrection of the righteous, is divided into two groups – The Church and Israel. The Church is raised at the rapture at the beginning of the Tribulation, and Israel is raised at the Revelation of Jesus Christ at the end of the Tribulation. This makes at least a seven year difference in its division. (see [chart](#Chart))

*Truth Number Five:* The first group of the first resurrection is likened unto the gathering of the fruits from a field, and therefore shows a further division. This is taught by showing us first, the resurrection of Christ called the FIRST FRUITS of them that slept (corresponding to the first fruits of a field) and second, the rapture of the church called the HARVEST of all that sleep in Christ (corresponding to the harvest of a field). This division of the first fruits ([I Corinthians 15:20](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+15.20&t=NKJV)), and of the harvest ([Matthew 13:36-40](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.36-40&t=NKJV)), is more than 1900 years apart.

*Truth Number Six:* If there are first-fruits and a harvest that stands for the resurrection of the church, then there must be gleanings (corresponding to the fruit that matures after the harvest). We find this to be true and discover that the gleanings are revealed in the Scripture as the tribulation saints who are killed for their witness of Jesus and raised again at the beginning of the one-thousand year reign (see again [Revelation 20:5-6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.5-6&t=NKJV)). These gleanings are not numbered with the church. This is so because the Levitical Law taught that the gleanings of any field could not be gathered into the barn and numbered with the harvest, but rather it was to remain in the field to become a blessing to the poor and stranger. Likewise, the gleanings of the resurrection are not to be harvested and numbered with the church, but rather [they are] to be numbered with the righteous of the world, which is Israel, and become a blessing to the world (see [Leviticus 19:9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+19.9&t=NKJV)).

*Truth Number Seven*: It is plain that the tribulation saints are to be numbered with Israel, God’s righteous earthly people, and both will serve God in the same manner by being a blessing to all nations (poor and strangers). This is further taught in type by the Levitical Law. In both [Leviticus 19:9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+19.9&t=NKJV); [23:22](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+23.22&t=NKJV), the Lord commanded the people of Israel not only to leave the gleanings for the poor and the stranger, but also to leave much of the corners of the field to the poor and the strangers. What do the corners of the field typify? There can be only one answer, and that is National Israel. We understand this by realizing that since the field is a type of the world ([Matthew 13:38](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV)), then the four corners of the field are the four corners of the world, and thus it was here that God’s earthly, righteous people, after they rejected Him, were scattered. The Lord God makes this quite clear in His prophecies concerning Israel’s rejection and scattering ([Deuteronomy 32:26](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+32.26&t=NKJV)). He also shows that it is from the four corners of the earth that they will be re-gathered ([Isaiah 11:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+11.12&t=NKJV)).

*Truth Number Eight:* The resurrection of the saints of Israel will occur at the same time as that of the gleanings. The first 14 verses of [Ezekiel 37](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37&t=NKJV) enlightens us about this. In [Ezekiel 37:12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.12&t=NKJV) the Lord God says

*Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.”*

This is a resurrection of individuals and not of National Israel. Notice that the Lord said “graves,” which is plural. This indicates people. He also calls the people…*”The whole house of Israel;”* in [Ezekiel 37:11](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.11&t=NKJV), showing that they were the righteous from all of the twelve tribes. Further, after they are raised from their graves they are brought into the land of Israel. This second thought tells us the time of the resurrection, for in order that this resurrection might include all the righteous of Israel which will immediately go into the land, it necessitates that it take place at the end of the Great Tribulation and at the beginning of the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ over Israel.

*Truth Number Nine:* National Israel will be completely gathered from the four corners of the world at this time and be brought into the land. The national resurrection of Israel is taught in [Ezekiel 37:15-21](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.15-21&t=NKJV), and is often confused with the individual resurrection recorded in the first 14 verses ([Ezekiel 37:1-14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.1-14&t=NKJV)).

*Truth Number Ten:* Evidently, all righteous Gentiles living before the dispensation of the church will be raised at this time and numbered with Israel. Job enlightens us on this by prophesying of his own resurrection.

*“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”* ([Job 19:25-26](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job+19.25-26&t=NKJV))

In this passage Job first tells us of the initial coming of Jesus to die on the cross by referring to Him as his redeemer. He also uses the words “I know,” referring to his faith in Him, and the words “redeemer lives,” referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Second, he tells us of the deity of Jesus by referring to Him as God. Third, he tells us of His second coming, for he says that, *“He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”* Fourth, he tells us that this second coming will occur at the end of the age, for he uses the term “latter day”. Fifth, he speaks of his own resurrection by declaring that he will see Him in his flesh. Now, it is important to see when this takes place. Notice that he did not say that when he sees God it shall be when he comes in the air, but when he stands upon the earth. Thus, Job dated his own resurrection not at the rapture, but seven years later, at the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ when He shall come upon the earth.

In summing up these ten truths, I pray that the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of the reader that he may not be in darkness.

God has two elected groups. They are the Church and Israel. Even as God’s Heavenly group, the church, is made up of Gentile and Jew (harvest and some of the corners), His earthly group is made up of Jew and Gentile (the corners and the gleanings). The first group is raised at the end of The Time of The Church, while the second is raised at the end of The Times of The Gentiles. All the righteous that are not raised with the church must be raised with Israel.

KING OF KINGS

The title of “King of Kings” as found in [Revelation 19:16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.16&t=NKJV) is descriptive of our Lord at His Revelation. It does not express His sovereignty over the present kings of the world (even though that is true), but rather sovereignty over the three orders of spiritual kings that will reign on the earth during the Kingdom Age. “King of Kings” means “Sovereign of Sovereigns.” “Lord of Lords” means “Ruler of Rulers.”

THE FIRST ORDER OF THE KINGS

The reader is already acquainted with the first order of the kings. He saw in earlier chapters how God will choose them out of the body of the saved at the Judgment Seat of Christ. He recognized that this position of king must be earned after one is saved and is called “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” ([Philippians 3:14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.14&t=NKJV)). He also learned that the majority who fail to win reward will not be participants in the coming kingdom. They will suffer loss in being only spectators. In the parable of the pounds ([Luke 19](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19&t=NKJV)) the reader further learned that these kings will rule over municipalities (see [Luke 19:17-19](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.17-19&t=NKJV)). Thus, the first order of the kings is the Bride of Christ that is chosen out of the harvest.

THE SECOND ORDER OF THE KINGS

The second order of kings that will exercise sovereign rule in the Kingdom Age (Millennium) is found in [Matthew 19:27-28](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+19.27-28&t=NKJV). Here our Lord reveals to the apostles that they will rule from twelve thrones, the twelve tribes of Israel. This order of the kings is reserved exclusively for His twelve (Judas excluded) who have followed Him into regeneration.1 This order of kings is probably given to the apostles on the grounds that they lived in both dispensations. That is, they believed and followed Jesus Christ before and after the church was established.

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1 Greek “Palingenesia” – The Renewal of Earth and Social Order.

THE THIRD ORDER OF THE KINGS

This order respects one king whose authority is over Israel only. In [Ezekiel 37:24](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.24&t=NKJV), [26](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.26&t=NKJV), the spirit of the Lord informs us that David will be that king. By harmonizing this in with the first 14 verses of the chapter, we understand that David will be raised along with all the other righteous of Israel and shall be made king over all Israel.

Thus, the three orders of kings are municipal, tribal, and national. The municipal and tribal will come out of the harvest and the gleanings. Above all this, we have an international and universal King who will overrule all. This is Jesus Christ the Lord. The sovereignty of all other kings will be made possible by being with Christ in one mind.

THE PEOPLES OF THE KING

The Church Age Saints: Those of the church age who fail to gain reward will still be saved, for salvation is a free gift, by grace. They will have a glorified, resurrected body suitable for the spiritual and physical world. However, their exclusion from the Kingdom and from the glory of the Lord is not clear as to specifics. We can only say that during this one-thousand year reign they will be suffering loss ([I Corinthians 3:15](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+3.15&t=NKJV)) and unhappy with their state of affairs ([Matthew 25:29-30](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.29-30&t=NKJV)). The duration of this seems to expire at the end of the one-thousand year reign. However, the position of the righteous during the Kingdom of the Father which follows seems to be fixed according to what one did during this life. The Tribulation Saints: These are the gleanings of the harvest that will be slain for their testimony during the Great Tribulation period on the earth. They are not numbered with the Church, but rather Israel, and will be resurrected at the same time as righteous Israel. There are two truths that we need to know about this integrated group that we will simply call resurrected Israel.

First, they have an entirely different function during the Kingdom Age than those righteous of Israel who are saved at His coming and never die. The Lord God informs us in [Revelation 20:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.6&t=NKJV) that they shall be priests of God and shall reign with Him a thousand years. We must be careful not to mix this group here with the church saints who will attain to the Bride. Notice that the Bride is mentioned briefly in [Revelation 20:4](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.4&t=NKJV) as a separate group.

*“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them.”*

After the word “them” the Scripture speaks of another group who are slain for their witness. These are the gleanings, and those whom God has reserved to become priests during the millennium. Notice also that God did not say that they will be kings and priests, but only priests. The function of kings and priests are given to the Bride only (compare [Revelation 20:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.6&t=NKJV) with [Revelation 1:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.6&t=NKJV); [Revelation 5:10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.10&t=NKJV)).

Second, the gleanings, along with the raised righteous of Israel will be raised as God’s earthly people. Thus, they shall have physical bodies, not like those of the Bride. Scripture is clear on this when it describes the resurrection of Israel in [Ezekiel 37:1-14](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.1-14&t=NKJV). It speaks of bones coming together, of sinews, flesh and skin. It speaks of a great host standing on their feet ([Ezekiel 37:8-10](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.8-10&t=NKJV)). Also, in the raising of the gleanings in [Revelation 20:6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.6&t=NKJV) the expression, *“The second death hath no power”* is used. By using this expression, our attention is called to this particular kind of resurrected body, a body similar to the first, with one exception. It is not subject to death. Also, typology bears out this type of body when it teaches in the Levitical Law that its purpose is to stay in the world with Israel (corners) to be a blessing to the people of the world (poor and strangers). Finally, the office of priest suggests one like the people [have today]. In this function, the priest stands in the presence of God for the people, and also stands in the presence of people for God.

Israel At His Coming: These are those of Israel who will be saved at the revelation of the Lord. Their position will be one of high esteem during the Kingdom Age. Israel will become the head of [the] nations instead of the tail. Our Lord will rule the world from the land and through the nation of Israel. It will be accounted as a high honor to any Gentile just to be acquainted with a Jew ([Zechariah 8:23](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+8.23&t=NKJV)).

The function of these people is given to us through the Apostle Paul. He tells us in [I Timothy 1:15-16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Timothy+1.15-16&t=NKJV) that he himself was saved as a pattern (type) of these people. In [I Corinthians 15:8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Corinthians+15.8&t=NKJV), he speaks of himself as one born out of time, or as one who was born by abortion (before his time). By harmonizing these two statements of Paul, we come to understand that all of National Israel will be as of the nature of Paul. Their task will be to carry the gospel of our Lord to the Gentile nations of the world that will be born during the millennium. A few points of comparison through the type spoken of by Paul in [I Timothy 1:15-16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=I+Timothy+1.15-16&t=NKJV) will bear this out.

(1) As Paul’s conversation was brought about by the personal, physical, visible, and literal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ who appeared to him on the road to Damascus, so will the nation of Israel be converted as the result of the personal, physical, visible and literal presence of the Lord at his second coming.

(2) As the Lord instructed Paul personally as to his mission while he was in Arabia, so will the Lord instruct Israel concerning her mission ([Isaiah 11:1-9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+11.1-9&t=NKJV)).

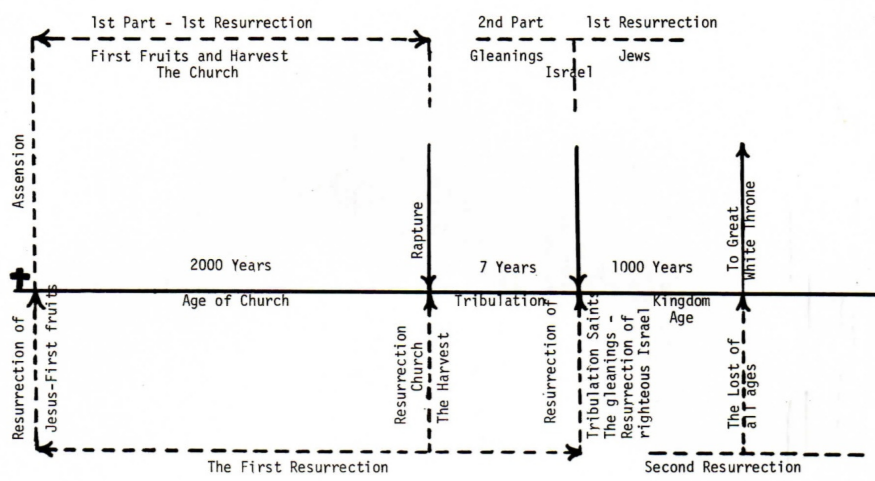
(3) As Paul’s instructions were from the Lord personally ([Galatians 1:11-12](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.11-12&t=NKJV), [15-17](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.15-17&t=NKJV)), so will the instruction to Israel be from the Lord personally.

(4) As Paul was the last apostle chosen and commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ, and his mission was to be an apostle to the Gentiles, so will the nation of Israel be the last group ever to be chosen and commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ whose mission is to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

The Saved Gentile Nations: This last group of people will be those that enter the millennium (Kingdom Age) at its beginning and are saved during the Tribulation, or those who are born during the millennium and are saved as a result of the preaching of the gospel by Israel.

These will live in blessings, and will hunger after the Lord ([Zechariah 8:20-23](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+8.20-23&t=NKJV)). It is not the burden of the writer at this time to write about the Kingdom of the Father which takes place after the Kingdom Age and after the heavens and earth have been destroyed and made anew. This will be reserved for a future volume if the Lord so directs.

Chart



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