**An understanding of the *Word of the Kingdom* will answer questions surrounding the Christian life unlike anything else in the Word of God.  This is the ONLY thing that will present the complete biblical picture in its correct fashion.  ONLY out of this teaching can all the issues surrounding the Christian life be properly addressed, and ONLY out of this teaching can one find the true motivation for Godly Christian living.**

**Mysteries of the Kingdom BOOK**

**By Arlen Chitwood of** [**Lamp Broadcast**](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

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| [Charles Strong Commentary & Foreword](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Charles%20Strong%20Commentary%20&%20Foreword)  Ch. 1 [Israel’s Rejection](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Israel%E2%80%99s%20Rejection)  Ch. 2 [I Will Return](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#I%20Will%20Return)  Ch. 3 [Parable of the Sower](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Parable%20of%20the%20Sower)  Ch. 4 [Parable of the Wheat, Tares](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Parable%20of%20the%20Wheat,%20Tares)  Ch. 5 [Parable of the Mustard Seed](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Parable%20of%20the%20Mustard%20Seed)  Ch. 6 [Parable of the Leaven](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Parable%20of%20the%20Leaven) | Ch. 7 [Some Will Depart](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Some%20Will%20Depart)  Ch. 8 [Christ and the Church](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Christ%20and%20the%20Church)  Ch. 9 [God and Israel](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#God%20and%20Israel)  Ch. 10 [Parable of the Treasure](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Parable%20of%20the%20Treasure)  Ch. 11 [Parable of the Pearl](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Parable%20of%20the%20Pearl)  Ch. 12 [Parable of the Net](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Parable%20of%20the%20Net)  Ch. 13 [Instruction in the Kingdom](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-five.php#Instruction%20in%20the%20Kingdom) |

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**Charles Strong COMMENTARY**

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

Both accounts were given by Christ, on different occasions. He made the first known to His disciples during His earthly ministry; and this account was given in parabolic form and has been recorded in [Matthew 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV). Then, He made the second known to John about sixty years later, following John being removed into His presence in the future Day of the Lord; and this account was given via seven short epistles to seven churches in Asia and has been recorded in [Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV).

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

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

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

Then, the seventh parable in Matthew chapter thirteen centers on *a future judgment of Christians, with the Kingdom in view.* And this would find its parallel in a number of things in [Revelation 1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-4&t=NKJV).

In the book of Matthew, this future judgment is seen *following* the revealed history of the Church; but in John’s account in the book of Revelation, this future judgment is seen *within* the revealed history of the Church.

Charles of [Bible One](http://www.bibleone.net/)

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**FOREWORD**

In relation to the central message of the New Testament — *the Word of the Kingdom* — first century Christendom and twentieth century Christendom would have very little in common. Things have changed in Christendom to that degree, and they have not changed for the better. Rather, there has been a steady deterioration, and this deterioration has been going on for almost two millenniums.

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

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

Those in fundamental circles DON'T understand any more about *the Word of the Kingdom* than those in liberal circles do. And anyone daring to proclaim this message today will be fought against by those in both groups — usually more so by the fundamentalists than by the liberals. In relation to this message, BOTH groups exist in an almost completely leavened state; and BOTH are seen described in [Revelation 3:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.17&t=NKJV) as "*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*"

The seven parables in [Matthew 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV) have to do with Christendom in relation to *the Word of the Kingdom*, from the time of the Church's inception to the beginning of the Messianic Era. The first four parables cover a history of Christendom extending throughout the dispensation; and the last three parables continue with events which will occur after the dispensation has run its course, events leading into the Messianic Era.

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

Christians are in a race — the race of "the faith" — with its corresponding spiritual warfare. And the highest of all possible prizes is being held out for the victors — *that of being accorded the privilege of ascending the throne with God's Son and ruling over the earth as co-heirs with Him for 1,000 years*. A Christian can overcome in the race, in the warfare, and occupy one of these positions with God's Son; OR he can be overcome in the race, in the warfare, and fail to occupy one of these positions. This is the message that Satan has fought so hard to destroy.

And, is it any wonder that Satan has expended so much time and effort to do away with this message? Christ and His co-heirs are to take the kingdom and rule over the very domain that Satan and his angels rule over today. Satan and his angels are to be put down, and Christ and His co-heirs are to ascend the throne in their stead. And this is something that Satan, at all costs, has sought to avoid.

This is the realm where Satan centers his attack against Christians and against the Word of God. This is the heart of all things surrounding the spiritual warfare. Satan attacks Christians, seeking at all costs to bring about their defeat in *the race of the faith*, causing them to be disqualified for *the prize set before them*. And he attacks the message that relates these things — *the Word of the Kingdom* — seeking at all costs to corrupt and destroy this message.

And how well Satan has succeeded can be seen on every hand today. This message is all but absent in the churches throughout the land, and the vast majority of Christians throughout these same churches lack any real spiritual direction and purpose in their lives. This is what the leaven that the woman placed in the three measures of meal in [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV) has done during a period encompassing almost two millenniums.

THIS is the state in which Christendom finds itself near the end of the dispensation. And THIS existing state of Christendom should surprise no one, for Scripture clearly reveals that THIS is the way the dispensation will end.

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Chapter One

**Israel’s Rejection**

*The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside.*

*And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.*

*And He spoke many things to them in parables…* ([Matthew 13:1-3a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.1-3a&t=NKJV)).

Matthew chapter thirteen records seven connected parables that Christ gave at a particular time during His earthly ministry, calling them, “*mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens*” ([Matthew 13:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.11&t=NKJV)). These parables comprise the first of the numerous *mysteries* seen in the New Testament and have to do with the same thing that any other mystery in the New Testament has to do with — *an opening up and unveiling of that which has laid in the Old Testament from the beginning.*

There is nothing in the New Testament that does not have its roots one or more places in the Old. The mystery revealed to Paul ([Ephesians 3:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.1ff&t=NKJV)), for example, not only had its basis in the Old Testament Scriptures but drew from Paul’s personal knowledge of these Scriptures ([Acts 9:20-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+9.20-22&t=NKJV)) — moving beyond “the letter” to “the spirit” of the matter ([2 Corinthians 3:6-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+3.6-18&t=NKJV)) — opening Scriptures that he already knew to his understanding.

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

These are mysteries opened up and revealed by Christ through the use of parables, a form of teaching that He began to extensively use at this point in His ministry. Christ had used parables sparingly prior to this time (*e.g.*, [Luke 5:36-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+5.36-39&t=NKJV)), but from this point forward, for a particularly revealed reason, parables began to occupy a major part of His ministry.

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

This is why these parables could be understood by the disciples but would be meaningless to numerous others in the nation ([Matthew 13:10-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.10-17&t=NKJV)). The matter hinged on whether or not the previously revealed truths had been received.

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

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

Though these parables form truths placed alongside things revealed in the Old Testament, they, as well, form truths placed alongside things that had been revealed during Christ’s earthly ministry (things completely in accord with Old Testament Scripture). And, in this respect, though they have their basis in the Old Testament Scriptures, they emanate out of things having previously been revealed during Christ’s earthly ministry, particularly things immediately preceding Christ’s departure from *the house* and His beginning to give these parables by t*he seaside*.

Thus, Matthew chapter thirteen has to do with an opening up and unveiling of *mysteries surrounding the kingdom of the heavens through the use of parables*. And the kingdom of the heavens in this chapter is a kingdom seen in exactly the same form in which it was previously seen in Matthew’s gospel. This chapter continues, from previous Scripture, dealing with a literal, existing kingdom.

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

During past and present time, throughout Man’s Day, Satan and his angels (though disqualified) have ruled over the earth from this heavenly realm. But in the future, during the coming Lord’s Day, angels will no longer rule from this realm. Rather, Man — namely, Christ and His co-heirs — will take the scepter and will rule from this realm ([Hebrews 2:5-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.5-10&t=NKJV); [4:4-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4.4-9&t=NKJV); [5:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.6&t=NKJV), [10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.10&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Psalm 110:1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.1-4&t=NKJV)).

And the message surrounding the kingdom of the heavens — whether to Israel (past) or to Christians (present) — has to do with Man moving into this heavenly realm, occupying this realm, and holding the scepter. All seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen have to do with this subject. This is something clearly stated in these parables, and they must be so interpreted and understood.

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

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

The Son — rather than presently ruling in the kingdom in view, in which Satan and his angels hold the scepter — is seated at the right hand of His Father, awaiting that day when His enemies will be made His footstool, when He will take the kingdom ([Psalm 110:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.1&t=NKJV)). Further, the Son is presently occupying the office of High Priest, not that of King. He is presently ministering on behalf of Christians in the heavenly sanctuary, with a view to “*bringing many sons unto glory*” [[Hebrews 2:5-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.5-10&t=NKJV); [10:19-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.19-22&t=NKJV)]. His Kingship, the time when He and His co-heirs will ascend the throne together, lies in the future [[Hebrews 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1.9&t=NKJV); [3:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3.14&t=NKJV); [4:4-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4.4-9&t=NKJV)].

A misunderstanding of verses, such as [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV), has led numerous Christians to erroneously view a present aspect to Christ’s future kingdom. However, neither this verse nor any other verse teaches such a thing. [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV) deals with Christians being moved from one place to another with respect to two manifestations of the kingdom — *present under Satan, and future under Christ.* Christians, according to this verse, have been delivered from the power of darkness [having to do with the kingdom under Satan] and have been translated [have been moved from one place to another, have been caused to change sides] with respect to the kingdom of Christ.

There can be no such thing as being translated into the kingdom of Christ during the present dispensation, for such a kingdom doesn’t presently exist. But there is such a thing as being caused to change sides with respect to two forms of the same kingdom — both *present* and *future*. This is what the epistles are about, and this is what is in view in [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV).)

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

Events Leading into [Matthew 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV)

John the Baptist appeared as the forerunner of the Messiah at His first coming, as Elijah will appear as the forerunner of the Messiah at His second coming. A prophecy that had to do with Elijah was applied to John the Baptist (*cf*. [Isaiah 40:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+40.3&t=NKJV); [Matthew 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.3&t=NKJV)); and John was said by Jesus to be Elijah, with a *condition* applied to the statement ([Matthew 11:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+11.13-14&t=NKJV)).

The passage in Isaiah, applied to John the Baptist, is set in a context surrounding Messiah’s coming at a time when Israel repents and the nation is healed ([Isaiah 40:1-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+40.1-5&t=NKJV)). This, of course, didn’t occur during or following John’s appearance, though the prophecy was applied to John. This will occur *only following Elijah’s appearance* as the forerunner of the Messiah ([Malachi 4:1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Malachi+4.1-6&t=NKJV)).

Christ’s statement concerning John being Elijah carried the condition, “*if you will receive*.” That is to say, if the nation would have received the message, Elijah, rather than John, would have appeared at that time as the forerunner of the Messiah. The latter was conditioned on the former. God though, in His foreknowledge, knew what Israel would do and sent John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ at His first coming instead of Elijah.

John the Baptist was the Elijah of his day, as Elijah will be the John the Baptist of his day. And the two men are so closely associated with one another that the prophecy applying to Elijah at Christ’s second coming in [Isaiah 40:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+40.3&t=NKJV) could be applied to John at Christ’s first coming in [Matthew 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.3&t=NKJV).

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

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea with a single, simple message: “*Repent: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand*” ([Matthew 3:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.2&t=NKJV)). This was a message directed to the nation of Israel, calling for national repentance, with a view to the Jewish people holding the scepter, with their Messiah, within the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.

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

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

This was the totality of the message proclaimed by John. It was a call for the nation of Israel (the entire nation) to change its mind, with a view to the Jewish people occupying regal positions with the nation’s Messiah in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom. Satan and his angels would be put down, and Christ and the repentant nation would move in and take the kingdom.

However, things didn’t go in this direction, and John eventually found himself in prison. Then Jesus took up the same message, which, under His ministry, was accompanied by miraculous signs — signs having to do with the kingdom, which centered on physical healings.

Jesus went throughout all Galilee doing two things: 1) “preaching the gospel of the kingdom,” and 2) “healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” ([Matthew 4:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4.12&t=NKJV), [17-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4.17-25&t=NKJV)).

*The message* concerned the proffered kingdom, and *the healings* were miraculous signs intimately and inseparably connected with the message being proclaimed. Israel was sick, “from the sole of the foot even unto the head,” and healing for the nation was in the offing, conditioned upon the nation’s repentance.

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

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

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

*Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.*

*From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment”* ([Isaiah 1:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+1.4-6&t=NKJV)).

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

*“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil;*

*Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.*

*Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

*If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land”* ([Isaiah 1:16-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+1.16-19&t=NKJV)).

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

*“And I will turn My hand against you, and thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your tin* [paralleling ‘dross,’ undoubtedly referring to metals in an impure sense].

*And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning: afterward you shall be called, the city of righteousness, the faithful city…*

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

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

*And He shall judge among the nations…”* ([Isaiah 1:25-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+1.25-26&t=NKJV); [2:2-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+2.2-4&t=NKJV)a).

Christ’s message to Israel, along with the message of the Twelve whom He later commissioned ([Matthew 10:1-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.1-8&t=NKJV)) — in complete keeping with Isaiah’s prophecy (among numerous other Old Testament prophecies) — was simply a call for the nation *to repent*, with a view *to healing* and *the nation being established in her God-ordained position in the kingdom* ([Exodus 19:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+19.5-6&t=NKJV)). The healing of an individual constituted a sign for the Jewish people to visibly behold, showing them what could happen to the entire nation, **if**…

“Repentance” on the part of Israel was *the sole condition* in the message proclaimed to the nation by John, Jesus, and the Twelve: “*Repent: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand*.” Then, following national repentance, healing would occur.

The Jewish people were to change their minds about their prior attitude towards God’s commandments ([Isaiah 1:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+1.19&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Leviticus 26:3ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+26.3ff&t=NKJV); [Deuteronomy 28:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+28.1ff&t=NKJV)). They had previously disobeyed that which God had commanded. And because of this disobedience, Israel had not only failed to fully occupy her God-ordained position in the Old Testament theocracy but the day came when this theocracy ceased to exist; and, in connection with the end of the Old Testament theocracy, Israel found herself in captivity and scattered among the Gentile nations.

(The northern ten tribes were carried into captivity by the Assyrians about 722 B.C., and the southern two tribes were carried into captivity by the Babylonians about 605 B.C., beginning the times of the Gentiles. And a few years later the Shekinah Glory departed from the holy of holies of the temple in Jerusalem, ascending to heaven from the Mount of Olives, marking the end of the Old Testament theocracy.)

And even during the time Christ was on earth, though a remnant was back in the land, the nation remained under Gentile dominion. The times of the Gentiles, which began during the days of Nebuchadnezzar, continued then, as it still continues today. John opened the message to Israel concerning the proffered kingdom, Christ continued this message following John being cast into prison, and the Twelve later also carried this same message to Israel. And, though numerous Jewish people heeded the call and repented, the nation as a whole refused. The nation as a whole refused to change its mind relative to disobedience, something which had marked the history of the nation throughout centuries of time.

*2. Israel’s Climactic Rejection*

Events surrounding the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, beginning with John and continuing with Jesus and the Twelve, reached an apex in [Matthew 12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12&t=NKJV). However, the apex reached was not one of *acceptance* on the part of the nation. Rather, it was one of *rejection*.

In this chapter, Christ healed a man on the Sabbath ([Matthew 12:9-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.9-13&t=NKJV)), pointing to Israel’s coming healing on the Sabbath (the seventh millennium, the coming Lord’s Day, following the six millenniums comprising Man’s Day [*cf.* [Numbers 19:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+19.11-12&t=NKJV); [Hosea 5:15-6:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+5.15-6.2&t=NKJV); [Matthew 17:1-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+17.1-5&t=NKJV)]). And, following this miraculous sign, “*the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him*” ([Matthew 12:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.14&t=NKJV)).

The Pharisees (along with the Scribes) — fundamental, legalistic religious leaders — were, by far, the largest of the religious parties in Israel. And, occupying this position, they sat “*in Moses’ seat*” ([Matthew 23:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.2&t=NKJV)), controlling the religious life of the nation.

These controlling religious leaders were the ones who followed Christ about the country, seeking, at every turn, to counter both His message and the miraculous signs He was performing. And, in this chapter they reached an apex in their rejection by not only rejecting the manifested sign of a man being healed on the Sabbath (pointing to Israel’s healing on the Sabbath) but by subsequently holding a council concerning how they might be able to do away with the One having performed this sign.

Then, later in the chapter, Christ healed a man possessed with a demon, who was both blind and dumb ([Matthew 23:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.22&t=NKJV)); and the Pharisees, in their rejection of the manifested signs, reached a terminal point. They attributed the power behind the manifestation of this miraculous sign to Satan ([Matthew 23:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.24&t=NKJV)). And doing this after they had rejected the sign pertaining to Israel being healed on the Sabbath, along with subsequently seeking to do away with Christ, was the final straw.

These signs were being performed through the power of the Spirit (in completely keeping with the way God performs His works [*cf.* [Genesis 1:2b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2b&t=NKJV)]); and the Pharisees, attributing Christ’s works to Satan, committed what was called by Christ, “*the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit*” ([Matthew 23:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.31&t=NKJV)).

The Pharisees had previously done the same thing ([Matthew 9:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+9.34&t=NKJV)), but here the setting is different. Here it follows their rejecting the sign of the Sabbath and their attempting to do away with the One having performed this sign. Israel’s religious leaders, at this point, had gone beyond what could be allowed. And Christ stated, relative to that which they had done:

*“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.*

*Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”* ([Matthew 9:31-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+9.31-32&t=NKJV)).

For all practical purposes the kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel at this point in Matthew’s gospel, though the announcement was not made until later ([Matthew 21:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV)). And it was at this point in Christ’s ministry that a major change occurred.

The Scribes and Pharisees, immediately after Christ told them that they had committed a sin having far-reaching consequences, had the effrontery to ask Christ for an additional sign ([Matthew 9:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+9.38&t=NKJV)). They had rejected all of His previous signs, even attributing the power behind the last one to Satan, and now they asked for something that they had previously rejected time after time.

This was little more than a personal affront, further seeking, by any means possible, to discredit the One performing these signs (as they had previously attempted to do). But Jesus, knowing full-well their thoughts, responded with the only sign that would now be given to them — the sign of the prophet Jonah, pointing to His coming death, burial, and resurrection rather than to the kingdom ([Matthew 12:39-40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.39-40&t=NKJV)).

Then Christ described the condition in which the nation of Israel, because of the actions of their religious leaders, now found itself.

The men of Nineveh would rise up in judgment and condemn this generation, for they had repented at the preaching of Jonah. And One greater than Jonah was standing in Israel’s midst, calling for the nation’s repentance, but to no avail ([Matthew 12:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.41&t=NKJV)).

The queen of the south would, likewise, rise up in judgment and condemn this generation, for she had come from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And One greater than Solomon was standing in Israel’s midst, One Whom the Jewish people wouldn’t hear ([Matthew 12:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.42&t=NKJV)).

The nation was to be left in *a desolate condition*, wherein the Jewish people would walk through dry places, seeking rest, and find none. And, should the people comprising this nation persist in their disobedience, particularly relative to any attempt to bring about a change in their state themselves, conditions would only become worse. Their latter end would be “*worse than the first*” ([Matthew 12:43-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.43-45&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Leviticus 26:18-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+26.18-31&t=NKJV)).

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

Christ’s Actions, Continued Rejection

The seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen present a sharp change in God’s dealings with the nation of Israel. Heretofore, events surrounding the proffered kingdom had been strictly Jewish in nature, but now something completely new and different in relation to this kingdom is introduced. These parables have to do with *the kingdom of the heavens as it pertains to individuals separate and distinct from the nation of Israel.*

Before He began to speak in parables, Christ went “*out of the house, and sat by the seaside*” ([Matthew 13:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.1&t=NKJV)). The first four parables were spoken *outside the house*, down by *the seaside* ([Matthew 13:3-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.3-9&t=NKJV), [18-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.18-33&t=NKJV)). Then Christ went back “*into the house*” ([Matthew 13:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.36&t=NKJV)) and gave three more parables ([Matthew 13:44-50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.44-50&t=NKJV)).

The use of “house” and “seaside” is fraught with meaning. “*The house*,” from which Christ departed, and later reentered, is a reference to *the house of Israel* ([Matthew 10:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.6&t=NKJV); [23:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.38&t=NKJV)); and “the seaside,” to which Christ went, is a reference to *the Gentiles* ([Jonah 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jonah+1.12&t=NKJV); [2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jonah+2.10&t=NKJV); [Revelation 13:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.1&t=NKJV)).

Thus, within the symbolism of that which is stated, the Lord left Israel (departed the house), went to the Gentiles (sat by the seaside), and gave four parables. Then the Lord returned to Israel (went back inside the house) and gave three additional parables.

*The kingdom of the heavens* — about to be taken from Israel at this point in Matthew’s gospel — would have been taken from Israel prior to the time of the occurrence of events revealed in the first four parables, spoken outside the house. And the last three parables, though spoken back *inside the house*, could, not really pertain to Israel *per se*. Because of the subject matter — *the kingdom of the heavens, having previously been taken from Israel* — these parables would have to still pertain to those *outside the house, associated with the seaside* (note that there is no mention of Christ leaving the seaside [leaving the Gentiles] when He reentered the house [returned to Israel]).

In this respect, the first four parables would concern the Lord’s dealings with a people other than Israel, *associated with the Gentiles*; and these dealings would have to do with these people in a particular realm — in relation to *the kingdom of the heavens.*

Then, the last three parables, because of the continued subject matter (*the kingdom of the heavens*), would have to continue the continuity of thought from the first four. And further, though spoken back inside the house, these parables really cannot be Jewish in nature (for, again, they deal with *the kingdom of the heavens* — a sphere of the kingdom in which Israel could no longer have a part).

All seven parables have to do with events during time that elapses following the Nobleman’s departure “*into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom*,” and with events during time that terminates with His “*return*” after receiving the kingdom (*cf*. [Luke 19:12ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.12ff&t=NKJV)). There is *nothing* in these parables that occurs before Christ’s departure from the Mount of Olives ([Acts 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+1.9&t=NKJV)), events depicted in these parables occur *almost entirely* during the time of Christ’s absence ([Psalm 110:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.1&t=NKJV)), and events in these parables will be *concluded* immediately following Christ’s return ([Revelation 19:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11ff&t=NKJV)).

These parables — centering around a message pertaining to *the kingdom of the heavens* — have to do with an offer of the kingdom to a people other than Israel, following the removal of the kingdom from Israel (*cf*. [Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-10&t=NKJV)). These parables have to do with the message pertaining to *the kingdom of the heavens* during and following the present dispensation, and these parables conclude with events surrounding Christ’s return (after He, the Noblemen in [Luke 19:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.12&t=NKJV), has received the kingdom from the Father [*cf*. [Daniel 7:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.13-14&t=NKJV); [Revelation 11:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+11.15&t=NKJV); [19:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11ff&t=NKJV)]).

The course of the dispensation is depicted in the first four parables, and the last three have to do with concluding events (directly related to that previously revealed in the first four) that will not only bring the age to a close but also usher in the next age, the Messianic Era.

Thus, the Lord reentering the house is not an act that places an emphasis on His dealing with Israel once again. Rather, the emphasis remains where it is seen in the first four parables. Nor is there any mention of Christ leaving the seaside when He goes back inside the house. And the significance of this is seen in the fact that His prior dealings with the Gentiles (first four parables) would continue.

Israel is reintroduced because that dealt with in the final three parables cannot be accomplished apart from God dealing with the Jewish people once again. But the emphasis in these three parables continues from the same place in which it was seen in the first four parables.

Briefly stated, all seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen form a continuous discourse having to do with the kingdom of the heavens being offered to a group other than Israel. The people of Israel had rejected the proffered kingdom, and the kingdom was about to be taken from Israel, with a view to a separate and distinct entity (the Church) being called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected ([Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV)).

In the first four parables, Israel is not in view. These parables have to do with God’s dealings with this new entity, separate from Israel, during a time in which Israel is set aside; but in the last three parables, Israel is brought back into view. And God begins to deal with the nation once again, with a view to two things: 1) concluding His dealings with Israel (something not seen in these parables but seen numerous places in related Scripture), and 2) concluding His dealings with the new entity brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected (the central issue seen in these parables). Because of Israel’s connection with certain concluding events, Christ had to go back inside the house before delivering the last three parables.

The first four parables have to do with the course of Christendom during the present dispensation (the course of the period during which God is removing from *the Gentiles* “*a people for his name*” [[Acts 15:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+15.14&t=NKJV)]), with Israel set aside; and the last three parables have to do with events occurring after God resumes His national dealings with Israel, following the removal of the Church from the earth and God turning once again to Israel. But the Church, though having been removed from the earth before events in these last three parables begin to occur, is still the central figure seen throughout these parables.

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

The Tribulation, along with being “*the time of Jacob’s trouble*” ([Jeremiah 30:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+30.7&t=NKJV)), will be the time when redemption (*future*, not past) of the inheritance awaiting Christ and His co-heirs will occur. And this *future redemption*, having to do with *the inheritance*, will also include *the bride* — already having been redeemed, past — who, through this future redemptive act, will become Christ’s wife.

This entire sequence of events, along with related events that usher in the Messianic Kingdom, is depicted in the last three parables. And, in this respect, the last three parables simply form a chronological continuation and conclusion to the events depicted in the first four parables.

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Chapter Two

**I Will Return**

*When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.*

*Then he says, “I will return to my house from which I came.” And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.*

*Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.* ([Matthew 12:43-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.43-45&t=NKJV))

These are Christ’s closing recorded words to religious leaders *after* they had committed the “*blasphemy against the Holy Spirit*” ([Matthew 12:24-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.24-32&t=NKJV)), *before* He “*went . . . out of the house*,” “*sat by the sea*,” and began to speak “*in parables*” ([Matthew 13:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.1-3&t=NKJV)). The *house of Israel*, during time covered by events seen in these parables, was to be left “*empty, swept, and put in order*” ([Matthew 12:44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.44&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Matthew 23:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.38&t=NKJV)). The house was *to stand vacant* (“empty”), and it was to be “*swept*” and “*put in order*” relative to its vacated state. *Nothing was to remain*.

And, once the house of Israel found itself in this condition (which would include *the people, the temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the land*), the nation was left with only one recourse: *Repentance*. But, should repentance not be forthcoming — with the Jewish people persisting in their disobedience, ignoring the reason for their condition — *matters would only become worse*.

God had revealed through Moses at the beginning that Israel would not be allowed to continue indefinitely in disobedience. The nation would ultimately be brought to the place of *repentance*. And, to bring this to pass, if necessary, Israel’s punishment would be intensified *seven times* ([Leviticus 26:18-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+26.18-31&t=NKJV)). Israel, through this means, would be brought to a place where the nation would have no recourse other than to turn to the God of their fathers (*cf*. [Exodus 2:23-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+2.23-25&t=NKJV); [3:7ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+3.7ff&t=NKJV); [Jonah 2:2-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jonah+2.2-10&t=NKJV)).

Then, fifteen hundred years later, Christ called attention to this same fundamental truth immediately before He left the house, went down by the sea, and began to speak in parables ([Matthew 12:43-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.43-45&t=NKJV); [13:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.1ff&t=NKJV)).

[Matthew 12:43-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.43-45&t=NKJV) reveals an “*unclean spirit*” dwelling in the house prior to the house being left “*empty, swept, and put in order.*” Then, following this, because of Israel’s refusal to repent, “*seven other spirits*,” *more wicked than the first,* would take up residence in the house, with the latter state of the nation being *far worse* than the former state ([Matthew 12:45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.45&t=NKJV)).

The picture is that of *Israel persisting in disobedience, with God intensifying, seven-fold, the trouble that Israel was already experiencing because of her disobedience*. Further, Israel is seen ignoring the reason for her divinely decreed condition and attempting to bring about a change herself — *something that could only make matters worse*.

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

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

Israel was *sick* (resulting from sin, disobedience [[Isaiah 1:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+1.4-6&t=NKJV)]); and “*the house*,” *the house of Israel*, was about to be left *desolate*. And the nation’s condition *would continue after this fashion until a certain decreed time*. This condition would continue until matters became so bad that Israel would be forced to cry out to the God of their Fathers for help ([Exodus 2:23-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+2.23-25&t=NKJV)).

And, correspondingly, the nation would, in that day, through divine power, be brought into such dire straits that the Jewish people would willingly, gladly, and eagerly say, “*Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord*” ([Matthew 23:37-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.37-39&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Isaiah 53:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+53.1ff&t=NKJV)).

Israel’s condition was/is of *divine origin*, and the nation’s cure must also be of *divine origin*. A *divine purpose* lies behind the nation’s present divinely decreed condition — a purpose having to do with bringing a nation to the end of itself, leaving the nation with no place to turn but to the God of its Fathers.

(A similar divine work can be seen in [Zechariah 1:14-15 KJV](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+1.14-15&t=KJV), where the Lord set about to chasten His son, Israel, because of disobedience; but, in this case, the Gentile nations stepped in and “*helped forward the affliction*.”

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

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

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

Should any Gentile nation attempt such [as some already have], God will, again, be “*very sore displeased*”; and the principle set forth in [Genesis 12:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+12.3&t=NKJV) will still apply: “*I will . . . curse him that curses you*.”)

A Modern-Day Saturation

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

*Israel has sought to return to her land, while, at the same time, remaining in disobedience*. And, attempting to return after this fashion is not only attempting to return before the time but also attempting to reverse that which God has decreed concerning Israel’s sickness and desolation. It is attempting, *through humanistic means*, to bring about a change in an “*empty, swept, and put in order*” house, *the house of Israel*. And an attempt of this nature can only result in *seven other spirits, more wicked than the first, entering into the house*.

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

With an existing Jewish nation in the Middle East, in the eyes of man, Israel has seemingly succeeded in that which the nation attempted (*return to the land, and change that which God had previously decreed*). But, in the eyes of God, though an Israeli nation presently exists in the Middle East, matters are viewed from *a quite different perspective*. According to Scripture, all of the efforts put forth by Israel — seeking to bring about a change in an “*empty, swept, and put in order*” house — can only have one end. *Conditions for the nation can only become worse*.

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

But neither Israel nor the Gentile nations have any understanding at all of that which is happening. They have *no understanding* of *the nature* of the problem, *why* it exists, or *how* to deal with it. And, even if they did understand all the ramifications of the existing problem, they couldn’t even begin to deal with it. *God alone is the only One who can possibly deal with it.* The whole of the *existing problem* is a matter between God and Israel, and the whole of the *solution* is also a matter between God and Israel.

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

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

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

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, [The Time of the End](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-in-revelation.php#The%20Time%20of%20the%20End), [Appendix 1 - The Intractable Middle East Problem](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-in-revelation.php#The%20Intractable%20Middle%20East%20Problem) and [Appendix 2 - The Death of the High Priest](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-in-revelation.php#The%20Death%20of%20the%20High%20Priest) in this site.)

A Man Seemingly Possessing the Answer

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

But though his solution for Middle East peace will appear to work for awhile, the end result will be exactly as stated by Christ in [Matthew 12:43-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.43-45&t=NKJV). Instead of one wicked spirit in the house, in the end, *seven spirits more wicked than the first* will be found therein.

Israel will seek to be cured of her sickness through an association with this man — the man of sin, the Antichrist. But he will be unable to effect a cure. The Lord wrought Israel’s sickness, and only the Lord can effect the nation’s cure ([Hosea 5:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+5.13-14&t=NKJV)).

The matter of a Jewish nation, a remnant in the land today, is as Jonah *out of the Lord’s will*, *on board the ship, out of the sea.* This remnant in the land today, *out of the Lord’s will*, is no longer scattered among the nations. They are *in their own land, seemingly completely removed from the sea.*

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

In Jonah’s case, *the sea raged* so long as this condition persisted — Jonah on board the ship, out of the sea. But once Jonah was cast into the sea, the sea became *calm* ([Jonah 1:3-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jonah+1.3-15&t=NKJV)). And Jonah had to remain *in the sea, in the place of death* (typifying, as well, being scattered among the nations), for two days, until the third day. *Only then* could Jonah be removed from the sea and be placed back in the land ([Jonah 1:17-2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jonah+1.17-2.10&t=NKJV)).

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

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

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

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

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

And that’s where the world presently finds itself. *Everything is unalterably tied to Israel and that which Scripture reveals about the nation’s destiny*. Israel finds herself in dire straits, the Gentile nations surrounding Israel are in turmoil, and an eluding Middle East peace *is desperately being sought* at practically any price.

*Peace* though will not be forthcoming, and conditions will only become *worse* as time goes on. The man of sin, who will shortly appear and seemingly have the solution to the problem, will *fail*; and matters will become even *worse*. In fact, the whole of man’s efforts will end with the darkest time in Jewish history, immediately before “*the Son of Righteousness*” arises “*with healing in His wings*” ([Malachi 4:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Malachi+4.1-2&t=NKJV)).

The remnant presently in the land, comprising the present nation of Israel, is not only going to be uprooted and “*led captive into all nations*” ([Luke 21:20-24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.20-24&t=NKJV)), but at least twice as many Jews will be killed worldwide in less than half the time as were killed in Europe during World War II, from 1939 to1945 ([Zechariah 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+13.8&t=NKJV)). All of this is according to the clear revelation of Scripture; and, try as man might; *he is completely powerless* to change the course of that which has been set in motion.

Scripture clearly reveals Israel’s destiny, not only during her approaching darkest hour, but also during and following that time when the Jewish people cry out to the God of their fathers. Until the latter occurs, there can be nothing but *intensifying trouble*; but following the occurrence of the latter, the whole of the matter will be *reversed*. Then, and only then, will *peace exist in the Middle East and the world at large*.

And all of this foretold calamity is the setting for Christ’s departure from the house, His going down by the sea, and His beginning to speak in parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. *Israel’s climactic rejection* ([Matthew 12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12&t=NKJV)) and *Christ’s subsequent action* ([Matthew 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV)) anticipate the removal of the kingdom from Israel ([Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV)), Christ’s condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees, and Christ’s announcement concerning the house being left desolate ([Matthew 23:1-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.1-39&t=NKJV)).

And all of this anticipates the Church being called into existence (to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected), the entire present dispensation (in which the house lies desolate, while God calls out a bride for His Son), and the coming Tribulation (when Israel’s desolation will reach an apex, as the nation enters her darkest hour).

And, as well, all of this anticipates Israel ultimately returning to the One who has torn and smitten, the only One who can bind her wound. It will be *in that day alone* that healing will occur, with Israel being raised up to live in God’s sight ([Hosea 6:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+6.1-2&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Isaiah 1:4-2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+1.4-2.5&t=NKJV)).

Similarities Seen in Jewish History

There are a number of parallels that can be seen through viewing Israel during both the days of Moses and the days when Christ was on earth the first time. *A theocracy* was in the offing in both instances, *a Magna Charta* for the kingdom was seen in both instances, there was *a climactic rejection* in both instances, and *the same consequences* followed in both instances.

*1. Moses’ Day*

During Moses’ day, the people were delivered from Egypt following the death of the firstborn, with a view to realizing the rights of the firstborn in an earthly land, separate from Egypt. After their deliverance from Egypt, prior to entering the land, the Magna Charta for the theocracy — the constitution, the law, the rules and regulations governing the people — was given through Moses. Then the march was to Kadesh-Barnea, where the people of Israel were to enter the land, conquer the inhabitants, and rule the nations within this theocracy.

At Kadesh-Barnea, prior to the nation entering the land, twelve men — leaders from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, one from each tribe — were chosen to enter the land first in order to derive information concerning the land and its inhabitants ([Numbers 13:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13.1ff&t=NKJV)). These men traversed the land from one end to the other for forty days and nights, deriving this information; and they returned at the end of this time, not only with this information, but also with fruits from the land for the people to see ([Numbers 13:21ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13.21ff&t=NKJV)).

Then, after all twelve of the Jewish leaders had delivered their report “*to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel*,” exhibiting the fruits of the land, they concluded with two diametrically opposed statements. Two of the men concluded with *a positive statement*, but the remaining ten concluded with *a negative statement*. Two of the men delivered *a good report*, but the remaining ten delivered *an evil report* ([Numbers 13:26ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13.26ff&t=NKJV)).

The two, Caleb and Joshua (with Caleb speaking for both), said,

*“Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it”* ([Numbers 13:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13.30&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Numbers 14:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+14.6&t=NKJV)).

But the remaining ten said,

*“We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we”* ([Numbers 13:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13.31&t=NKJV)).

And the people listened to and gave heed to the ten with *the evil report* rather than the two with *the good report*.

Unbelief on the part of Israel in this respect was unbelief in God’s ability to see the matter through to its completion. God had supernaturally delivered His people from Egypt and had supernaturally provided for them thus far ([Exodus 14:13-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+14.13-31&t=NKJV); [16:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+16.1ff&t=NKJV); [17:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+17.1ff&t=NKJV)). And now He was to allow them to possess the land through supernaturally delivering those inhabiting the land (a land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) into their hands ([Deuteronomy 1:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+1.30&t=NKJV); [4:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+4.38&t=NKJV); [7:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+7.1-2&t=NKJV), [16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+7.16&t=NKJV), [22-24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+7.22-24&t=NKJV); [28:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+28.7&t=NKJV)). But the people, through their unbelief, *stayed God’s hand*.

And, because of this unbelief, Israel, at Kadesh-Barnea, *fell away* after such a fashion that a return to their former state was no longer possible. They had crossed over the line; and because of this, the entire unbelieving generation, twenty years old and above, save Caleb and Joshua, was to be *overthrown in the wilderness* ([Numbers 14:29-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+14.29-30&t=NKJV)). They were to be overthrown *on the right side* of the blood (the death of the firstborn back in Egypt) but *on the wrong side* of the goal of their calling (entrance into the land to realize the rights of the firstborn).

After God had dealt with the ten leaders who delivered *an evil report* to the people ([Numbers 14:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+14.37&t=NKJV)), the entire unbelieving generation was progressively overthrown during the next thirty-eight and one-half years. Those comprising this generation were led away from the Promised Land, into the wilderness land of Esau and Lot, down by the sea; and this entire unbelieving generation died in this wilderness land ([Deuteronomy 2:1-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+2.1-14&t=NKJV)).

And there was *nothing* any one of them could do about it. They were *completely, totally powerless* to bring about a change. They had fallen away at Kadesh-Barnea after a fashion that made a return to their former state *impossible*.

*2. Christ’s Day*

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

But, rather than deliverance from one *earthly land* to another, as during Moses’ day, deliverance from the earth to a *heavenly land* was in view. Then, with a view to the Jewish people entering this heavenly land, the Magna Charta for the theocracy (again, the constitution, the rules and regulations governing the people) was given through Christ. This is what the message was about that Christ delivered on the Mount in [Matthew 5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5&t=NKJV); [6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+6&t=NKJV); [7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+7&t=NKJV).

And, though the message surrounding the kingdom had previously been proclaimed to Israel ([Matthew 3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3&t=NKJV); [4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4&t=NKJV)), only after the Magna Charta for the kingdom had been delivered ([Matthew 5-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5-7&t=NKJV)) could the full force of the offer come into view (Matthew 8ff).

But the religious leaders in Israel led an unbelieving generation to do exactly the same thing that the leadership in Israel had led the people to do during Moses’ day. These religious leaders had no interest in entering the kingdom, and they did everything within their power to see that those comprising the remainder of the nation didn’t enter either ([Matthew 23:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.13&t=NKJV)).

They had heard the report (from John, Jesus, and the Twelve), and they had seen the fruits of the land (the various signs being manifested, showing that which Israel could have if the nation would repent). *But they wanted nothing to do with the matter*. And Israel’s religious leaders, exactly as had been done during Moses’ day, presented *an evil report,* leading the nation into a rejection *from which there could be no return*.

Events of [Numbers 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13&t=NKJV); [14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+14&t=NKJV) and [Matthew 12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12&t=NKJV) (*ref.* Chapter 1 of this book) parallel one another in this respect. Both have to do with *climactic points of rejection, with a theocracy in view*; and both present the nation, *because of its leadership*, being brought to *a point of no return*.

After they had been brought to this place, only one thing lay in store for both generations: *an overthrow, on the right side of the blood, but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling.*

A Similarity Seen in Christendom

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

*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,*

*and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,*

*if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame”* ([Hebrews 6:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-6&t=NKJV)).

This section in Hebrews warns against a falling away after such a fashion that, once the individual has fallen away, he will be unable to find *a place of repentance*. And, contextually, the warning is drawn from the type seen in the previous warning — the Israelites under Moses ([Hebrews 3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3&t=NKJV); [4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4&t=NKJV)).

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

“Repentance” simply means a change of mind. And the thought has nothing to do with the Israelites changing their minds. This is something that they did the very next day, but to no avail ([Numbers 14:39-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+14.39-45&t=NKJV)). They changed their minds and sought to go into the land set before them and conquer the inhabitants in accordance with God’s previous command. But God, because of their previous unbelief upon hearing the report of the Twelve and seeing the fruits of the land, had already told them that they would not be allowed to do that which they were now attempting to do. Instead, the entire unbelieving generation was destined to be *overthrown in the wilderness*.

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

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

Esau’s forfeiture of his birthright constitutes the fifth and last of the five major warnings in Hebrews. And this warning concludes by stating that Esau “*found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears*” ([Hebrews 12:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.16-17&t=NKJV)).

Esau repented; he changed his mind. But Esau couldn’t get his father to repent; he couldn’t get his father to change his mind. Isaac couldn’t change his mind. It was *too late*. He had already bestowed the blessing of the firstborn on Jacob. And, realizing not only the *gravity of the situation* but *the finality of the matter*, it is recorded that “*Esau lifted up his voice and wept*” ([Genesis 27:34-38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+27.34-38&t=NKJV)).

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

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

Note how [Hebrews 6:4-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-5&t=NKJV) is worded, keeping in mind that the matter has to do with “*the powers of the age to come* [the Messianic Era]” ([Hebrews 6:5b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.5b&t=NKJV)):

The individuals in this passage had been “*enlightened*,” they had “*tasted the heavenly gift*,” they had been made “*partakers* [‘companions’] *of the Holy Spirit* [note that the primary function of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the world today is the search for the bride ([Genesis 24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV))],” and they had “*tasted the good Word of God.*”

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

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

God didn’t change His mind relative to an unbelieving generation during Moses’ day, He didn’t change His mind relative to an unbelieving generation when Christ was on earth the first time, and He is not going to change His mind relative to unbelieving Christians. *God’s people didn’t then, nor will they today or yet future, find a place of repentance.*

But God Honors Faithfulness

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

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

Following the crossing of Jordan, the conquest of Jericho, and numerous subsequent battles, Caleb realized his inheritance. And upon realizing his inheritance, Caleb said:

*I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart.*

*Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God.*

*So Moses swore on that day, saying, “Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.”*

*And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said . . .*

*Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day . . . .* ([Joshua 14:7-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+14.7-10&t=NKJV), [12a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+14.12a&t=NKJV) [10a]).

Joshua then blessed Caleb and gave him “*Hebron . . . as an inheritance*” ([Joshua 14:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+14.13-14&t=NKJV)).

Then Joshua’s inheritance in the land is spoken of at a later time, after the land had been divided and things had been put in order:

*When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun.*

*According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it.* ([Joshua 19:49-50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+19.49-50&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Luke 19:15-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.15-18&t=NKJV)).

And therein lies the difference between *faithfulness* and *unfaithfulness* to that which God had commanded during Moses’ day, which would be *exactly the same* for Christians in the antitype.

It was/is *being allowed to realize an inheritance* in a land flowing with milk and honey on the one hand, or it was/is *being overthrown* in the land of Esau and Lot on the other.

*One thing alone* is seen as the deciding factor.

This one thing was stated by Caleb before he realized his inheritance, something *upon which he based the whole of his claim to the inheritance*:

*I wholly followed the LORD my God* ([Joshua 14:8b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+14.8b&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Joshua 14:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+14.9&t=NKJV)).

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

*Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb . . . because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel* ([Joshua 14:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+14.14&t=NKJV)).

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Chapter Three

**Parable of the Sower**

*Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow.*

*And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.*

*Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.*

*But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.*

*And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.*

*But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”*([Matthew 13:3-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.3-9&t=NKJV))

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

Israel — the nation to whom the kingdom of the heavens was being offered at the time Christ gave the parable of the Sower, outside the house, by the sea — is represented in Matthew’s gospel by *a barren fig tree* ([Matthew 21:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.18-19&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Joel 1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+1.7&t=NKJV)). The tree had leaves, but *no fruit.* And, because of the fruitless condition of the tree (representing the fruitless condition of Israel), Christ pronounced a curse on the tree. He said, “*Let no fruit grow on you ever again* [*lit*. ‘for an age’].” And the fig tree, by the next day, had “*withered away*,” showing that which was about to happen to the nation of Israel ([Matthew 21:19-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.19-20&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Mark 11:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+11.13-14&t=NKJV), [20-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+11.20-21&t=NKJV))).

The parable of the Sower *looks out ahead to God’s activity during an entirely separate dispensation,* following the removal of the kingdom from Israel and a new nation being brought forth to bear fruit ([Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV)). Israel, because of the nation’s barren condition, was to be set aside for a dispensation; and, throughout the dispensation, God would deal with *a different nation with respect to fruit-bearing and the kingdom of the heavens*.

This is that “*holy nation*,” a “*peculiar people*” to which Peter referred, who “*once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy*” ([1 Peter 2:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-10&t=NKJV)). This is *the new creation “in Christ,”* taken from both of the former two creations (both Jew and Gentile), though neither of the former two creations (neither Jew nor Gentile) exists within this new creation ([Ephesians 2:12-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.12-15&t=NKJV)).

“*In Christ*,” all distinctions of the human race seen in both of the former two creations (in both Jew and Gentile) simply do not exist ([Galatians 3:26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.26-29&t=NKJV)). *The new creation “in Christ”* is exactly what the name implies — *an entirely new creation in the human race* ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.17&t=NKJV)). This is why Scripture, following this time, divides the human race into three separate and distinct segments:

*Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks* [*lit*. Gentiles] or to the Church of God. ([1 Corinthians 10:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+10.32&t=NKJV))

The parable of the Sower was given with a view to this new creation not only being brought into existence but also being extended the opportunity to bring forth fruit for the kingdom. The parable of the Sower looks out ahead to that time when the kingdom would be taken from Israel (because of the nation’s failure to produce fruit) and given to a nation that would produce “*the fruits of it*” ([Matthew 21:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV)).

In the first three parts of the parable though, individuals comprising *the one new man* fail to bring forth fruit, as those in Israel had done relative to the proffered kingdom. Rather than overcoming and bearing fruit, they are instead overcome (through various means) and bear no fruit.

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

Thus, it is revealed at the beginning, before God even brought this new creation into existence, that not all those comprising the one new man — not all Christians — would bring forth fruit. *Fruit-bearing* is seen in only one part of the parable, in the last part. In the first three parts, individuals are shown to have been overcome through various means, resulting in *barrenness*.

All of these things are set forth in the parable itself. But, after responding to the disciples’ question concerning why He was speaking to the multitudes in parables ([Matthew 13:10-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.10-17&t=NKJV); *ref*. chapter 1 in this book), Christ provided them with interpretative help to further explain the parable of the Sower ([Matthew 13:18-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.18-23&t=NKJV)). Christ went back over the four parts, briefly explaining each part.

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

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

Then, after giving both the parable of the Sower and interpretative help, Christ gave the second, third, and fourth parables, apart from any explanation ([Matthew 13:24-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24-33&t=NKJV)). But, after going back inside the house, Christ, responding to another question asked by the disciples, concerning the second parable, provided additional interpretative help for this parable as well ([Matthew 13:36-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.36-43&t=NKJV)). And, once back inside the house, Christ then gave the fifth, sixth, and seventh parables ([Matthew 13:44-48](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.44-48&t=NKJV)), providing a very brief explanation concerning several things in the seventh and closing parable ([Matthew 13:49-50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.49-50&t=NKJV)).

All seven parables have to do *with a people other than Israel* ([Matthew 13:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.1&t=NKJV); *ref.* chapter 1 in this book), *with the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens* ([Matthew 13:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.11&t=NKJV)), *with the Word of the Kingdom* ([Matthew 13:19-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19-23&t=NKJV)), and *with* *fruit-bearing* ([Matthew 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.8&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.23&t=NKJV)). All seven parables, accordingly, have to do with the gospel of the glory of Christ, not the gospel of the grace of God. And they have to do with those to whom the kingdom is being offered during the present dispensation, following Israel’s rejection of the kingdom and the kingdom being taken from the nation.

Thus, all seven parables have to do with a time *following* the rejection of the kingdom by Israel and the removal of the kingdom from Israel. And they have to do with the new entity, the new creation, called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected.

And further, though Christ reentered the house prior to giving the last three parables, there is *no change* in the identity of those in view, those being dealt with. The Church continues center-stage.

The last three parables depict God’s summary dealings with respect to two things: (1) His previous dealings with Christians (throughout the dispensation, with fruit-bearing in view), and (2) His future redemptive action and separation of Christians (immediately preceding and leading into the Messianic Era, based on fruit-bearing during the dispensation preceding the Messianic Era).

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

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

Manner of Sowing

The designation “*the Sower*” in the parable (the Greek text has a definite article before “Sower” — a particular Sower) is identified in the explanation to the second parable as *the Son of Man*, a Messianic title ([Matthew 13:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.37&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Psalm 8:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+8.4-6&t=NKJV); [Daniel 7:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.13-14&t=NKJV); [Matthew 16:13-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.13-16&t=NKJV)). And also, in this explanation, the place where the sowing occurs is revealed to be *in the field, in the world* ([Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV)). In the parable itself, this sowing occurs in different places in the field, in different places in the world.

And that which the Sower — the Son of Man, Christ — sows out in the world is revealed to be *individuals*, not “seeds” *per se* (note that the word “*seed*” in the text is in italics [[Matthew 13:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.4&t=NKJV)], indicating that it is not in the Greek text, but supplied by the translators).

In the second parable though, there *is* a sowing of “seed.” The “*good seed*” ([Matthew 13:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24&t=NKJV), [27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.27&t=NKJV)) is sown by Christ in the field (which is really the same sowing seen in the first parable), but this “good seed” represent individuals. It is identified as “*the children* [‘sons’] *of the kingdom*” in the explanation ([Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV)).

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

The latter part of [Matthew 13:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19&t=NKJV), explaining the sowing in the first of the four parts of the parable ([Matthew 13:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.4&t=NKJV)), should read, “This is he which was sown by the wayside.” The beginning of [Matthew 13:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.20&t=NKJV), explaining the sowing in the second of the four parts of the parable ([Matthew 13:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.5-6&t=NKJV)), should read, “But he that was sown into stony places . .” The beginning of [Matthew 13:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.22&t=NKJV), explaining the sowing in the third of the four parts of the parable ([Matthew 13:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.7&t=NKJV)), should read, “He also that was sown among the thorns . . . .” And the beginning of [Matthew 13:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.23&t=NKJV), explaining the last of the four parts of the parable ([Matthew 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.8&t=NKJV)), should read, “But he that was sown into the good ground . . . .”

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

(In Mark’s and Luke’s accounts of the parable of the Sower [[Mark 4:13-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+4.13-20&t=NKJV); [Luke 8:4-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.4-15&t=NKJV)], both *the Word* [the Word of the Kingdom, as seen in Matthew’s account] and *individuals* [as also seen in Matthew’s account] are sown in different places out in the world, with a view to *fruit-bearing* [as seen in Matthew’s account as well]. There is, of course, no conflict in the Word being sown along with individuals, for the Word cannot be sown apart from a saved individual [in Luke’s account, “seed” is sown [[Luke 8:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.5&t=NKJV)], but this “seed” is identified as *the Word* [[Luke 8:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.11&t=NKJV)]. The Word is actually sown within the individual who has been sown. He hears, receives the Word [[Matthew 13:19-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19-23&t=NKJV); [Mark 4:14-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+4.14-20&t=NKJV); [Luke 8:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.11-15&t=NKJV)].

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

Understanding this is *foundational* if one would properly understand that which should be the central focus of all activity in the lives of Christians in the world today. And, understanding this is *foundational* as well if one would properly understand that which is the central focus of all activity surrounding the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world today — the search for the bride ([Genesis 24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Genesis 23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+23&t=NKJV); [24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV); [25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+25&t=NKJV)). Activity in the lives of Christians and activity in the ministry of the Spirit go hand-in-hand in this respect. They, of necessity, *must.*

The gospel of the grace of God though, as it has to do with both those sown in the field and the present work of the Spirit, is another matter entirely. An individual must pass “*from death to life*” before he can be extended the opportunity, find himself in a position, to bring forth fruit for the kingdom. He must become a child of the Owner before he can possess any association with the inheritance awaiting Christ and His co-heirs ([John 5:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.24&t=NKJV); [Romans 8:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.17&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:1-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1-5&t=NKJV)).

Thus, unsaved man must first hear the gospel of the grace of God (from those sown in the field). And the work of the Spirit must, correspondingly, begin at this point (as seen in the foundational pattern in [Genesis 1:2-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2-5&t=NKJV) [2b]). Unsaved man must pass “*from death to life*” before he can be dealt with relative to the inheritance out ahead.

And the Spirit of God is in the world today, first of all, to do a work in unsaved man in this respect. He is present in the world to breath life into the one who is without life, effecting *spiritual life* in that individual (*cf.* [Genesis 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.7&t=NKJV); [Ezekiel 37:1-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.1-10&t=NKJV); [John 5:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.24&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.5&t=NKJV), [8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8&t=NKJV)).

Only then can the Spirit deal with man in relation to that which is seen in the parable of the Sower, or any of the other six parables in this chapter. And only then can the Spirit, as well, bring to completion the central purpose for His presence in the world today — to search for, find, and remove the bride for God’s Son ([Genesis 24:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.33&t=NKJV), [36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.36&t=NKJV), [58-67](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.58-67&t=NKJV)).

Places Where Sown

The explanation to the parable of the Sower begins with the statement, “*When anyone hears the word of the kingdom* . . . .” ([Matthew 13:19a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19a&t=NKJV)). Then, in each of the four parts to the explanation, the expression is shortened to simply, “*the word*” — referring to the previously mentioned Word, “*the word of the kingdom*” ([Matthew 13:20-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.20-23&t=NKJV)).

This is a reference to a message surrounding *the same kingdom that was being offered to Israel* ([Matthew 3-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3-12&t=NKJV)). And the reference is set within a context having to do with a message surrounding this kingdom being offered *to a people other than Israel*. It is simply called “*the word of the kingdom*” in the explanation to the parable of the Sower, for it would be completely obvious from both the text and context exactly what message was being referenced.

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

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

1) *The Word of the kingdom.*

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

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

*1) Ones Sown by the Wayside*

Comparing the parable and the explanation ([Matthew 13:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.4&t=NKJV), [19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19&t=NKJV)), the ones sown by the wayside represent individuals (Christians) who hear the Word of the Kingdom but fail to understand the message. And their failure to understand the message allows the “*birds*,” representing “*the wicked one* [Satan],” to simply come along and *do away* with the message, thus *devouring* the person (*cf.* [Matthew 13:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.4&t=NKJV), [19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 5:6-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+5.6-9&t=NKJV)).

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

In Israel, when Christ was on earth the first time, the religious leaders had misled the people ([Matthew 12:9-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.9-32&t=NKJV); [15:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+15.1ff&t=NKJV); [16:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.1ff&t=NKJV); [23:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.13&t=NKJV), [15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.15&t=NKJV)). And, as a result, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in the actions of the Israelites of that day:

*For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed . . .* ([Matthew 13:15a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.15a&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Isaiah 6:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+6.9-10&t=NKJV))

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

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

The final state of Christendom during the dispensation — seen in both the chronology of the first four parables in [Matthew 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV) and the seven churches in [Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV) — is *complete corruption and rejection* in relation to the Word of the Kingdom. That is, insofar as this message is concerned (the message seen throughout the parable of the Sower), *the whole of Christendom* (fundamental and liberal segments alike) will be as the church in Laodicea at the end of the dispensation, *completely leavened* (*cf.* [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV); [Revelation 3:14-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.14-20&t=NKJV)).

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

*Because you say, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing”--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.* ([Revelation 3:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.17&t=NKJV))

Israel, in the nation’s blinded condition, didn’t heed the message; and the Church in its blinded condition is not going to heed the message either. But a number of individuals in Israel did heed the message, and their eyes were opened (*cf.* [Matthew 13:15-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.15-16&t=NKJV) [15b]; [Luke 24:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.16&t=NKJV), [31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.31&t=NKJV)). And a number of individuals in Christendom too have heeded and continue to heed the message, and their eyes too have been/are being opened (*cf*. [2 Corinthians 3:14-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+3.14-18&t=NKJV); [Revelation 3:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.18&t=NKJV)).

*2) Ones Sown into Stony Places*

Comparing the parable and the explanation ([Matthew 13:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.5-6&t=NKJV), [20-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.20-21&t=NKJV)), the ones sown in stony places represent individuals who hear the Word, understand the Word, and receive it joyfully. These are individuals who get excited about that which they have heard and learned. There is *new-found joy and excitement in their lives*, because of “*the word of the kingdom*” ([Matthew 13:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.20&t=NKJV)).

But, before they can become sufficiently grounded in this Word (they have no “depth of earth,” they have no “root”), “tribulation or persecution” takes its toll. They endure “for awhile”; but, in the symbolism of the parable, when “the sun [‘tribulation or persecution’]” begins to beat down in all its strength, because of their lack of root (maturity in the faith), they wither away ([Matthew 13:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.5-6&t=NKJV), [21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.21&t=NKJV)).

In the text, “*tribulation or persecution*” occurs “*because of the word*,” because of individuals hearing and receiving *the Word of the Kingdom*. There is no message in existence which Satan will marshal his forces against as he will against the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ.

This message has to do, centrally, with *a change in the government of the earth*. Satan and his angels presently rule over the earth, within the existing kingdom of the heavens; but a new order of Rulers is about to be brought forth — Christ and His co-heirs. Satan and his angels are to be put down, with Christ and His co-heirs then taking the kingdom.

The Word of the Kingdom is a message that has this end in view. It is a message having to do with *Christ ruling the earth* in that coming day, ruling in the stead of Satan; and it is a message having to do with *Christians occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ* in that day, ruling in the stead of angels presently ruling with Satan.

And this is something that Satan will do *all within his power* to prevent. Thus, one could only expect a message dealing centrally with this subject to come under attack *as no other message*, which is exactly the way Scripture presents the matter.

In [Ephesians 3:1-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.1-11&t=NKJV) this message is seen as something presently being made known “by [*lit.*, ‘through’] *the Church*” to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places [Satan and his angels]” ([Ephesians 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.10&t=NKJV)). The message being made known has to do with the fact that Satan and his angels are about to be replaced, and it has to do with individuals presently responding in a positive manner to the invitation (being extended by the Holy Spirit in the world) to have a part with Christ, in His administration, in that coming day (*cf.* [Genesis 24:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.36&t=NKJV), [58](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.58&t=NKJV)).

And in [Ephesians 6:10ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.10ff&t=NKJV) a spiritual warfare is seen raging because of that which is presently being made known through the Church to Satan and his angels. Satan will, first of all, do everything within his power *to prevent* Christians from hearing this message; and, should Christians hear this message, he will then do everything within his power *to do away with*, *destroy* this message, *devouring* Christians.

At this point, Satan brings about “*tribulation or persecution*” in the life of the one hearing and understanding the message. And note again the wording of the text. Tribulation or persecution arises in the life of such an individual “*because of the word*,” because of *the Word of the Kingdom*. He has heard and joyfully received this Word.

And this tribulation or persecution invariably comes from *other Christians*. Unsaved man out in the world can have nothing to do with all of this. He is “*dead in trespasses and sins*,” *completely incapable* of operating in the spiritual realm. And not only does this tribulation or persecution come from other Christians, but many times it comes more specifically from those in positions of leadership, exactly as in Israel when this offer was open to the nation almost two millennia ago (*e.g.*, [John 9:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+9.22&t=NKJV)).

The person, through this tribulation or persecution, “stumbels [Greek: *skandalizo*, ‘is scandalized’]” ([Ephesians 6:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.21&t=NKJV)). That which he has heard, understood, and accepted is associated with error, cultism, etc. And, because of his lack of maturity in the faith, he is overcome. He simply gives up; he quits; he falls away. And Satan wins the victory in his life.

*3) Ones Sown Among Thorns*

Comparing the parable and the explanation ([Matthew 13:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.7&t=NKJV), [22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.22&t=NKJV)), the ones sown among thorns represent individuals who hear the Word, but, because of worldly involvement, they bear no fruit. They “*go forth*” ([Luke 8:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.14&t=NKJV)), apparently enduring for awhile, but are then overcome by the enemy.

That which is used to bring about their fall is revealed to be “*the cares of this world* [‘age’], *and the deceitfulness of riches*.” Then Luke, in his account of this parable, adds a third — the “*pleasures of this life*” ([Luke 8:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.14&t=NKJV)).

These individuals — whether through immaturity, neglect, letting their guard down, or any number of other things (we’re simply not told) — allow various things within the present world system, under Satan, to bring about their fall (*cf*. [1 John 2:15-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+2.15-17&t=NKJV)). Satan uses these things against them in the spiritual warfare.

They fail to heed the Lord’s admonition and warning concerning where Christians are to fix their attention and keep it fixed. Christians, in the race of the faith, are to look “*to Jesus* [*lit.*, ‘from, to Jesus’]” ([Hebrews 12:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.1-2&t=NKJV)). They are to look “from” the things of this present world system “to” Jesus. *They are not to look back; they are not to look around; but they are to keep their eyes fixed straight out ahead, on Christ, on the Author and Finisher of their faith.*

And Christians are not only to fix their attention on Jesus, but also on exactly the same thing Christ fixed His attention as He endured the sufferings and shame surrounding Calvary. Christ fixed His attention on “*the joy that was set before Him*” as He “*endured the cross, despising the shame* [considering the sufferings and shame *of little consequence* compared to His coming glory and exaltation]” ([Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Matthew 25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.21&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.23&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.21&t=NKJV)).

Christians are to “*escape to the mountain* [“the mountain,” signifying *the kingdom*],” *apart from looking back, apart from remaining in the plain* (“the plain,” signifying *the present world system*). And if they don’t, they will be consumed along with the things in the plain ([Genesis 19:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.17&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Genesis 19:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.26&t=NKJV); [Luke 9:62](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+9.62&t=NKJV); [17:32-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.32-33&t=NKJV)).

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

*4) Ones Sown into Good Ground*

The fourth part of the parable presents matters after an entirely different fashion. Those sown “in good ground” ([Matthew 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.8&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.23&t=NKJV)) represent individuals who hear the Word (first part of the parable); they understand the Word and refuse to allow “*tribulation or persecution*” to deter them as they progress toward maturity in the Word (second part of the parable); and they keep their eyes fixed on the goal out ahead, rather than on the things of this present world system (third part of the parable).

They hear, understand, and grow in the Word (*cf.* [Acts 20:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.32&t=NKJV); [James 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.2&t=NKJV)). Tribulation or persecution doesn’t stop them; and they do not allow themselves to become sidetracked by the “*cares of this age*,” the “*deceitfulness of riches*,” or the “*pleasures of life*.” These are individuals who refuse to become entangled “*with the affairs of this life*,” knowing that a crown lies out ahead *for those who “strive lawfully”* ([2 Timothy 2:4-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.4-5&t=NKJV)).

Thus, these are individuals who overcome and bring forth fruit. These are individuals who overcome *the world* ([1 John 5:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+5.4&t=NKJV)), *the flesh* ([Romans 8:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.13&t=NKJV); [Colossians 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+3.5&t=NKJV)), and *the devil* ([James 4:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+4.7&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 5:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+5.9&t=NKJV)), rather than being overcome by one or all three. And, as a result, they bring forth fruit. They are the only ones who do bring forth fruit among the four groups mentioned, and they bring forth fruit in varying amounts — “*some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty*.”

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

Outcome of Sowing

Positions in the coming kingdom of Christ are to be earned, not passed out in any type of indiscriminate manner ([Matthew 20:21-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+20.21-23&t=NKJV)). Individuals appearing before Christ in that day will receive *exactly what each, through fruit-bearing, has earned*. Each will receive “*his own reward according to his own labor*” ([1 Corinthians 3:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.8&t=NKJV)).

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

Individuals bringing forth no fruit will receive no payment. There will have been no fruitful labor, and, consequently, wages will not be forthcoming. Instead, they will “*suffer loss*” ([1 Corinthians 3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.15&t=NKJV)).

On the other hand, individuals bringing forth fruit will receive payment. There will have been fruitful labor, and, consequently, wages will be forthcoming. Each will “*receive a reward*” ([1 Corinthians 3:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.14&t=NKJV)). There will be “*a just recompense of reward* [‘a just payment, justly earned wages’]” ([Hebrews 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.2&t=NKJV); [11:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.26&t=NKJV)).

Mention is made in the parable of the Sower of individuals bringing forth fruit in varying amounts — “*some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty*” ([Matthew 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.8&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.23&t=NKJV)). And payment for the varying amounts, seen in another parable, the parable of the pounds in [Luke 19:11-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.11-27&t=NKJV), would be *exactly commensurate* with their individual fruitfulness.

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

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

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

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

1. *A person always reaps what he sows.* The one sowing “*to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption*,” and the one sowing “*to his Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting* [Greek: *aionios* life, referring, in the text, to ‘life in the coming age’ ([Galatians 6:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+6.7-8&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Genesis 1:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.11&t=NKJV))].”

2. *A person always reaps more than he sows*. Sow “*the wind*” and one can only expect to reap “*the whirlwind*” [[Hosea 8:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+8.7&t=NKJV)], but remain faithful over “*a few things*,” and one will be made “*ruler over many things*” [[Matthew 25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.21&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.23&t=NKJV)].

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

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Chapter Four

**Parable of the Wheat, Tares**

*Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field;*

*but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.*

*But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.*

*So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?”'*

*He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’*

*But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.*

*Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."* ([Matthew 13:24-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24-30&t=NKJV))

The parable of the wheat and tares continues with the same subject matter introduced in the previous parable, the parable of the Sower. The central focus in the parable of the Sower was *fruit-bearing*; and different things were presented which, on the one hand, *prevented fruit-bearing* ([Matthew 13:4-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.4-7&t=NKJV), [19-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19-22&t=NKJV)), or, on the other hand, *resulted in fruit-bearing* ([Matthew 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.8&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.23&t=NKJV)).

And the central focus in the parable of the wheat and tares, as well, centers around *fruit-bearing* ([Matthew 13:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.26&t=NKJV)). But this parable does not cover fruit-bearing from the same broad spectrum seen in the previous parable. Rather, continuing the thought from the previous parable, the parable of the wheat and tares limits itself to *one realm*. It limits itself to that part of the parable of the Sower that deals with the ones sown into the good ground, who brought forth fruit (*cf.* [Matthew 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.8&t=NKJV), [23-24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.23-24&t=NKJV), [26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.26&t=NKJV)). Those failing to bring forth fruit in the first three parts of the previous parable cannot be viewed as “*good seed*” in this parable.

That is to say, *all* of the “*good seed*” — “*wheat*,” “*sons of the kingdom*” — in the parable of the wheat and tares are seen bringing forth fruit (*cf.* [Matthew 13:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24&t=NKJV), [26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.26&t=NKJV), [37-38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.37-38&t=NKJV), [40-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40-43&t=NKJV)). This is simply a continuation and elaboration of the fourth and last part of the previous parable. Then something new is introduced. The parable of the wheat and tares centers around those bearing fruit from the previous parable in order to reveal something additional, something not revealed in the parable of the Sower.

Thus, the parable of the wheat and tares moves a step beyond that which is revealed at the end of the previous parable, the parable of the Sower. This second parable continues with the same thought but then reveals *a concentrated attack against those individuals bearing fruit*. It reveals *the exact method* that Satan uses as he goes about seeking *to stop that which is occurring*.

Satan seeks *to prevent fruit-bearing* through a number of means (revealed in the first three parts of the parable of the Sower). And, throughout the dispensation he has been successful in his confrontation with the vast majority of Christians. He has succeeded in preventing most from bearing fruit.

But the preceding has not been true of all Christians. Many have been victorious over Satan’s methods and schemes. They have overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. And, as a result, they have brought forth and continue to bring forth fruit. And it is these Christians, the ones bearing fruit, that Satan is seen directing his attack against in the parable of the wheat and tares, seeking *to stop that which is occurring*.

The Kingdom of the Heavens Is likened to . . .

The parable of the wheat and tares and the subsequent five parables begin after a similar fashion: “*The kingdom of the heavens is likened* [or, ‘is like’] *to* . . . .” (*cf.* [Matthew 13:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24&t=NKJV), [31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.31&t=NKJV), [33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV), [44-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.44-45&t=NKJV), [47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.47&t=NKJV)). This though is in the English translation (KJV). The Greek text, in its wording, reveals Christ sharply distinguishing between the way in which He began the parable of the wheat and tares and the way in which He began each of the remaining five parables.

*1) Has Become Like, Is Like*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*2) The Kingdom of the Heavens*

“The kingdom of the heavens” is *a realm*. And, in relation to this earth, the expression would refer simply to “the rule of the heavens over the earth.”

Satan and his angels presently rule from a heavenly sphere over the earth. And this heavenly sphere is that realm in which Christ and His co-heirs will reside during the coming age when they rule from the heavens over the earth, following Satan and his angels being cast out ([Revelation 12:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.4&t=NKJV), [7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.7-9&t=NKJV); *ref.* the author’s [The Most High Ruleth BOOK](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-one.php#The%20Most%20High%20Ruleth%20BOOK) in this site).

Thus, the kingdom of the heavens *becoming* as described in the parable of the wheat and tares, or *continuing* as described in the subsequent five parables, cannot be a reference to *the realm* of the kingdom *per se*. The realm itself doesn’t change. Only certain things about the kingdom can change (*e.g.*, the message about the kingdom).

The complete parabolic section in Matthew chapter thirteen is introduced and concluded after a similar fashion. And seeing how this is done, the thought inherent in the use of the expression, “*the kingdom of the heavens*,” in the second through seventh parables can be easily ascertained.

In the parable of the Sower, setting the stage for the remaining parables, “*the word of the kingdom*” is in view ([Matthew 13:19-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19-23&t=NKJV)). This is a message pertaining to Christian faithfulness during the present dispensation, with a view to occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens during the coming age. That is to say, the Word of the Kingdom is *a message about the realm* presently occupied by Satan and his angels, which Christ and His co-heirs will one day occupy.

Then, concluding all seven parables, Christ stated relative to these parables, “*Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like .* . . ” ([Matthew 13:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.52&t=NKJV)). Again, the Word of the Kingdom is in view. The instruction to which Christ referred is instruction in exactly the same thing seen in the introductory parable, the parable of the Sower — *i.e., instruction in the Word of the Kingdom.*

And exactly the same thing is in view through the use of the expression, “*the kingdom of the heavens*,” introducing the second through seventh parables. It’s not *the realm* of the kingdom of the heavens that *has become like* and *continues like* that described in these parables. Such would be impossible. Rather, it is t*he proclamation, offer, and reception or rejection* of the kingdom of the heavens (referred to both before and after these six parables) that *has become like* and *continues like* that described in the parables.

(The same thing can be seen in the offer of the kingdom to Israel by John, Jesus, and the Twelve. The kingdom of the heavens was “*at hand* [‘had drawn near’]” [[Matthew 3:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.2&t=NKJV); [4:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4.17&t=NKJV); [10:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.7&t=NKJV)]. The realm itself hadn’t drawn near. The realm remained unchanged. But the prospect of Israel moving into and occupying that realm, based on national repentance, had drawn near [*cf.* [Matthew 6:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+6.33&t=NKJV); [11:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+11.12&t=NKJV); [21:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV)].)

Sons of the Kingdom, Sons of the Devil

Only two types of individuals are seen in the parable of the wheat and tares. They are referred to by the expressions “*wheat* [or, ‘good seed’]” and “*tares*” ([Matthew 13:24-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24-25&t=NKJV)). *The wheat, the good seed*, are identified as “*the sons of the kingdom,*” and the *tares* are identified as “*the sons of the wicked one*” ([Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV)).

*The One sowing the good seed* is identified as “*the Son of Man*,” a Messianic title ([Matthew 13:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.37&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Psalm 8:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+8.4&t=NKJV); [Daniel 7:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.13-14&t=NKJV); [Matthew 16:13-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.13-16&t=NKJV)); and *the one sowing the tares* is identified as “*the enemy*,” “*the devil*,” the incumbent ruler in the kingdom ([Matthew 13:39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.39&t=NKJV)).

Everything about this parable has to do with a particular work of God (relative to the kingdom) and with a particular countering work of Satan (also relative to the kingdom). God has placed individuals out in the world, *with a view to their bringing forth fruit*; and this fruit would, in turn, be in relation to the proffered kingdom. And Satan has placed contrary minded individuals ([Matthew 13:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.41&t=NKJV)) in the midst of those who are bearing fruit, *seeking to counter that which is occurring*. It is only through this means that Satan would envision any hope at all of retaining his present ruling position.

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

Now, put all of this together for the complete picture of something that has been occurring throughout the dispensation, which has gone almost completely unrecognized. This parable has to do, not with how Satan seeks *to prevent fruit-bearing* (that was seen in the first three parts of the previous parable, the parable of the Sower), but with how Satan seeks *to stop fruit-bearing* — something not seen in the previous parable, or really not seen in the same fashion in any of the subsequent parables.

This parable reveals Satan’s attack against *a select group of Christians*. It reveals his attack against *fruit-bearing Christians*. And it is among these Christians that Satan goes about seeking to counter God’s plans and purposes through sowing that which resembles wheat, though it is not wheat.

Satan knows that fruit-bearing is that which God requires of those who are to ascend the throne with His Son in that coming day (*cf.* [Matthew 21:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.18-19&t=NKJV), [43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 6:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.7-9&t=NKJV)). And he will, first of all, do everything within his power *to prevent Christians from bearing fruit* (seen in the first three parts of the parable of the Sower). But, when Christians begin bearing fruit (seen in the fourth part of the parable of the Sower), then he will do everything within his power *to stop them from bearing fruit*. And it is among the latter group of Christians — those bearing fruit — that Satan is seen sowing counterfeits (*in relation to fruit-bearing, individuals producing counterfeit fruit* [[Matthew 7:15-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+7.15-20&t=NKJV)]).

*1) The Wheat — Sons of the Kingdom*

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

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

Note how Paul dealt with this matter in [Romans 8:14-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.14-23&t=NKJV):

*For as many as are led* [*lit*., ‘are being led’] *by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”*

*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*

*and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. . . .*

*. . . even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.* ([Romans 8:14-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.14-17&t=NKJV), [23b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.23b&t=NKJV))

In this chapter in Romans, as also in Galatians chapters three and four and in Hebrews chapter twelve, reference is made to Christians being “sons” *in a present sense, preceding the adoption* ([Romans 8:14-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.14-15&t=NKJV); [Galatians 3:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.26&t=NKJV); [4:5-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+4.5-7&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 12:5-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.5-8&t=NKJV), [16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.16-17&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.23&t=NKJV)). And these instances would correspond to the way in which the matter is handled in Matthew chapter thirteen.

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

All “angels” are *sons of God* because of their special, individual creation. And angels occupy various positions of delegated power and authority in God’s kingdom (*cf*. [Job 1:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job+1.6&t=NKJV); [2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job+2.1&t=NKJV); [38:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job+38.7&t=NKJV)).

“Adam” was *a son of God* because of a special creative act of God. But Adam’s descendants were *not* sons of God. Rather, they were sons of the one from whom they descended. They were sons of Adam ([Genesis 5:3ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+5.3ff&t=NKJV); [Luke 3:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+3.38&t=NKJV)).

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

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

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

This special creation was performed in the person of Abraham’s grandson, Jacob ([Isaiah 43:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+43.1&t=NKJV)); and this special creation was of a nature that would allow it to be passed on through the genes, through Jacob’s twelve sons, resulting in a nation recognized as separate and distinct from all the other nations (thus, the distinction between Jew and Gentile [[Numbers 23:8-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+23.8-11&t=NKJV)]).

Then, once God had a separate nation of this nature — which would be viewed as *a son* because of the special creation in Jacob — he *adopted this nation into a firstborn status* ([Exodus 4:22-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+4.22-23&t=NKJV)), *redeemed those comprising this nation* ([Exodus 12:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+12.1ff&t=NKJV)), and *called this nation out of Egypt under Moses to rule at the head of the nations in a land previously covenanted to their forefathers* (*cf.* [Exodus 2:23-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+2.23-25&t=NKJV); [3:7-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+3.7-12&t=NKJV); [15:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+15.17-18&t=NKJV); [19:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+19.5-6&t=NKJV)). That is, a redeemed people, recognized as *God’s firstborn son*, was being called forth to rule in that part of God’s kingdom that Adam had previously been created to rule.

But coming on down into modern times, Israel is not presently ruling the earth (because of past disobedience); nor is Israel even in a position to rule today. Israel, though still retaining the nation’s position as *God’s firstborn son*, is presently scattered among the nations, in *unbelief*. Even the remnant presently in the land is there in *unbelief*. Thus, Israel, in this state of *unbelief* (whether in or out of the land), though still God’s firstborn son, *is in no position to rule*. The nation must *first exercise belief*. The nation, as seen in [Exodus 12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+12&t=NKJV), must *first be redeemed*. They must *first apply the blood of the Paschal Lamb* (*through belief*) *whom they slew 2,000 years ago*.

Then the Church, a separate creation from either Jew or Gentile, is likewise in no position to rule. Though those comprising the Church are *new creations* (“*in Christ*” [[2 Corinthians 5:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.17&t=NKJV)]), can be viewed as *sons*, and are *saved* (unlike those comprising the nation of Israel today), *they have not been adopted* (*as the nation of Israel was adopted in past time*).

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

Christians are presently Sons, (because of their standing as *new creations*), awaiting the adoption (their present status); and consequently, although Christians are presently “sons,” *they are in no position to rule*. Only *adopted son*s (the Christians’ future standing) can rule. Thus, *sonship*, portending *rulership*, is seen in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews in relation to *adoption* and *inheritance* (both future).

The matter can be illustrated quite easily from Romans. The verses leading into [Romans 8:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.14&t=NKJV) (the verse presenting Christians as “sons”) deal with Christians either living after the flesh or putting to death the deeds of the flesh. Then verse fourteen deals with individuals being led by the Spirit of God (contextually, individuals under the leadership of the Spirit putting to death the previously mentioned deeds of the flesh), and these individuals are said to be “*the sons of God*,” with adoption mentioned in connection with sonship in the next verse ([Romans 8:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.15&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Romans 8:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.23&t=NKJV)). But then the following verse ([Romans 8:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.16&t=NKJV)) specifically states that Christians are also presently “*children of God*.”

However, though Christians are presently seen as both ”children” and “sons,” no Christian is presently seen as *a firstborn son*. That standing awaits a future time, a time following the adoption.

Contextually, [Romans 8:14-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.14-16&t=NKJV) should be understood in the light of [Hebrews 12:5-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.5-8&t=NKJV), where Christians are seen undergoing *child-training as sons* (*seen as children of God who are being child-trained as sons of God*), *with a view to adoption into a firstborn status* ([Hebrews 12:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.16-17&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.23&t=NKJV)). Thus, [Romans 8:14-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.14-16&t=NKJV) would have to be understood in the sense of Christians presently being led by the Spirit of God (undergoing *child-training as sons*), who will be manifested as *firstborn sons in that coming day following the adoption, occupying positions as joint-heirs with Christ in His kingdom* ([Romans 8:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.17&t=NKJV), [19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.19&t=NKJV)).

That is the subject of the whole passage. And exactly the same thing can be seen through the use of the expression, “*sons of the kingdom*,” in [Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV), for that is the subject of the whole passage there as well.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, [God’s Firstborn Sons BOOK](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-six.php#God%E2%80%99s%20Firstborn%20Sons%20BOOK), chapter 3, [The Church](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-six.php#The%20Church) in this site.)

The “*sons of the kingdom*” in [Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV) are *the good seeds*, the ones bringing forth fruit. They, as the ones in [Romans 8:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.14&t=NKJV) (actually, the “*sons*” both places are the same), are the ones who will be manifested as “*the sons of God*,” in the kingdom, in that coming day ([Romans 8:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.19&t=NKJV)).

Though all Christians can presently be viewed as *sons* because of creation, not all Christians are being referred to in [Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV) by the expression, “*sons of the kingdom*.” Nor are all Christians being referred to in [Romans 8:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.14&t=NKJV) by the expression “*sons of God*.” The specific reference in Matthew is to those Christians bringing forth fruit, and the specific reference in Romans is to those Christians following the leadership of the Spirit.

And, again, the two are the same. Fruit-bearing cannot be realized apart from following the leadership of the Spirit; and following the leadership of the Spirit will invariably result in fruit-bearing.

It is the Son of Man who sows Christians out in the world, with a view to fruit-bearing, which is with a view to the kingdom. *Everything* points ahead to the kingdom — *the Son of Man* (the Sower, described through the use of a Messianic title), *the sons of the kingdom* (those sown, described through the use of an expression portending rulership), and *fruit-bearing* (a bringing forth, with a view to the kingdom).

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

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

And, as also previously shown, Satan is seen carrying on his activities on two fronts: (1) *He is seen seeking to prevent Christians from bringing forth fruit* (described in the first three parts of the parable of the Sower), and (2) *he is seen seeking to stop Christians from bringing forth fruit* (described in the parable of the tares, forming a commentary on the fourth part of the parable of the Sower).

If Satan can *prevent Christians from bringing forth fruit*, the matter will be settled at that point, and a continued work will be unnecessary. But, if he can’t prevent Christians from bringing forth fruit, then he has *to stop them*.

It is here that he is revealed sowing tares. He sows them right in the midst of Christians bearing fruit, and this is done with *one goal in mind*. It is done in an effort *to stop, through any means possible, Christians who are bearing fruit from continuing to bear fruit.*

*a) Identity of the Tares*

Exactly who are those whom Satan sows among fruit-bearing Christians in an effort to stop them from bearing fruit? The answer is easy to ascertain.

These parables were given by Christ at His first coming, at a time when the kingdom of the heavens was being offered to the nation of Israel; but these parables had to do with events beyond that time, occurring during a time when the kingdom of the heavens would be offered to a separate and distinct entity, *the one new man “in Christ.”* And, whether during that time when the kingdom was offered to Israel, or during that time when the kingdom would be offered to the one new man “*in Christ*,” any realization of the offer was contingent on one thing — *fruit-bearing* ([Matthew 21:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.18-19&t=NKJV), [43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV)).

Israel failed to bring forth fruit. And note who was responsible for the nation’s failure in this realm. It was *the religious leaders of that day*, mainly the Scribes and Pharisees, seated “*in Moses’ seat,*” who controlled the religious life of the nation ([Matthew 23:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.2&t=NKJV)).

They were the ones who followed Christ about the country seeking, at every turn, to speak out against the Messenger and His message. They were the ones directly responsible for the nation’s rejection of the King and kingdom. They had “*shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men* [‘in the presence of men’]” ([Matthew 23:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.13&t=NKJV)). And for this reason they experienced a rebuke and condemnation at Christ’s hands unlike that experienced by any other religious group in Israel ([Matthew 23:14ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.14ff&t=NKJV)).

Bringing this over into Christendom, whom would Satan use during the present dispensation to either prevent or stop fruit-bearing relative to the kingdom? In the light of the past offer to Israel, there is only one possible answer. It would have to be the same as that seen in Israel when the same offer was open to the nation almost 2,000 years ago.

It was *Jewish religious leaders* then, and the counterpart would have to be *Christian religious leaders* today. Those outside the nation — the unregenerate world — had nothing to do with the matter then; nor can those outside the Church — the unregenerate world — have anything to do with the matter today. It was *those within* that Satan used in Israel in the past, and it is *those within* that he uses in the Church today (*cf.* [Matthew 15:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+15.1ff&t=NKJV); [16:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.1ff&t=NKJV); [Acts 20:29-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.29-30&t=NKJV)).

But how could Christians be identified by the expression, “*sons of the wicked one*” ([Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV))? Note several references in Scripture relative to Israelites acting in similar capacities and the answer will become apparent.

In John chapter eight, *Jews who had believed on Christ* ([John 8:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+8.31&t=NKJV)), who were acknowledged by Christ to be “*Abraham’s seed*” ([John 8:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+8.37&t=NKJV)), were also said, *because of their works,* to be of their “f*ather the devil*” ([John 8:39-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+8.39-44&t=NKJV)).

In Matthew chapter sixteen, Peter, because he stated relative to Christ’s sufferings, death, and resurrection on the third day, “*Lord; this shall not happen to You!*,” was associated directly with Satan. Jesus said to Peter — not to Satan, but to Peter — “*Get behind me, Satan*” ([Matthew 16:21-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.21-23&t=NKJV); *cf.* [John 6:70](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+6.70&t=NKJV)).

Then in [Matthew 23:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.15&t=NKJV), the Scribes and Pharisees — those having “*shut up the kingdom of the heavens*” ([Matthew 23:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.13&t=NKJV)) — were said to have made a proselyte “*twofold more the child of hell* [*lit.*, ‘twofold more a son of *Gehenna*’]” than themselves. Their *sonship*, because of that which they had done, was associated with *Gehenna* (the place of refuse) rather than with the kingdom.

With all these things in mind — seeing a counterpart in Israel to that which is existing in Christendom — viewing the expression, “*sons of the wicked one*” in [Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV) as a reference to the saved, *not* the unsaved, would, contextually, be the only natural way in which the matter could be viewed. And, that this is the correct way to view this part of the parable can be shown through other means as well.

Seeing the tares, the sons of the wicked one, as those within the Church, not without, is in complete accord with all facets of the matter. It is in complete accord with the history of the offer to Israel, it is in complete accord with (and the only thing that can possibly adequately explain) that which can easily be seen occurring throughout Christendom today, and it is in complete accord with that which can be seen when one moves on into the third and fourth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

Then there is one other thing that will preclude viewing the matter after any other fashion. That which the text reveals about God’s future dealings with the wheat and tares should resolve all doubts that anyone might have concerning their identity.

*b) Judgment of the Wheat and Tares*

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

All those represented by the wheat are gathered into the barn. But the matter is quite different for those represented by the tares. They are seen being gathered and burned ([Matthew 13:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.30&t=NKJV), [40-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40-43&t=NKJV)).

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

Everything stated about the Lord’s dealings with those represented by the wheat and tares is *in perfect accord* with Scripture elsewhere relating to both the judgment seat of Christ and that which will emanate out of issues and determinations at this judgment (*cf*. [Matthew 24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV); [25:19ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.19ff&t=NKJV); [John 15:1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+15.1-6&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 3:12-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.12-15&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 6:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.7-9&t=NKJV)).

And dealings by the Lord of this nature would be *completely out of line* with any thought that the tares represent unregenerate individuals. Scripture never presents a judgment of the saved and unsaved *at the same time and place*; nor does Scripture ever present the unsaved being dealt with after the fashion seen here — *relative to fruit-bearing, with a view to the kingdom.*

*c) Leave Them Alone*

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

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

*Do you want us then to go and gather them* [the tares] *up?*

*But he* [Christ] said, *“No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.*

*Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers* [angels ([Matthew 13:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.41&t=NKJV))], ‘*First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn*.’” ([Matthew 13:28-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.28-30&t=NKJV))

Those standing in the way of one’s interest in having a part with Christ in His kingdom are to be dealt with after *only* one fashion.

*They are to be left ALONE! “Leave them ALONE!”* ([Matthew 15:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+15.14&t=NKJV)). *Simply IGNORE them, CONTINUE doing that which the Lord has called you to do, and let the Lord take care of the matter in His own way and time.*

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Chapter Five

**Parable of the Mustard Seed**

*Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field,*

*which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”* ([Matthew 13:31-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.31-32&t=NKJV))

The parable of the mustard seed continues with *the same central thoughts* set forth in the previous parable, the parable of the wheat and tares. *Fruit-bearing* remains at the forefront ([Matthew 13:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.31&t=NKJV)), as well as *Satan’s continuing activity as he seeks to stop Christians from bearing fruit*. And the method that Satan uses as he seeks to stop Christians from bearing fruit, revealed in the previous parable, is *through sowing tares among the wheat.*

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

In the true sense of the definition of a parable and why the Lord used parables — to provide additional information pertaining to previously revealed truths (*ref.* chapter 1 of this book) — the parable of the mustard seed was given to help explain the parable that had previously been given, the parable of the wheat and tares.

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

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

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

Natural, Unnatural Growth

In the second parable — the parable of the wheat and tares — Satan is seen sowing contrary-minded individuals in the midst of Christians bringing forth fruit (seen in the latter part of the first parable, the parable of the Sower), seeking *to stop fruit-bearing*. This is how matters *had become* in Christendom relative to fruit-bearing, with the kingdom of the heavens in view. Then the third parable, the parable of the mustard seed, presents how matters *would continue* in this respect.

This parable first depicts the mustard seed germinating, with a natural growth occurring for a time. The natural growth of this particular seed, “*the least of all the seeds*,” would result in *an herb*, referred to as “*greater than the herbs*” when grown. And, beyond that, a natural growth of this herb would result *in fruit-bearing* ([Matthew 13:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.32&t=NKJV)), as seen in the previous two parables.

Thus, Satan’s success in stopping fruit-bearing would be contingent on his success in preventing the continuance of a natural growth of the mustard seed. One would go hand-in-hand with the other.

The mustard seed in the parable represents, not individuals *per se*, but *an entity* made up of individuals — *the good seed, the sons of the kingdom* from the previous parable. And *a natural or unnatural growth* of the mustard seed would represent *a natural or unnatural development* of those comprising the good seed.

Should Satan be *unsuccessful* in his efforts to prevent *a natural development* of those comprising the mustard seed, *growth* would eventually result in that which God had intended; and *fruit-bearing* would go hand-in-hand with their growth and development.

However, should Satan be *successful* in his efforts to prevent the continuance of a natural development of those comprising the mustard seed, *growth* would eventually result in something other than that which God had intended; and *barrenness* would ensue.

And the latter is exactly what is seen in this parable. The mustard seed, following a period of normal growth (which, if not interfered with, would result in “*greater than the herbs*”), is seen experiencing an abnormal growth and *becoming “a tree.”* And not only did this abnormal growth ensue, but the mustard seed is seen developing so abnormally that it not only grew into *a tree*, but the nature of this tree allowed “*the birds of the air*,” individuals doing the work of Satan, *to find a lodging place in its branches* ([Matthew 13:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.32&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Matthew 13:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.4&t=NKJV), [19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19&t=NKJV)).

Thus, the third parable, continuing the thought from the second parable, presents the tares being *quite effective*. They are seen deceiving fruit-bearing Christians to the degree that they bring about an unnatural spiritual growth among these Christians, resulting in *unfruitfulness, barrenness*; and the matter is carried to the point that, in the end, the tares are able to simply *settle down* in that which they had produced, finding *acceptance* among those whom they had deceived.

False Teachers

This work of Satan — producing an unnatural growth, resulting in *barrenness* — could only have been accomplished through *one means*. It could only have been accomplished through the promulgation of *false doctrine*. It could only have been accomplished through Satan placing *false teachers* in the midst of fruit-bearing Christians, leading them away from *the truth of the Scriptures*, leading them away from *an adherence to the faith*. And this is exactly the way Scripture elsewhere reveals that the matter occurred.

There are multiplied warnings in numerous places in Scripture concerning false teachers who would arise and teach “*perverse things*,” particularly relative to *the faith*, *the Word of the Kingdom*. And these false teachers would arise, not from the world, but *from within Christendom itself*. These false teachers would *arise from the ranks of Christians*, *from within the churches* ([Acts 20:29-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.29-32&t=NKJV); *cf.* [1 Timothy 4:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.1-3&t=NKJV); [2 Timothy 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.8&t=NKJV), [18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.18&t=NKJV); [3:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.7-8&t=NKJV); [4:1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.1-4&t=NKJV); [2 Peter 2:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+2.1ff&t=NKJV); [Jude 1:3ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.3ff&t=NKJV)).

As it was surrounding Christ’s first coming and the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, *so would it be* surrounding Christ’s second coming and the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Christians. *Jewish religious leaders were responsible* for that which happened in the past dispensation surrounding the proffered kingdom at Christ’s first coming, and *Christian religious leaders are responsible* for that which is happening during the present dispensation surrounding the proffered kingdom and Christ’s second coming.

*The religious leaders in Israel* followed Christ about the country and sought, at every turn, to speak against that which was being seen and heard. Christ’s ministry centered around supernatural signs, which pointed to that which Israel could have — supernatural healing, supernatural provision — if the nation would repent. But the religious leaders would have no part in the matter; and they misled the people, resulting in the nation’s rejection of the proffered kingdom and the subsequent crucifixion of the nation’s King.

And the situation relative to the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom throughout the present dispensation has been no different. Christians down through the years have been misled, not by those in the world, but *by their own religious leaders*. Scripture is *very clear* on this matter.

*1) At the Beginning of the Dispensation*

The message of the hour at the beginning of the dispensation — one proclaimed throughout Christendom — centered around *the faith*, *the saving of the soul, the Word of the Kingdom*. This was the message that Paul referred to as “*my gospel*” ([Romans 16:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+16.25&t=NKJV)), “*our gospel*” ([2 Corinthians 4:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+4.3&t=NKJV)), and “*the gospel of the glory of Christ”* ([2 Corinthians 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+4.4&t=NKJV)); this was the message that Paul had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world ([Acts 9:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+9.15&t=NKJV); [Galatians 1:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.11-12&t=NKJV), [16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.16&t=NKJV); [2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+2.7&t=NKJV)); and this was the message that Paul and others, during the first few decades of the existence of the Church, “*preached to every creature under heaven*” ([Colossians 1:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.5-6&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.23&t=NKJV)).

(The reference to “*every creature under heaven*” in [Colossians 1:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.23&t=NKJV) would, contextually, refer to *the saved alone, not* to the unsaved. This would be a reference to *all of the saved* having heard the message that saved individuals are to hear *following* their salvation — *the Word of the Kingdom*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

And Satan’s work in this manner is how Scripture reveals that he stops fruit-bearing. He places individuals with a false message relative to the kingdom among those bearing fruit for the kingdom. The false message takes root, growth becomes progressively unnatural, and fruit-bearing is stymied. Then, the false message continues to take hold until the point is reached where growth becomes so unnatural that fruit-bearing can no longer exist.

*a) The Messengers*

Both Peter in his second epistle and Jude begin their epistles by exhorting Christians to strain every muscle of their being in the present race of the faith ([2 Peter 1:2-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.2-11&t=NKJV); [Jude 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.3&t=NKJV)); and that which necessitates this exhortation, in both epistles, is *the presence of false teachers in their midst* ([2 Peter 2:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+2.1ff&t=NKJV); [Jude 1:4ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.4ff&t=NKJV)).

These are the same *false teachers* to which Christ had referred in the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, who would produce an unnatural growth among fruit-bearing Christians; and these are the same *false teachers* to which Paul subsequently referred, who would arise among Christians, take truths concerning the Word of the Kingdom, and distort and twist these truths ([Acts 20:30-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.30-31&t=NKJV)).

These are *the apostates*, dealt with extensively in Scripture — a type of individual identified by the meaning of the word itself. Our English word, “apostasy,” is simply an Anglicized form of the Greek word *apostasia*. This is a compound word comprised of *apo* (from) and *stasis* (to stand). The word means “to stand away from”; and the word refers to a person *standing away from* a place which he had previously occupied.

The apostasy in view has to do with “*the faith*” (*cf.* [2 Timothy 2:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.18&t=NKJV); [3:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.8&t=NKJV); [Jude 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.3&t=NKJV)). Thus, *true apostates relative to the faith* can only be individuals who had, at one time, *received* the message concerning the faith; but then, at a later time, they had *departed* from an adherence to this message. These are individuals who had initially *heard, understood, and received the truth*; but then they had *apostatized*. They “stood away from” the truth. They turned from the truth, began to speak out against the truth, and, in the process, taught that which was untrue.

These are the type individuals referred to in Paul’s warnings in both Acts and his epistles, as well as Peter’s and Jude’s warnings in their epistles. These are the type of individuals — those quite familiar with the matter that they were speaking against — whom Satan knew that he could use *the most effectively*, whom Satan knew that he could use to do *the most damage.*

Thus, Satan simply began to place individuals of this nature in the midst of those Christians bringing forth fruit. And they began to “*draw away the disciples*” *after themselves* ([Acts 20:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.30&t=NKJV)). They began to reproduce *after their kind* (*cf.* [Genesis 1:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.11&t=NKJV)), resulting in fruit also *after their kind*, an “*evil fruit*” ([Matthew 7:15-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+7.15-20&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Matthew 7:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+7.13-14&t=NKJV), [21-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+7.21-23&t=NKJV) KJV).

Aside from Paul’s identification of these individuals in [Acts 20:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.30&t=NKJV) — “*Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things* . . . .” — note Peter’s identification of them in [2 Peter 2:18-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+2.18-20&t=NKJV):

*For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.*

*While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.*

*For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.*

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

That these were saved individuals is evident, for an unsaved person cannot even come into a rudimentary knowledge of these things ([1 Corinthians 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.14&t=NKJV) [*gnosis*, the regular Greek word for “knowledge,” appears in this passage]), much less the mature knowledge seen in [2 Peter 2:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+2.20&t=NKJV). Thus, the text can only have to do with *saved individuals turning from the central message of that day, distorting and twisting the truth as they taught false doctrine relative to the Word of the Kingdom.*

Satan used this type of individual — after this manner, during the opening decades of the Church’s existence — to do his bidding, to stop Christians from bearing fruit. And though the ones whom Satan used were also Christians, they were doing the works of Satan; and doing works of this nature, they were identified with Satan, referred to as “*tares*,” “*sons of the wicked one*” (*ref.* chapter 4 of this book).

*b) Their Message*

The teaching of the apostates is spoken of as “*destructive heresies* [‘heresies that lead to destruction’]” ([2 Peter 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+2.1&t=NKJV)). And the destruction in view has nothing to do with salvation by grace through faith, with the Christians’ presently possessed free gift of eternal life.

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

Numerous statements are given concerning the teaching and action of the apostates (*cf*. [2 Peter 2:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+2.1-3&t=NKJV), [10ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+2.10ff&t=NKJV); [Jude 1:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.4&t=NKJV), [8ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.8ff&t=NKJV)). But one thing in Peter’s second epistle stands out above everything else. There is a septenary structure to Peter’s second epistle, with a particular reference to and emphasis upon Christ’s return within this structure ([2 Peter 1:16-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.16-18&t=NKJV); [3:4-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+3.4-8&t=NKJV)).

The apostates are seen “*walking according to their own lusts* [‘desires’ — desires which would be *soulical* (‘their own desires’), not *spiritual* (that which the Lord would desire)]” ([2 Peter 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+3.3&t=NKJV); *cf.* [2 Peter 2:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+2.18&t=NKJV)). And, within this type of walk, they are seen proclaiming a message that would strike *at the heart* of all sound biblical teaching surrounding Christ’s return and the Messianic Kingdom:

*Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.* ([2 Peter 3:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+3.4&t=NKJV))

Then the verses that follow ([2 Peter 3:5-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+3.5-9&t=NKJV)) — answering the apostates false message by referring to events beginning with the opening verses of Genesis — make matters very clear that *the heart* of the apostates’ message had to do with *denying Christ’s return at the end of six thousand years, with attendant destruction on the one hand and attendant blessings on the other.* They had willingly allowed the things surrounding this entire panorama of teaching to escape their attention, and they are seen infiltrating the ranks of fruit-bearing Christians everywhere, seeking to promulgate their false doctrine.

The misleading, destructive doctrine proclaimed by the apostates is seen taking numerous forms. But *the foundation* upon which all their false teaching rested is seen taking only *one form*. All their false teaching is seen resting on *a totally perverted form of the true foundation set forth in* [*Genesis 1:1-2:3*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.1-2.3&t=NKJV) — the God-established foundation upon which all subsequent Scripture rests.

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

1) *The septenary structure of Scripture as set forth in the beginning, in* [*Genesis 1:1-2:3*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.1-2.3&t=NKJV)*.*

2) *Teachings surrounding Christ’s return within the framework of this septenary structure* (at the end of six days, at the end of 6,000 years).

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

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

Proper growth can come *only* from that which has not been corrupted ([1 Peter 2:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.1-2&t=NKJV)). And the converse of that is equally true. *Only* improper growth can result when corruption has occurred. Thus, to bring about improper growth, the false teachers simply proclaimed a corrupted form of the only thing that God had provided for the nourishment and well-being of the spiritual man. And through so doing, they went back to and began with *the very heart of the matter* — the foundation itself, in the opening two chapters of Genesis.

It was *the work of the apostates* that brought about the conditions seen in the parable of the mustard seed. A corrupted and improper diet of spiritual food resulted in a corrupted and improper growth; and a growth of this nature, over time, ultimately resulted in barrenness. Then the false teachers simply took up residence within that which they had produced, assuring that conditions would remain in a corrupted and barren state.

*2) At the End of the Dispensation*

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

Thus, during the present day and time, Satan has little need for apostates to infiltrate and settle down within the ranks of Christians. Christendom is too far gone for any type overall change or recovery to occur. And, beyond that, though little infiltration of apostates need exist on Satan’s part today, he would undoubtedly be hard-pressed to find very many true apostates during the present time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Tree

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

*1) Symbolism of a Tree*

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

In [Judges 9:8-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Judges+9.8-15&t=NKJV), which relates the oldest known parable in the world, “*trees*” are seen symbolizing *nations* that had sought to elect a king to reign over them.

Daniel, in his prophecy, refers to the vision of “*a tree in the midst of the earth*,” which “*reached to the heavens*.” And this “*tree*” is said to symbolize *the kingdom of Babylon* ([Daniel 4:10-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.10-12&t=NKJV), [20-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.20-22&t=NKJV)).

Israel is referred to in Joel’s prophecy by a “*fig tree*” ([Joel 1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+1.7&t=NKJV)). And Christ not only referred to *Israel* through the symbolism of a “*fig tree*” during his earthly ministry but He also referred to the *surrounding Gentile nations* through the symbolism of “*all the trees*” ([Matthew 21:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.18-19&t=NKJV); [24:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.32&t=NKJV); [Luke 21:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.29&t=NKJV)).

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

The teaching, through the symbolism given, is clear. That which is represented by the mustard seed germinated and eventually became *a national power* — something that it was not supposed to become at all during the present dispensation, something reserved for the coming dispensation. It became a national power during the time Satan ruled within the kingdom of the heavens; it became a national power within the present kingdom of Satan.

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

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

Satan, throughout Man’s Day, following man’s fall, has ruled the earth through the nations [once national powers had been brought into existence]. This though would exclude Israel [once the nation had been brought into existence], for Israel was not to be “*reckoned among the nations*” [[Numbers 23:9 KJV](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+23.9&t=KJV)].

This type of rule by Satan is revealed in [Daniel 10:12-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+10.12-21&t=NKJV), with Satan and his angels ruling through the nations, but with Israel occupying a position separate from the nations and Satan’s rule in this respect [ref. the author’s books, [The Most High Ruleth BOOK](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-one.php#The%20Most%20High%20Ruleth%20BOOK) (in this site) and [Bible One - The Spiritual Warfare by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/TSW.htm), for additional information on this subject].

Through Satan’s efforts — producing an abnormal growth in Christendom, resulting in that which is symbolized by *a tree* — he sought to make Christendom *a national power* during the time when he rules through national powers, with his emissaries finding ready acceptance in this national power [the birds of the air lodging in the branches of the tree]. Satan sought to make Christendom *a national power, as the nations, through which he and his angels could exert rulership and control*.)

*2) In History, During the Present Day*

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

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

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

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

In the year 380 A.D., Theodosius I issued an edict that made Christianity the exclusive state religion; and, in the year 395 A.D., Christianity was finally recognized as *the official and only religion of the Roman Empire*.

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

This condition of Christendom though did not result from the previous Roman persecution. The previous persecution had only resulted in Christian growth. As Tertullian, a Christian living during the period of Roman persecution, said, “*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church*.”

That which ultimately occurred in Christendom was caused by *the apostates*. Their attack was not centered upon *the entity itself* (as was Rome’s attack) but upon *that which brought the entity to a fruit-bearing stage.* They went back to that upon which the entity was fed and nourished, introducing corruption and destruction at this point.

And the end result was *exactly* as Christ had foretold. The mustard seed germinated, grew normally for awhile, then took an abnormal growth, and eventually became *a tree*. The abnormal growth, over time, ultimately resulted in *barrenness*; and Christians found themselves occupying a position that they were not supposed to occupy during the present dispensation at all. They found themselves *associated with Gentile world power within the present kingdom of Satan.*

And this is a position from which Christianity has never recovered. Down to the present day, though Rome has long since passed off the scene, Christians can still be found involving themselves in activities associated with *the tree* of [Matthew 13:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.32&t=NKJV). They can be seen on every hand involving themselves in the present government after all types of fashions, attempting to exert some type of power in the present kingdom under Satan.

But this is simply *not the day* when Christians are to rule and reign. *That day lies in the future, after Christ has taken the kingdom and Christians have been placed in positions of power and authority.*

The entire present system is in its *death-throes* and is to be destroyed by Christ when He returns. Christians having works associated with the present system will one day see their works suffer the same fate that the system is about to suffer. Such works will be *destroyed, burned “in fire”* at the judgment seat; and even though these Christians will be “*saved, yet so as through fire*” ([1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV)), they will be left with *nothing of value in relation to the coming kingdom of Christ*. And they will consequently *be rejected for regal positions with Christ.*

But for those Christians who will *not* have allowed the pseudo form of Christendom enmeshed within the present world system to govern their lives, things will be different. Their works will not suffer the same fate as those having works associated with the present world system. They will possess works that will endure the fire, and they will be left with *something of value in relation to the coming kingdom of Christ*. These are the ones who will have waited to exercise regal power and authority, and these are the ones who will *rule as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom.*

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Chapter Six

**Parable of the Leaven**

*Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”* ([Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV))

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

This parable contains the first mention of “leaven” in the New Testament, and Christ used the word in a symbolic sense, in an unexplained manner, knowing that it could be understood *only one way*. The Old Testament symbolism surrounding “leaven” and the flow of thought seen in the three parables preceding the first use of this word in the New Testament left no room for those hearing these parables to question how the word was to be understood.

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

The Mosaic Law forbade the priests in Israel from using leaven in their rituals ([Leviticus 2:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+2.11&t=NKJV)). In this respect, the absence of leaven (the absence of a foreign substance) pointed to *purity*, as seen in the first usage of this word in Scripture ([Genesis 19:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.3&t=NKJV)).

Though the priests were forbidden from using leaven in their rituals, in two instances, instructions in the Mosaic economy stated that leaven was to be included in offerings ([Leviticus 7:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+7.13&t=NKJV); [23:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+23.17&t=NKJV)); and Amos, centuries later, mentioned an offering which was to include leaven as well ([Amos 4:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Amos+4.5&t=NKJV)).

But in all three of these instances where leaven was to be included, other offerings are also mentioned; and, in two of these instances, the other offerings are specifically stated to include *blood sacrifices*, to atone for man’s sins. And, in the one offering where blood is not specifically mentioned ([Amos 4:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Amos+4.5&t=NKJV)), blood could only be inferred from the other offerings where blood is mentioned ([Leviticus 7:1-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+7.1-14&t=NKJV); [23:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+23.5&t=NKJV), [27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+23.27&t=NKJV) [*cf*. [Exodus 12:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+12.1ff&t=NKJV); [Leviticus 16:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+16.1ff&t=NKJV)]; [Amos 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Amos+4.4&t=NKJV)).

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

This can be illustrated by referring to God’s command surrounding the second of the festivals in [Leviticus 23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+23&t=NKJV) — the festival of unleavened bread. Beginning with the day immediately following the death of the firstborn and the application of the blood (the first festival), the Israelites were commanded to refrain from eating anything containing leaven for “*seven days*,” for *a complete period of time* ([Leviticus 23:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+23.5-6&t=NKJV)).

This pointed to God’s truth surrounding the fact that those who had appropriated the blood were then to keep themselves pure for a complete period of time, for the entire duration of their lives that followed. This was true for the Israelites at the time these festivals were instituted, it was true for the Israelites down through the centuries, and it remains true for Christians today. It has been and it remains true for God’s people *throughout all time* ([1 Corinthians 5:6-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+5.6-8&t=NKJV)).

And within the continuing symbolism shown by these feast days, God instituted a day of atonement. This was the sixth of the seven festivals, and it had to do with *shed blood to atone for man’s sins* — the sins of those who had previously applied the blood of the paschal lambs (which was immediately followed by God’s command to not partake of that which contained leaven). The day of atonement had to do with a covering provided for failure — a failure to remain separated from sin — for those having previously applied the blood of the paschal lambs. This festival had to do with their failure to continuously keep themselves separated from that which is symbolized by leaven.

And exactly the same thing can be seen today through viewing the Christians’ present state in the world and Christ’s present high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Christians have applied the blood of the Paschal Lamb and have been commanded to keep themselves pure.

But Christians, possessing a body of death, as the Israelites in the past dispensation, experience failure; and, as in the camp of Israel, provision is made for failure. Christ is presently ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, on the basis of His own blood on the mercy seat; and His ministry in this respect is on behalf of Christians who sin, providing cleansing.

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

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* ([1 John 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+1.9&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Hebrews 4:13-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4.13-16&t=NKJV); [9:23ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+9.23ff&t=NKJV); [10:19ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.19ff&t=NKJV); [1 John 2:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+2.1-2&t=NKJV))

In the light of the way in which leaven is always used in the Old Testament, Christ could use the word in a symbolic sense — as He did in [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV), and in [Matthew 16:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.6&t=NKJV), [11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.11&t=NKJV) — and His disciples would know *exactly* what was meant ([Matthew 16:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.12&t=NKJV)). Or, also in this respect, Paul could use the word in this same symbolic sense in his epistles — as he did in [1 Corinthians 5:6-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+5.6-8&t=NKJV), and in [Galatians 5:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.9&t=NKJV) — and the recipients of these epistles would also know *exactly* what was meant.

But an added feature about the way leaven is used in [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV) is seen in the context leading into the use of this word. The context of the passage itself reveals how this word is to be understood, which is the same way leaven is used and understood elsewhere in the New Testament. Every place leaven appears in the New Testament, the context *always* clearly shows the word being used *only one way* — showing corruption and deterioration — in complete keeping with its Old Testament usage.

In [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV), the context leading into the use of leaven has to do with fruit-bearing and with the method Satan uses to stop Christians from bearing fruit. The preceding two parables reveal Satan introducing *false doctrine,* with a progressive corruption and deterioration following. And the parable of the leaven simply reveals the conclusion of the matter.

According to the parable of the leaven, the message surrounding the proffered kingdom during the present dispensation would, near the end of the dispensation, *become completely leavened*. Corruption introduced at the beginning of the dispensation would progressively permeate the whole of Christendom until that which has to do with the proffered kingdom *would be completely corrupted*. This is how, according to this parable, the dispensation would end.

Three Measures of Meal

“Three” is the number of *divine perfection*. This number shows *divine perfection within that which is in view*. Three measures of meal — three measures of ground grain, used to make bread — are in view. The reference is to *the Word of God* ([Matthew 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4.4&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Isaiah 55:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+55.1-2&t=NKJV)), though not the Word in a general sense. Rather, the reference, contextually, is to *the Word in a specific sense, a specific part of the Word, a specific teaching in the Word*.

The subject at hand has to do with *the Word of the Kingdom*. It has to do with how the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ would begin to be proclaimed in Christendom and how this message would progressively change because of something (a foreign substance) that is placed within the message ([Matthew 13:19-24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19-24&t=NKJV), [31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.31&t=NKJV), [33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV)).

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

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

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

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

And that, contextually is what continues in view — *the only thing that can continue in view* — by Christ using the symbolism of a woman taking leaven and hiding it in three measures of meal. In keeping with the definition of a parable, Christ simply provided additional truth placed alongside of previous truth to help explain the previous truth. This parable provides additional truth placed alongside the preceding two parables to help explain these parables.

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

Till It Was All . . . .

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

Near the end of the dispensation, when the Word of the Kingdom has been *completely corrupted*, that which Jesus foretold in this parable would be fulfilled. In those days, at that time, the true message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ *will not be — it cannot be* — heard throughout the churches of the land.

The move in Christendom from conditions depicted by the church in Ephesus to conditions depicted by the church in Laodicea, seen in Revelation two and three, *will then be complete*. The Church will not only have left its “*first love*” ([Revelation 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.4&t=NKJV)), but the Church will ultimately be brought into a state described as “*wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*” ([Revelation 3:17b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.17b&t=NKJV)).

And one need only look around today to see this exact state of affairs existing in Christendom — in fundamental and liberal circles alike. *In relation to the Word of the Kingdom*, one segment is just as leavened as the other. *In relation to the Word of the Kingdom*, exactly the same conditions exist in both. Neither proclaims this message, and neither will have anything to do with it.

This is *the one thing* that both the fundamentalists and the liberals (as they are known and referred to) have in common today. Neither will proclaim or have anything to do with the central message that Christians are to hear.

When Christ was on earth the first time, there were two main religious parties in Israel — the Pharisees and the sadducees (the fundamentalists and the liberals of that day). These two religious parties were *worlds apart* in their theology, but they were one in their attitude toward the message surrounding the proffered kingdom. Neither would have anything to do with it.

And exactly the same situation exists in Christendom today, immediately preceding Christ’s return. There are two main divisions among Christians — the fundamentalists and the liberals. These two religious groups are *worlds apart* in their theology, but they are *one* in their attitude toward the proffered kingdom. Neither will have anything to do with it.

*1) From Ephesus . . .*

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

Reference is made in [Colossians 4:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+4.16&t=NKJV) to an epistle in connection with the church in Laodicea. But this is not stated to be an epistle written to that Church (though if it were, it would have to be viewed as a non-canonical epistle that was not preserved and passed down). Rather, it is simply an unidentified epistle (possibly one that Paul had written from this location); and this epistle, in possession of the Christians in Laodicea, was to be obtained by the Christians in Colossae from those in Laodicea.

Paul had spent three years ministering to the Christians in Ephesus ([Acts 20:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.31&t=NKJV)). When he came to Ephesus the first time, he was accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla (whom, it is apparent, he had instructed in *the faith*). He remained in Ephesus an unrevealed period of time, reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue. Then he left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus in order to return to Jerusalem ([Acts 18:18-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+18.18-21&t=NKJV)).

It was during Paul’s second visit to Ephesus that he spent most of the three-year period that he mentions in [Acts 20:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.31&t=NKJV) (*cf.* [Acts 19:10ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+19.10ff&t=NKJV)). On this second visit, Paul found disciples who were not familiar with the fact that God had called an entirely new entity — *the one new man “in Christ”* — into existence. These disciples knew only “*the baptism of John*,” something that they had apparently learned from Apollos before he received further instruction in the matter from Aquila and Priscilla ([Acts 19:1-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+19.1-7&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Acts 18:24-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+18.24-26&t=NKJV)).

And Paul began his ministry in Ephesus at this time by providing further instruction for these individuals, as Aquila and Priscilla had provided for Apollos. Then Paul continued his ministry in Ephesus by going “*from house to house,” teaching the people, keeping nothing back that was not profitable for them* ([Acts 20:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.20&t=NKJV)). In this respect, Paul’s ministry in Ephesus would seemingly form a pattern concerning the manner in which his entire ministry in the Gentile world was to be conducted.

Paul had earlier been converted and subsequently taken aside (apparently to a desert area in Arabia) where the Lord appeared to him and personally revealed to him what is called in Scripture, “*the mystery*” ([Galatians 1:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.11-12&t=NKJV), [16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.16-17&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 3:1-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.1-11&t=NKJV)). The “*mystery*” had to do with the new entity, *the new creation “in Christ,”* *the Church*; it had to do with both Jews and Gentiles being joint-heirs together, in one body; and it had to do with those comprising this new entity being the recipients of the kingdom that Israel had rejected — the kingdom of the heavens (*cf.* [Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-10&t=NKJV)).

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

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

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

It is plain from Paul’s last meeting with the elders in the church in Ephesus that “in every city” that he entered (which included Ephesus) he proclaimed “*the gospel of the grace of God*”; but it is also clear that Paul, in these same cities, then went on to proclaim “*the kingdom of God*” to those who had been saved under the simple preaching of the gospel of the grace of God ([Acts 20:24-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.24-25&t=NKJV)).

And the three years Paul spent in Ephesus are specifically said to be time that he spent *instructing Christians in the faith and warning them about false teachers who would arise in their midst* ([Acts 20:28-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.28-32&t=NKJV)).

Note the preceding sequence in Paul’s ministry, seen in these verses in [Acts 20:24-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.24-32&t=NKJV):

*But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

*And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.*

*Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.*

*For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God..*

*Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

*For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.*

*Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

*Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

*So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

Then, the epistle that he later wrote to those in Ephesus, shows *the depth* to which he had previously instructed the Christians in that city. This epistle begins (apart from foundational teachings, and really, apart from any introductory teachings) with a discussion of the things that would be realized “*in the dispensation of the fulness of the times*” — adoption, redemption, and an inheritance ([Ephesians 1:3-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.3-14&t=NKJV)). Thus, this epistle begins and continues with the assumption that the Christians in Ephesus were well-grounded in *the faith*.

Paul could begin and continue this way because of the apparent spiritual maturity of these Christians, resulting from his previous lengthy ministry in their midst. And Paul’s unceasing prayer for these Christians at the time he wrote this epistle was that God would give them *wisdom* and *full knowledge* (Greek: *epignosis*) concerning the things he was writing about (things that he had previously taught them), referred to as “*the hope of His calling*,” and “*the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*” ([Ephesians 1:16-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.16-18&t=NKJV)).

Then Paul continues in chapter two of Ephesians, showing the reason for their salvation, the reason these Christians in Ephesus had passed “*from death to life*” ([Ephesians 2:1-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1-10&t=NKJV)). And the thought of saved Jews and Gentiles, seen together in one body in this chapter ([Ephesians 2:15-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.15-16&t=NKJV)), merges into a discussion of “*the mystery*” in chapter three ([Ephesians 3:1-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.1-11&t=NKJV)).

And Paul, calling attention to “*the mystery*,” continues with the thought of *an inheritance* set before Christians, for a future inheritance is what the mystery has to do with. It has to do with Gentiles being “*fellow heirs*” with Jews, “*of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel*” ([Ephesians 3:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.6&t=NKJV)). And Paul refers to the whole of the message surrounding the mystery as “*the unsearchable riches of Christ*,” and “*the manifold wisdom of God*” ([Ephesians 3:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.8&t=NKJV), [10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.10&t=NKJV)) — something that the writer of Hebrews presented as is realized in that which he called “*so great salvation*” ([Hebrews 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.3&t=NKJV)), or which Peter referred to as “*the greatest of precious promises*,” connected with Christ’s “*greatest regal magnificence* [literal translation]” ([2 Peter 1:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.4&t=NKJV), [16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.16&t=NKJV)).

In the first part of chapter four of Ephesians, Paul dealt with the reason for gifted leaders and teachers in the church. Simply stated, God had placed gifted leaders and teachers in the church in Ephesus, and elsewhere, to guide Christians as they moved from immaturity to maturity; and this was with a view to *the future adoption, redemption, and inheritance* awaiting Christians (*cf.* [Ephesians 4:11-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.11-14&t=NKJV), [30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.30&t=NKJV)).

Then the Christians’ walk comes into view as individuals move from immaturity to maturity. And this takes up the remainder of the epistle, with a warning at the end to clothe oneself with “*the whole armour of God*” because of the ongoing spiritual warfare against Satan and his angels ([Ephesians 6:10ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.10ff&t=NKJV)).

The church in Ephesus was filled with Christians who were well-versed in *the Word of the Kingdom*. And well they should have been, for Paul had spent a great deal of time with them, going ”*from house to house*,” teaching them — something that had allowed him to be able to later write a letter to these Christians and simply begin discussing “*the deep things of God*” ([1 Corinthians 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.10&t=NKJV)), *completely apart from introductory, foundational teachings.*

And it was this church that the Lord chose to use in His revelation to John in order to show the state of Christendom at the beginning of the dispensation. This was a time when the true message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ was proclaimed throughout Christendom, when this message was received and understood by Christians throughout the churches ([Colossians 1:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.5-6&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.23&t=NKJV)).

During these early years, this was *the message of the hour* when Christians met. This was *the central message* proclaimed by Paul and other ministers of that day, this was *the central message* of all the letters (epistles) written to the different churches and individuals during that time. And Christians during these days gathered to talk about the things having to do with the coming kingdom of Christ, encouraging and exhorting one another relative to *the hope* set before them ([Hebrews 10:23-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.23-25&t=NKJV)).

*But something happened!*  A foreign substance was placed in the three measures of meal. And it wasn’t long before things began to go awry, even in the church in Ephesus.

Note that which Scripture states in this respect, as recorded in [Revelation 2:2-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.2-4&t=NKJV):

*I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;*

*and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.*

*Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

The corruption that Satan introduced began and continued to cause deterioration in Christendom. It began in the manner depicted in the first of the seven churches in [Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV), the church in Ephesus; and it would continue until it had brought about conditions in Christendom as depicted in the last of the seven churches in these two chapter in the book of Revelation, the church in Laodicea.

*2) To Laodicea*

From a biblical standpoint, one thing about Christendom is *certain*! And this one thing *cannot be denied*!

Christendom, near the end of the dispensation, is going to appear in the world in *a completely leavened state*. This is something that Christ revealed to His disciples before the Church was ever brought into existence, and this is something that He revealed again to John at a time after the Church had been brought into existence.

The record of Church history was given before the dispensation began, and the record of Church history was given once again during the early years of the dispensation. And man today — living during the closing years of the dispensation, viewing both the history and current state of Christendom — *can know exactly why the whole of Christendom exists in its present condition.*

According to the clear teaching of the Word of God, relative to any proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom near the end of the dispensation, *all Christendom* *will have become completely saturated with leaven, with that which is false*. Relative to any proclamation of this message near the end of the dispensation, *all Christendom will have become completely corrupted.*

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

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

In the second of these two times — in Revelation chapters two and three — the Lord revealed this final state of Christendom by referring to conditions in the church in Laodicean, a church that had become completely corrupted even before the end of the first century. And, if one desires to study about the Church of today (whether fundamental or liberal), he need only turn to [Revelation 3:14-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.14-21&t=NKJV). This is a description given by Christ Himself; and this description, in complete keeping with that which is seen in the parable of the leaven in [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV), *vividly depicts the true nature of the Church at the end of the dispensation — “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked”* ([Revelation 3:17b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.17b&t=NKJV)).

But, again, bear one thing in mind. This does not picture Christendom at the end of the dispensation in *a general sense*. Rather, something *specific* is in view. This presents Christendom at the end of the dispensation in relation to *an outlook on a particular facet of biblical doctrine* — the attitude of Christians throughout the churches toward that which very few of them seem to know anything whatsoever about, *the Word of the Kingdom*, that upon which the leaven is seen to have centered its attack.

And this whole overall thought of the leaven centering its attack at this point is something easily seen throughout the seven epistles to the seven churches in [Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV). Note that each epistle is structured exactly the same. Each centers around works, with a view *to overcoming*. The statement to each church is twofold in each epistle:

1) “*I know your works . . .* .” ([Revelation 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.2&t=NKJV), [9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.9&t=NKJV), [13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.13&t=NKJV), [19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.19&t=NKJV); [3:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.1&t=NKJV), [8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.8&t=NKJV), [15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.15&t=NKJV)).

2) “*To him who overcomes* . . . .” ([Revelation 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.7&t=NKJV), [11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV), [17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.17&t=NKJV), [26-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-28&t=NKJV); [3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV), [21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)).

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

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

*I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”* ([Revelation 3:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.18&t=NKJV))

Thus, the Church near the end of the dispensation, in relation to teachings surrounding the Word of the Kingdom, will be in the condition depicted by the Laodicean church. It will be *completely corrupted*. And all one needs to do to see the truth of the matter is go into practically any church throughout the country today — fundamental or liberal, it makes no difference — and listen for any reference to teachings surrounding the Word of the Kingdom.

One will listen in vain, for the message is simply not being taught. The leaven has done its damaging work too well.

If Anyone . . .

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

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

Note Christ’s closing words to these Christians:

*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

*To him who overcomes . . . .”* ([Revelation 3:19-21a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.19-21a&t=NKJV)).

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

The invitation, seen in this passage, extends *to any individual* in the Church: “*If anyone hears my voice and opens the door .* . . .” The person is not told to leave the Church, for, again, *there is no place for him to go; the whole will have been leavened*. Rather, the person is to remain where he is and heed the Lord’s message. Then, the Lord will come *inside the church, to that individual, with fellowship in the Word following.*

There will be fellowship between Christ and that individual (“. . . *and dine with him*”), and there will be fellowship between that individual and Christ (“. . . *and he with me*” [[Revelation 3:20b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.20b&t=NKJV); *cf.* [1 John 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+1.3&t=NKJV)).

But for the other Christians in the church, Christ will remain outside the door, though the invitation will remain open.

And that is the way it is in Christendom as the Church nears the end of the dispensation, near the end of the 2,000 years that God has allotted for the Spirit to procure a bride for His Son ([Genesis 24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV)). The Church finds itself in a completely leavened state, with *Christ outside the door, exhorting individual Christians to heed the truth of that which Satan has fought so hard to destroy.*

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Chapter Seven

**Some Will Depart**

*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,*

*speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,*

*forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*  ([1 Timothy 4:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.1-3&t=NKJV))

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

Scripture reveals God’s original establishment of the government of the earth ([Ezekiel 28:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+28.14&t=NKJV)), the fall and disqualification of the earth’s first ruler ([Isaiah 14:12-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.12-14&t=NKJV); [Ezekiel 28:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+28.15&t=NKJV)), and both the immediate and far-reaching results of the fall and disqualification of this ruler (*cf.* [Genesis 1:2a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2a&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 14:15-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.15-17&t=NKJV); [Jeremiah 4:23-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+4.23-28&t=NKJV); [Ezekiel 28:16-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+28.16-19&t=NKJV)).

The immediate result was *a ruined kingdom* — a kingdom *becoming* “*without form, and void*,” with *darkness* covering “*the face of the deep* [‘raging waters’ covering the darkened, ruined kingdom]” ([Genesis 1:2a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2a&t=NKJV)). And the far-reaching results — still future today — will be *a removal* of the incumbent ruler from his appointed position of power and authority and his eventual *consignment* to a prepared “*lake of fire*” ([Matthew 25:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41&t=NKJV); [Revelation 20:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.10&t=NKJV)).

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

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

But, viewing the matter from the beginning, man was not to rule over a kingdom lying in ruins. The earth, which *had become “without form, and void”* when God’s original appointed ruler sought to exalt his throne ([Genesis 1:2a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2a&t=NKJV)), was *restored* immediately prior to man’s creation ([Genesis 1:2-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2-25&t=NKJV) [2b].

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

*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion* . . . . ([Genesis 1:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Genesis 1:27ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.27ff&t=NKJV))

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

And, with God’s statement to this effect, note two *established, unchangeable facts* concerning man, revealed immediately preceding his creation: (1) *Man was to be brought into existence to rule the earth*; and (2) *this rule would be realized in conjunction with the woman, who would be taken out of man following His creation* (*cf.* [Genesis 1:27-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.27-28&t=NKJV)).

God said, prior to man’s creation, “. . . *let them have dominion* [*the man and the woman together*] . . .” ([Genesis 1:26-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26-28&t=NKJV)). Then, Genesis chapter two provides a number of details concerning man’s creation ([Genesis 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.7&t=NKJV)), the removal of the woman from the man ([Genesis 2:21-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.21-22&t=NKJV)), and the relationship of the woman to the man ([Genesis 2:23-24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.23-24&t=NKJV)).

This is the way God established matters in the beginning, and that which God established in the beginning *does not change, it cannot change*, as one moves through Scripture. At any point in Scripture, following that which God established and revealed in the opening two chapter of Genesis, the man and the woman are seen occupying this same *inseparable relationship together — a regal relationship, having to do with the government of the earth.*

It matters not whether it’s a man and wife in their fallen state, God and Israel, or Christ and the Church, *this established relationship holds*. It *must* hold, for God Himself established this relationship.

The man and wife are to presently be “*heirs together of the grace of life*” and foreshadow, within this God-established relationship existing during Man’s Day, the future relationship that will exist between Christ and His wife in the Lord’s Day ([Ephesians 5:21-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.21-33&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 3:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+3.7&t=NKJV)).

God took Israel as His wife in the Old Testament theocracy. God had to possess a wife to reign in the theocracy, for that is the manner in which He Himself established matters in the beginning. God later divorced Israel because of harlotry. But, in the future restored theocracy, God will again take Israel as His wife (*cf.* [Isaiah 1:21-2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+1.21-2.5&t=NKJV); [Jeremiah 3:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+3.1ff&t=NKJV); [Hosea 2:2-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+2.2-3&t=NKJV); [14:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+14.1ff&t=NKJV); [Revelation 19:1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.1-6&t=NKJV)).

After the same manner, Christ will one day take a wife. The Spirit of God is in the world today searching for a bride for God’s Son, for the Son can’t reign apart from possessing a wife. Again, this is a matter established by God in the beginning, and it cannot change ([Genesis 24:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.1ff&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 5:21-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.21-33&t=NKJV); [Revelation 19:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-9&t=NKJV)).

Understanding this established relationship will explain both Satan’s initial action and Adam’s resulting subsequent action in Genesis chapter three.

Satan knew full-well the reason man had been created, with the woman removed from the man; and he also knew full-well the relationship existing between the man and the woman. He knew that Adam *couldn’t* rule apart from Eve. And, knowing this, he directed his efforts toward the woman, seeking to bring her into a state in which she *couldn’t* rule.

Satan deceived Eve into eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, contrary to God’s command. And once Eve had disobeyed God, she was no longer in a position to rule with Adam, which meant that Adam couldn’t rule. A part of Adam’s very being — *bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh* ([Genesis 2:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.23&t=NKJV)) — was no longer in a position to rule, preventing him from ruling.

Thus, Adam, in this condition — *an incomplete being* — was left with only one choice. *Eve had to be redeemed*. And there was only *one way* in which this could be done.

Adam, taking the only course available, partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as well (Adam could only drop to Eve’s level, not she rise to his). And Adam did this with a view to *redemption* and his one day being able to occupy, *as a complete being* (the man and woman together), the position for which God had created man.

Comparing type and antitype, all of this can be clearly seen. The second Man, the last Adam, found His bride in the same fallen state; and He took *the only course available*. He who knew no sin was made sin for us “*that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” ([2 Corinthians 5:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.21&t=NKJV)).

As the first man, the first Adam, couldn’t reign apart from the one in a fallen state — his wife — neither can the second Man, the last Adam. And since man is to ultimately realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning, it must be recognized that both the first Adam and the last Adam took *the only course available* as it pertains to the reason for man’s existence and the sin question. To properly understand the actions of either Adam in Eden or Christ at Calvary, one account must be studied in the light of the other. That is to say, type and antitype must be studied together.

Man’s redemption — wrought through Christ’s finished work at Calvary — has its direct connection with that which is revealed in Genesis surrounding the reason for man’s creation, Eve’s subsequent fall because of Satan’s deception, and Adam’s resulting subsequent act. “Salvation” in Scripture is connected with *regality,* not as man often presents the matter, with a rescue or deliverance from the lake of fire.

Though the lake of fire *does await* individuals rejecting Christ’s finished work at Calvary, viewing salvation with respect to a deliverance from the lake of fire is really not the correct biblical approach. The lake of fire was prepared for “*the devil and his angels*,” *not for man* ([Matthew 25:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41&t=NKJV)). It was prepared for the ones originally ruling the earth who *rebelled against God’s supreme regal power and authority.*

In this respect, the lake of fire has its connective origin *with regality as it pertains to the earth* — the same as the purpose for man’s salvation. And this connective origin of regality and the earth with the lake of fire is why man, rejecting God’s remedy for sin, will end up in this place.

Fallen man will have rejected that which has to do first and foremost with *regality and the earth*. He will have rejected a salvation that finds its revealed purpose in *the reason for man’s creation and subsequent fall.* And man, rejecting a salvation of this nature, is doing little more than *rebelling against God’s supreme regal power and authority* — the same as Satan and his angels had done, though after a different fashion.

Thus, though the lake of fire was originally prepared for angelic beings who had rebelled against God’s supreme regal power and authority, man, also rebelling in a manner that has to do with regality and the earth, will be cast therein as well.

Doctrines of Demons

The “*doctrines of demons*” in the text from [1 Timothy 4:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.1-3&t=NKJV) would involve a counterfeit parallel to *the truth* presented in the Word of God. God has *His deep things*, and Satan has *his deep things* ([1 Corinthians 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.10&t=NKJV); [Revelation 2:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.24&t=NKJV)). And the latter, as it is presented in Scripture, is simply *a corruption* of the former. It is taking the former, remaining within the same framework as the former, and producing *a counterfeit, a corrupted parallel.*

For example, Scripture begins with a foundational framework ([Genesis 1:1-2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.1-2.3&t=NKJV)), providing *an unchangeable pattern* for the whole of that which God was about to lay out in His Word ([Genesis 2:4ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.4ff&t=NKJV)). And Satan begins at the same point, providing *a corrupted parallel* to that which God has laid out in His Word (*cf*. [2 Peter 3:3-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+3.3-8&t=NKJV)).

Satan not only has his corrupted parallel relative to salvation by grace through faith ([Genesis 1:2-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2-5&t=NKJV) [2b]), but he has his corrupted parallel relative to present and future aspects of salvation as well — the salvation of the soul ([Genesis 1:6ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.6ff&t=NKJV)). And, as God in His Word places the emphasis on present and future aspects of salvation (not only in [Genesis 1:1-2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.1-2.3&t=NKJV), but also in the remainder of Scripture), so does Satan in his counterfeit parallel.

And, as God in His Word reveals a specific goal for man’s salvation (not only in [Genesis 1:1-2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.1-2.3&t=NKJV), but also in the remainder of Scripture), Satan seeks to entirely corrupt this teaching in his counterfeit parallel.

Satan places *the emphasis* where God has placed *the emphasis*, and he seeks to set forth *a counterfeit* at the same points God has set forth *the truth* (*cf.* [Isaiah 14:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.13-14&t=NKJV)). He has taken God’s *truth* and introduced *error* in his efforts to mislead the masses.

(A good counterfeit will approximate the original as closely as possible; and, as with any good counterfeit, it is easier to mislead the masses in this manner [*cf*. [2 Corinthians 11:13-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+11.13-15&t=NKJV)].)

Then note that God’s Word is directed to the saved, not the unsaved. The unsaved are “*dead in trespasses and sins*” and cannot understand this Word ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV); *cf.* [1 Corinthians 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.14&t=NKJV)).

And so it is with Satan and his counterfeit parallels. These counterfeit teachings have been designed for those who have “*passed from death to life*” ([John 5:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.24&t=NKJV)). Those “*dead in trespasses and sins*” are in no position to understand spiritual issues — whether “corrupted” (emanating from Satan) or “uncorrupted” (emanating from God). Both fall completely outside the realm of the natural (the soulical).

Such a corruption of the truth, received by the saved, can easily be seen in the text from the book of 1 Timothy, where Paul sounded a warning. Paul foretold a departure from “*the faith*” where some Christians would begin giving heed to “*deceiving spirits*” rather than to God’s Word; and these deceiving spirits would teach that which was untrue, specifically referred to in the text as the “*doctrines of demons*.”

These Christians’ spiritual awareness would become seared (Greek: *kausteriazo*; English, “cauterize” — to burn, as with a hot iron, to the point of destroying that which is being burned), resulting in a departure from “*the faith*.” And, relative to “*the faith*” from which they had departed, they would begin proclaiming that which is false, that which is in line with the “*doctrines of demons*.” They would begin proclaiming a message opposed to that which the Word of God had to say about two things: (1) *Marriage*, and (2) *Meats* ([1 Timothy 4:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.1-3&t=NKJV)).

The subject of “*marriage*” points to a work occurring during Man’s Day (the truth surrounding the matter established before and at the time of man’s creation), which would be brought to fruition and realized in the future Lord’s Day; and “*meats*” has to do with that part of biblical doctrine that centers around this overall subject ([1 Timothy 4:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.6&t=NKJV), [13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.13&t=NKJV), [16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.16&t=NKJV)).

And those which are seen being misled in [1 Timothy 4:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.1-3&t=NKJV), “*in latter times*” by “*deceiving spirits*,” resulting in their proclaiming “*doctrines of demons*,” are seen, “*standing in the way of marriage* . . . .” (literal thought from the Greek text [[1 Timothy 4:3a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.3a&t=NKJV)]) and are referred to as *apostates*. Further, a misleading of individuals after this fashion is presented in a very specific and limited sense in Scripture. It is presented specifically as and limited to *an apostasy from the faith — nothing more, nothing less.*

*1) Apostasy from the Faith*

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

In short, there would be *a departure from this central message*; and that which is associated with *the doctrines of demons would, instead, be taught.*

*a) Apostasy*

The word “*depart*” in [1 Timothy 4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.1&t=NKJV) is a translation of the Greek word, *aphistemi*, which is the verb form of the noun, *apostasia*. And *apostasia* is the word from which our English word “apostasy” is derived. The English word “apostasy” is simply an Anglicized form of the Greek word *apostasia*. Accordingly, to understand that which is meant by “apostasy,” the Greek word needs to be referenced.

*Apostasia* is a compound word comprised of *apo* and *stasis*. *Apo* means “from,” and *stasis* means “to stand.” Thus, the literal meaning of the word is “to stand from,” or “to stand away from.” An apostate, in the true sense of the word, is simply *someone standing away from, departing from, a position previously held.*

In [1 Timothy 4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.1&t=NKJV), the departure from the previously held position is specifically stated to pertain to “*the faith*.” That is, seducing spirits, promulgating the doctrines of demons, are seen leading individuals adhering to “*the faith*” (of necessity, Christians, not unsaved individuals [[1 Corinthians 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.14&t=NKJV)]) away from this position.

*b) The Faith*

*The central thrust* surrounding the truth of the matter, derived from the Word of God, has to do with “*the faith*.” And *the central thrust* surrounding that which is false, derived from the doctrines of demons, also has to do with “*the faith*.” One emanates from “*the deep things of God*,” and the other emanates from “*the depths* [*lit.*, ‘the deep things’] of Satan” ([1 Corinthians 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.10&t=NKJV); [Revelation 2:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.24&t=NKJV)). The former is *the Truth*; the latter is *a corrupted, counterfeit parallel to the Truth.*

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

Christ, during the course of His earthly ministry, at His first coming, looked 2,000 years ahead to His second coming, and, through a question, called attention to a solitary fact concerning *the central message of the New Testament*. Christ asked, “. . . *when the Son of Man* [a Messianic title] *comes, will he really find faith* [*lit.*, ‘the faith’] *on the earth?*” ([Luke 18:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+18.8&t=NKJV)). And the manner in which the question is worded in the Greek text designates *a negative answer*.

The Son of Man *will not* find “*the faith*” being taught in Christendom at the time of His return. The leaven that the woman placed in the three measures of meal in [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV) (having to do with the doctrines of demons) will have taken care of that.

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

Fundamentalism, in the preceding respect, is presently a major force in Christendom; and “*the faith*” would be something held to and proclaimed throughout a rather large segment of Christendom. Thus, if “*the faith*” is to be understood as a reference to *the body of biblical doctrines*, as held by those recognized as “fundamental Christians,” then conditions in Christendom are such that Christ cannot return during the present time. Fundamentalism of this nature is presently alive and well in Christendom. In fact, it is actually a growing force in numerous quarters. Millions of Christians in this country alone would fall within the mainstream of fundamentalism and adhere to this body of biblical doctrine.

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

Doctrines of “*the faith*,” in the preceding respect, in actuality, represent that which man has attempted to categorize as he has looked at the Scriptures, not doctrines seen through allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. And it is *the latter alone*, not the former, which allows man to look into the Scriptures and view matters from the way God has recorded them in His Word. There is a vast difference in viewing Scripture from the preceding two vantage points, especially when it comes to dealing with “*the faith*.”

To take the biblical expression, “*the faith*,” and attempt to identify it with man’s categorization of doctrine (a list of biblical doctrines) is the height of folly in Scriptural interpretation. Scripture is *always* to be interpreted in the light of Scripture ([1 Corinthians 2:9-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.9-13&t=NKJV)). And this is exactly the way in which the expression, “*the faith*,” *must* be understood.

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

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

*Fight the good fight of* [the] *faith, lay hold on eternal life* [*lit*., ‘Strive in the good contest of *the faith*, lay hold on life for the age’], *to which you were also called .* . . . ([1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV))

And, in Paul’s second letter to Timothy, a similar usage is again seen:

*“I have fought the good fight* [*lit*., ‘I have strived in the good contest’], *I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*.

*Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness* . . . .” ([2 Timothy 4:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.7-8&t=NKJV))

Or, when Jude sought to write an epistle relative to the “*common salvation* [the good news concerning salvation by grace through faith, a subject which *none* of the epistles centers on],” the Spirit of God led him to write on an entirely different subject. The Spirit of God led Jude to write an epistle exhorting Christians to “*earnestly contend* [*lit.*, ‘earnestly strive’] *for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints* [the good news concerning salvation in relation to the coming glory of Christ, something seen as central in the subject matter of all the epistles]” ([Jude 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.3&t=NKJV)).

The words “*fight*” ([1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV)), “*fought*” ([2 Timothy 4:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.7&t=NKJV)), and “*contend*” ([Jude 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.3&t=NKJV)) are translations of the same word in the Greek text — *agonizomai*, the word from which our English word, “agonize,” is derived.

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

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

In the first two references (from 1, 2 Timothy), the picture is that of an athletic contest. Christians are to *strain every muscle of their being in the present race of “the faith” in which they find themselves engaged.*

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

And it is apparent that Jude intensified this word, *with a view to the apostates*, because of the specific nature of apostasy, because of the realm in which the apostates had centered their teachings — seeking to mislead Christians relative to “*the faith*,” seeking to draw Christians away from the central teaching of Scripture. The “*doctrines of demons*,” promulgated by the apostates, is *the most dangerous and deadly teaching that has ever been proclaimed or ever will be proclaimed in Christian circles*. And, because of this, Jude exhorted Christians *to strain every muscle of their being* in the race of “*the faith*.”

The preceding would form only a few examples of the way in which the expression, “*the faith*,” is used in the New Testament. Other examples would be the conversion of priests in Israel during the reoffer of the kingdom, who were then “*obedient to the faith*” ([Acts 6:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+6.7&t=NKJV)), disciples exhorted “*to continue in the faith*” relative to *entrance into the kingdom* ([Acts 14:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+14.22&t=NKJV)), Paul proclaiming “*the faith*” which he had once sought to destroy ([Galatians 1:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.23&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Ephesians 6:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.16&t=NKJV); [Philippians 1:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+1.27&t=NKJV); [Colossians 1:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.23&t=NKJV); [2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+2.7&t=NKJV); [1 Thessalonians 5:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+5.8&t=NKJV); [2 Thessalonians 1:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+1.4&t=NKJV), [11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+1.11&t=NKJV); [1 Timothy 1:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.2&t=NKJV), [18-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.18-20&t=NKJV); [5:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+5.8&t=NKJV); [6:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.10&t=NKJV), [21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.21&t=NKJV); [2 Timothy 2:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.18&t=NKJV); [3:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.7-8&t=NKJV)), and the usage of the expression in the general epistles (*cf.* [Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV); [James 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.3&t=NKJV); [2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14&t=NKJV), [17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.17-18&t=NKJV), [20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.20&t=NKJV), [22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.22&t=NKJV), [26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.26&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.7&t=NKJV), [9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.9&t=NKJV)). “Faith” is *articular* in the Greek text in each of the preceding references.

Thus, there is a uniform usage of this expression throughout the New Testament. And, though it doesn’t have to do with the body of biblical doctrine held by those forming “fundamental Christendom,” it does have to do with a body of biblical doctrine. It has to do with that body of biblical doctrine rejected by Christendom at large — liberals and fundamentalists alike. It has to do with that body of biblical doctrine referred to in various ways in Scripture — *the Word of the Kingdom, the mystery, Paul’s gospel, the gospel of the glory of Christ, etc.*

*2) Marriage, Meats*

Foundational principals and biblical doctrine surrounding the marriage relationship have forever been set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis. And, any time one finds the man and the woman together beyond this point — whether during Man’s Day or during the coming Lord’s Day — *rulership* is in view. Or, to present the truth of the matter from another perspective, turn the statement around. Any time one finds *rulership* in view beyond the opening chapters of Genesis (relative to man), a husband-wife relationship *must* also be in view.

This is why Israel is seen as *the wife of Jehovah* in the Old Testament theocracy — a wife later seen as a*n adulterous wife*, resulting in God divorcing Israel — with God then, *of necessity*, ending the Old Testament theocracy (*cf.* [Jeremiah 3:1-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+3.1-14&t=NKJV); [Ezekiel 9:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+9.3&t=NKJV); [10:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+10.4&t=NKJV), [18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+10.18&t=NKJV); [11:22-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+11.22-23&t=NKJV)). And this is why, before a theocracy can be established on the earth yet future, *Israel has to be cleansed and restored to her former place, as the wife of Jehovah*. A Husband-wife relationship *must* exist at this time.

This is also why Christ is to have a *wife* yet future. If Christ is to reign over the earth as the second Man, the last Adam, He *must* have *a consort queen* to reign with Him. This is why a marriage *must* occur prior to the time He reigns. A Husband-wife relationship *must* exist at this time.

And further, this is why the husband-wife relationship today, during Man’s Day, is dealt with in Scripture in connection with *an heirship together* ([1 Peter 3:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+3.7&t=NKJV)). There is a present *reigning in life*, seen in the marriage relationship; and this is at the heart of that which Paul refers to as “*a great mystery*” relative to “*Christ and the Church*” in [Ephesians 5:21-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.21-33&t=NKJV).

There are two books in the Old Testament that bear the names of women. One is “Ruth,” and the other is “Esther.” And, interestingly enough, no one knows who wrote either book. But the book of Ruth presents one aspect of this overall matter, and the book of Esther presents the other.

The book of Ruth has to do with a Gentile who marries a Jew, with a redeemed inheritance in view. Ruth, in her marriage to Boaz, sets forth truths surrounding *Christ and His wife* yet future. And the entire book of Ruth sets forth the overall scope of the matter from beginning to end, with the husband-wife relationship being brought to the forefront in the end.

The book of Esther then presents the matter as it relates to *God and Israel*. Esther was a Jew whom King Ahasuerus (who was not a Jew [note that it is God’s Son who is a Jew and will so remain throughout eternity, not the Father]) had taken as his wife following the former queen’s (Vashti’s) refusal to fulfill her role as the king’s wife ([Esther 1:9ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+1.9ff&t=NKJV)). Then the remainder of the book revolves around Israel in the latter days (Haman typifying Antichrist), the end of Gentile world power, and Israel restored to the nation’s rightful place as *the wife of Jehovah* ([Esther 2:17ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+2.17ff&t=NKJV)).

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s books, Ruth [<http://bibleone.net/Ruth.htm>] and Esther [<http://www.bibleone.net/Esther.htm>].)

Thus, the whole of that seen in the marriage relationship beyond [Genesis 1:26-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26-28&t=NKJV) (along with that revealed in chapter two) rests on these foundational verses in Genesis. The husband-wife relationship today has its basis in the past ([Genesis 1:26ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26ff&t=NKJV)) and points to the future ([Revelation 19:7ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7ff&t=NKJV)). And whether it is Israel on the earth or the Church in the heavens, *there can be no future reign over the earth apart from this relationship existing between God and Israel and between Christ and the Church.*

Ministry of the Spirit Today

Understanding the preceding will allow one to clearly understand that which God revealed concerning Israel and the Church in Genesis chapters twenty-two through twenty-five. In these four chapters, God, through Moses, revealed things concerning both *the wife of Jehovah* and *the wife of Christ*; and this was based on that which is revealed in the first three chapters of Genesis, but with a view to the goal of the matter in the future Lord’s Day. And God set all of this forth long before He brought either Israel or the Church into existence (*cf.* [Isaiah 46:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+46.9-10&t=NKJV)).

The ministry of the Spirit during the present dispensation is seen in [Genesis 24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV), fifteen hundred years before it even began. Events in this chapter — Abraham sending his servant into the far country to obtain a bride for His son, typifying God sending the Spirit into the world to obtain a bride for His Son — occurred *following* the offering of Isaac ([Genesis 22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22&t=NKJV)) and the death of Sarah ([Genesis 23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+23&t=NKJV)), but *before* the remarriage of Abraham ([Genesis 25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+25&t=NKJV)).

That is to say, the ministry of the Spirit during the present dispensation occurs *following* the events of Calvary ([Genesis 22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22&t=NKJV)) and the setting aside of Israel ([Genesis 23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+23&t=NKJV)), but *before* the time God restores Israel as His wife ([Genesis 25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+25&t=NKJV)). And further, the ministry of the Spirit in the world today, as seen in the type in [Genesis 24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV), is clearly revealed to be that of *obtaining a bride for God’s Son*. And, in line with the preceding, any facet of the Spirit’s work during the time of His mission — whether it be among the unsaved (effecting life, based on the finished work of the Son) or among the saved (leading saved individuals “*into all truth*,” from *gnosis* to epignosis [from immaturity to maturity]) — must center around His revealed mission, as seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four.

The reason why God sent the Spirit into the world to accomplish such a mission is easy to see and understand if one keeps in mind the God-established issues surrounding the husband-wife relationship. The Son *must* have a wife if He is to reign. And Christians as well — anticipating the Son’s reign — *cannot* reign apart from this same relationship.

The coming millennial reign of the Son will be a theocracy wherein God the Father will have *a wife on earth* (seen in the type in [Genesis 25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+25&t=NKJV)) and the Son will have *a wife in the heavens above the earth* (a wife presently being procured through the work of the Spirit, seen in the type in [Genesis 24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV)). And in order for any individual from the human race to rule and reign in that coming day, that person will have to be a part of either the wife of Jehovah on the earth or the wife of the Son in the heavens. There can be no rule and reign for anyone — man, or God’s Son — apart from this established, Husband-wife relationship.

The preceding is why “marriage” and “meats” are singled out in [1 Timothy 4:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.3&t=NKJV). The marriage relationship today is based on that which God established in past time, and reflects on that which will ultimately be brought into full fruition during future time. And it matters not whether the word “marriage” in this verse is understood in a literal sense (referring to the marriage relationship today) or in a spiritual sense (referring to Christ and His wife yet future), *the same thing* is still being dealt with. A husband-wife relationship today is based on that which God established in the past and directly reflects on that which He will bring to fruition yet future. It directly reflects on Christ and His wife yet future.

And the preceding is why any corruption of the marriage relationship by man (adultery, homosexuality, etc.) is dealt with so severely in Scripture. Any deviation from that which God established is *a corruption, with far-reaching ramifications.*

Marriage, as established by God, has to do with *regality*; and this *regality* is to be realized in its ultimate sense during the coming Messianic Era. All of man’s corruptions are simply offshoots of Satan’s attempted, multi-faceted corruption surrounding the whole panorama of biblical doctrine (“*meats*”) pertaining to the marriage relationship.

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Chapter Eight

**Christ and the Church**

*Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess…”*

*And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi.*

*Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife…”*

*So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife…* ([Ruth 4:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.5&t=NKJV), [9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.9-10&t=NKJV), [13a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.13a&t=NKJV) [5a] [10a]).

The key to understanding the last three parables in Matthew chapter thirteen ([Matthew 13:44-50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.44-50&t=NKJV)), which Christ gave once He had reentered the house ([Matthew 13:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.36&t=NKJV)), is seen in understanding *the marriage relationship within its correct biblical framework*. This subject was dealt with in a general way in the last chapter, it will be dealt with in relation to Christ and the Church in this chapter (from the book of Ruth), and it will be dealt with in relation to God and Israel in the next chapter (from the book of Esther). Understanding this subject in general, plus understanding the typology of these two Old Testament books (particularly Ruth), is vitally necessary in order to properly understand the last three parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

These parables begin with events seen in chapter four of the book of Ruth — Boaz’s redemption of a forfeited inheritance originally belonging to Elimelech’s family (with Ruth then becoming his wife), typifying Christ’s redemption of a forfeited inheritance originally belonging to Israel (with the Church then becoming His wife). In the type, these things occurred only after Ruth had become a member of the family ([Ruth 1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1&t=NKJV)), had gleaned in Boaz’s field from morning until evening, from the beginning to the end of the barley harvest ([Ruth 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2&t=NKJV)), and had prepared herself for an appearance on Boaz’s threshing floor at midnight ([Ruth 3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3&t=NKJV)). And so it is in the antitype. All these things precede the redemptive act seen in [Ruth 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4&t=NKJV) — type or antitype.

The Family Relationship ([Ruth 1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1&t=NKJV))

The book of Ruth begins with a Jewish family (a father [Elimelech], a mother [Naomi], and their two sons [Mahlon and Chilion]) leaving Bethlehem, because of a famine in the land, to sojourn in Moab. The family dwelled in Moab for awhile, and the father died. This left Naomi, the mother, and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion ([Ruth 1:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1.1-3&t=NKJV)).

The sons then took wives of the women of Moab. Mahlon married Ruth, and Chilion married Orpah, and they dwelled in the land together for about ten years. Naomi’s two sons then died, which left Naomi with only her two daughters-in-law ([Ruth 1:4-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1.4-5&t=NKJV)).

After this, Naomi received word that the famine had ended in her own country; and she made the necessary preparations to leave Moab and return to Bethlehem ([Ruth 1:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1.6&t=NKJV)).

She departed on the journey toward Bethlehem, with Ruth and Orpah. But, while in-route, Naomi urged her two daughters-in-law to return to the people that they had left rather than to accompany her over the remainder of the way. Orpah, at this point in the journey, chose to turn back; but Ruth chose to continue the journey ([Ruth 1:7ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1.7ff&t=NKJV)).

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

*“Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.*

*Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do to me and more also if anything but death separates you and me.”* ([Ruth 1:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1.16-17&t=NKJV)).

Then Naomi, seeing that Ruth was *determined* to continue on to Bethlehem with her, “*stopped speaking to her*.” And the two of them continued the journey together([Ruth 1:18ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1.18ff&t=NKJV)).

Thus, the family relationship was established at the very beginning of the book, with the remainder of the book providing numerous details concerning this relationship. And three particulars are presented about this family relationship in the first chapter: 1) Those alienated from and becoming a part of the family were taken from the Gentiles, 2) they were joined to a Jewish family, and 3) there was a division within the family relationship (one turned back, the other didn’t).

All of this, of course, is typical of events occurring within God’s economy during the present dispensation. God is presently removing from *the Gentiles “a people for his name”* ([Acts 15:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+15.14&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Romans 11:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.25&t=NKJV)). Israel has been set aside for a dispensation, while the Spirit of God acquires *a bride* for God’s Son. And this Gentile bride, as Ruth, must possess a Jewish relationship. There can be no journey to Bethlehem, the House of Bread, apart from *an association with the Jews*.

Four thousand years ago God called one man out of the human race to be the channel through whom the remainder of the human race would *be blessed*. God called *Abraham* out of Ur of the Chaldees, gave him *a land* through an unconditional covenant, and promised that *through this one man and his seed* (through Isaac, Jacob, and his lineal descendants, through his twelve sons) all the Gentile nations of the earth would *be blessed* ([Genesis 12:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+12.1-3&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Genesis 13:14-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+13.14-18&t=NKJV); [15:18-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+15.18-21&t=NKJV); [22:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22.17-18&t=NKJV)).

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

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

*“Salvation is of the Lord”* ([Jonah 2:9b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jonah+2.9b&t=NKJV)).

*“Salvation is of the Jews”* ([John 4:22b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+4.22b&t=NKJV)).

Both *must* be true. Salvation *must be of the Lord* because unsaved man is “*dead in trespasses and sins*” ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV)). Unsaved man is completely incapable of acting in the spiritual realm. He is spiritually dead, and another Person must act on his behalf *in order to effect life where no life exists*. And this is accomplished through the Spirit of God breathing life into unregenerate man, on the basis of *the finished work of God’s Son, a Jew*.

Thus, *salvation* is both “*of the Lord*” and “*of the Jews.*” Individuals brought from a dead to a living state, by way of the birth from above (*cf.* [John 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.3&t=NKJV); [5:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.24&t=NKJV)) are, *positionally*, “in Christ,” *Abraham’s Seed*. And since Christ is *Abraham’s seed*, they too, because of their *position* “in Christ,” are also *Abraham’s seed* ([Galatians 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.16&t=NKJV), [29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.29&t=NKJV)).

Those who, in time past, were “*aliens from the commonwealth* [citizenship, having to do *with regal activity*] of *Israel*” have been “*made nigh* [‘brought near’]”; and, through being “Abraham’s seed,” are now “*heirs according to the promise* [heavenly, not earthly].” They, through being *Abraham’s seed*, have the prospect of one day participating *in regal activity* in the heavens with the greater Son of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ ([Galatians 3:26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.26-29&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.12-13&t=NKJV)).

But, going back to the type, note the difference that Scripture presents between Ruth and Orpah after they had become members of the family and had begun the journey to Bethlehem, the House of Bread. Ruth determined within herself *to complete the journey*. But not so with Orpah. *She turned back*.

And so it *must be* on the one hand and *is* on the other with Christians today. All begin the journey toward the House of Bread, but not all complete the journey. Some, like Ruth, leave the country from which they were called and go on; but others, like Orpah, turn back.

In the typology of [Genesis 24:57-58](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.57-58&t=NKJV), Ruth, as Rebekah — in response to the question, “*Will you go with this man?*” — said, “*I will go*.” And Ruth went on with Naomi, toward the House of Bread. Orpah though didn’t respond in this manner. Instead, she turned back.

At the time of the journey, Ruth and Orpah were related to Naomi *through death* (The prior death of their husbands had terminated the marriage relationship itself. And, in the antitype, Christians are also members of the family *through death*. Christians are Abraham’s seed *through death, the death of another Person*). But, though Orpah was just as much a member of the family as Ruth, there is no mention of her in the book of Ruth beyond the point of her *turning back*, just as there is no mention of Lot’s wife in the Genesis account beyond the point of her *looking back* [[Genesis 19:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.26&t=NKJV)].

Christ’s admonitions and warnings to this effect in [Luke 9:62](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+9.62&t=NKJV); [17:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.32&t=NKJV) are clear:

*“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

*“Remember Lot’s wife.”*

Gleaning in Boaz’s Field ([Ruth 1:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1.2&t=NKJV))

Once Naomi and Ruth had arrived in Bethlehem, attention is called to two things: 1) They had returned at the beginning of barley harvest, and 2) Naomi had a kinsman (through her deceased husband), Boaz, in whose field Ruth could glean grain. And this is where Ruth found herself — gleaning in Boaz’s field ([Ruth 1:22-2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1.22-2.3&t=NKJV)).

Boaz, “*a mighty man of wealth*,” took note of Ruth gleaning in his field, inquired of her, instructed her to not glean in any other field, and then instructed his workers in the field to purposefully leave handfuls of grain for her to glean. And Ruth gleaned in Boaz’s field after this fashion *from morning until evening, from the beginning to the end of the harvest* ([Ruth 2:4-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2.4-23&t=NKJV)).

All of this is a picture of the Christian in the race of “*the faith,*” gleaning in the field of the One Whom Boaz typifies. A “field” is used in Scripture to typify *the world* ([Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Genesis 37:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+37.15&t=NKJV)), “gleaning” in the field has to do with *bringing forth fruit* while in the world, and “the length” of the gleaning (from morning until evening, from the beginning to the end of the harvest) has to do with *a never-ending work, extending throughout the dispensation*.

A Christian is to set his sights on the goal out ahead, and he is to be busy throughout the course of the dispensation in his Master’s field. And he is to concern himself with *one thing*. He is to concern himself with *that provided for him to glean*, not with that provided for another to glean.

Boaz instructed his workers to purposefully leave handfuls of grain behind for Ruth to glean. Thus, Boaz *provided that which Ruth was to glean,* giving his workers instructions that it was to be left *specifically for her*. And all she had to do was glean that which the workers, at Boaz’s instructions, had left.

And so it is with Christians bringing forth fruit today. The Lord of the harvest has *provided for each and every Christian*. Christians are to simply glean *that which has been provided, by the Lord’s instructions, for them to glean*. They are to bring forth fruit through simply working with *that which has already been provided for them.*

Then the length of time in which they are to be busy in the Master’s field, after this fashion, is simply stated. It is “*until even*” on the one hand, and it is “*unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest*” on the other ([Ruth 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2.17&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2.23&t=NKJV)). It is *a never-ceasing work*, and it is *to continue until the end of the present dispensation.*

And another thing relative to the harvest stands out in the text — something of utmost importance and significance. Ruth, after she had gleaned in the field throughout the day, “*beat out that she had gleaned*,” leaving “*about an epah of barley*” ([Ruth 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2.17&t=NKJV)). That is, she didn’t confine her work to just one part of the task — gathering the grain that had been left for her. Rather, after gathering the grain, she worked with that which she had gleaned, removing the grain from the stalk. She worked with that which she had gleaned until the valuable part alone remained.

And so it is with Christians today. They are not to confine themselves to just one part of the task. They, for example, are not to cease their work following the proclamation of the message of salvation by grace through faith. Rather, once a person has been saved, they are then to continue their work with that which has been taken from the field. They are then to provide instruction concerning why the person has been saved. They are then to proclaim all the various facets of the message surrounding the coming glory of Christ. And they are to provide this instruction until a certain revealed time.

Remaining within the framework of the type, they are to reap stalks of grain from the field. Then they are to continue the harvest, working with that which has been gleaned from the field. And they are to continue this work until that which is worthless has been separated from that which is of value. They are to continue this work until individuals have been brought from immaturity to maturity (from *gnosis* to *epignosis*), until they have been grounded in “*the faith*” ([Ephesians 4:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.11-15&t=NKJV)).

Note how Paul conducted his ministry along these lines (*cf.* [Acts 20:20-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.20-32&t=NKJV); [Colossians 1:1-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.1-29&t=NKJV)). And note Paul’s command in his second epistle to Timothy, along these same lines:

*“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”* ([2 Timothy 4:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.5&t=NKJV)).

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

Timothy, being told to “*do the work of an evangelist*,” was simply being told *to proclaim the good news*. What good news was he to proclaim? The context itself has to do with the good news of the coming glory of Christ (*cf.* [Ruth 3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3.15&t=NKJV); [4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.1&t=NKJV), [7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.7-8&t=NKJV)). Thus, contextually, this facet of the good news would be foremost in view.

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

In other words, if Timothy was dealing with the unsaved, he was to proclaim the good news of the grace of God. He couldn’t proclaim anything else to them, for they were still “*dead in trespasses and sins*.” They were incapable of spiritual discernment ([1 Corinthians 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.14&t=NKJV)).

But, once they had “*passed from death unto life*,” he was no longer to proclaim the good news of the grace of God to them. Such would be meaningless, for they had already heard and responded to this message. He was then to proclaim the good news of the coming glory of Christ, for now they could understand spiritual truth ([1 Corinthians 2:9-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.9-13&t=NKJV)).

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

And placing this within the framework of the type in [Ruth 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2&t=NKJV), the same person proclaiming the good news of the grace of God to the unsaved is then to proclaim the good news of the coming glory of Christ to those responding. And he is to continue the latter until the wheat has been separated from the chaff, else the Lord of the harvest will Himself have to make this separation at the judgment seat.

(In the preceding respect, there is often an un-Biblical distinction made between an “evangelist” and a “pastor-teacher,” as seen in [Ephesians 4:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.11&t=NKJV). In actuality, their message is *the same*. It involves both *the gospel of the grace of God and the gospel of the glory of Christ.*

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

Preparation for Meeting Boaz ([Ruth 3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3&t=NKJV))

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

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

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

*“He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel.*

*He has not dealt thus with any nation* [any Gentile]; *and as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!”* ([Psalm 147:19-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+147.19-20&t=NKJV)).

*1. Preparation*

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

*“Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor…”* ([Ruth 3:3a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3.3a&t=NKJV)).

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

*A) Wash Thyself*

“Washing” has to do with *cleansing*, and the overall thought in [Ruth 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3.3&t=NKJV) has to do with the necessity of Ruth presenting herself *clean* in Boaz presence. And, brought over into the antitype, exactly the same thing is seen — the necessity of Christians presenting themselves *clean* in Christ’s presence, in that future day.

Cleansing in this typical sense, as presented in the book of Ruth, can be seen numerous places throughout Scripture. Old Testament priests, for example, were given a complete bath upon their entrance into the priesthood (a one-time event, never to be repeated [[Exodus 29:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+29.4&t=NKJV); [40:12-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+40.12-15&t=NKJV)]); and then, subsequent provision was made for repeated washings of the priests’ hands and feet as they became defiled in the process of carrying out their ministry ([Exodus 30:19-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+30.19-21&t=NKJV)).

These latter washings were that which Christ dealt with when washing the disciples’ feet in [John 13:8-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+13.8-10&t=NKJV). A washing of the complete body had already occurred. Thus, only washings of parts of the body were now necessary.

And that pictured by these latter washings, or Christ’s washing of the disciples’ feet, is also the same type washing dealt with in [Ruth 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3.3&t=NKJV). Ruth washed herself as *a member of the family*, not to become a member of the family.

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

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

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

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

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

Christ’s present high priestly ministry is being performed in the heavenly sanctuary, on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat, to provide a present cleansing for the kingdom of priests that He is about to bring forth. It is being performed for *Christians* (*members of the family*), so they can properly prepare themselves for an inevitable future meeting, a meeting with Christ on His threshing floor; and it is being performed so Christians can appear in His presence, in that future day, in *a clean* manner (*cf.* [1 John 1:7-2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+1.7-2.2&t=NKJV)).

*B) Anoint Yourself*

“Oil” was used in the Old Testament to anoint prophets, priests, and kings. And there was a connection between the use of oil after this fashion and the Holy Spirit coming upon an individual to empower him for the office to which he was being consecrated.

The anointing of Saul and David would be two such examples ([1 Samuel 10:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Samuel+10.1&t=NKJV), [6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Samuel+10.6&t=NKJV); [16:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Samuel+16.13&t=NKJV)). The Spirit came upon each following their being anointed, to empower them for the regal tasks that they were to perform.

Then the parable of the ten virgins sets forth matters as they would exist relative to the Holy Spirit and Christians during the present dispensation. All ten of the virgins had oil in their vessels, but only five possessed an extra supply of oil.

That would be to say, all Christians have that spoken of in the parable through the use of oil, but not all Christians possess an extra supply of oil. That is, all Christians are indwelt by the Spirit, but not all Christians are filled with the Spirit.

And, as Ruth could not be properly prepared for meeting Boaz apart from being anointed, neither can a Christian be properly prepared for meeting Christ apart from being filled with the Spirit. This will become more evident through viewing the third part of Naomi’s command concerning proper preparation.

*C) Put On Your Best Garment*

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

This apparel, according to [Revelation 19:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-8&t=NKJV) is made up of “*the righteousness* [*lit*., ‘righteous acts’] *of saints*.” This is something that Christians progressively weave for themselves, over time, as they glean in the field and beat out the grain. And to do this work in a proper manner, with the wedding garment being progressively woven, an extra supply of oil is necessary. That is, being filled with the Spirit for the task at hand is *an absolute necessity*, for only through being filled with the Spirit can a work in the spiritual realm be effectively accomplished.

Appearing in Christ’s presence in that future day *without a wedding garment* is the central issue in the parable of the marriage feast ([Matthew 22:1-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.1-14&t=NKJV)) and is a central issue in the letter to the church in Laodicea ([Revelation 3:14-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.14-21&t=NKJV)).

Relative to the man appearing *without a wedding garment* and the subject at hand in [Matthew 22:1-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.1-14&t=NKJV) — the wedding festivities — the man was cast into the darkness outside the banqueting hall ([Matthew 22:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV)). And relative to an entire church appearing *naked in Christ’s presence* and the subject at hand in [Revelation 3:14-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.14-21&t=NKJV) — ruling from His throne ([Revelation 3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)) — Christ said, “*I will vomit you out of My mouth*” ([Revelation 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.16&t=NKJV)).

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

*2. On the Threshing Floor*

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

John the Baptist connected the threshing floor with Christ’s future judgment of His people ([Matthew 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.12&t=NKJV)), and he could only have drawn this thought from that set forth in the Old Testament types. This is the place where *“the chaff” will be burned “with unquenchable fire,”* which is what Paul had in mind in his first letter to those in Corinth ([Ephesians 3:12-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.12-15&t=NKJV)).

Ruth appeared on Boaz’s threshing floor in a particular manner, at a particular time. She appeared *in a prepared manner, at midnight.*

“Midnight” in Scripture is always used in connection with *judgment*. That’s the manner in which the word is first used in Scripture ([Exodus 11:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+11.4&t=NKJV)), establishing a first-mention principle, which can never change. And, with the usage of the word set in this manner, any subsequent place in Scripture where the word is used, *judgment* has to always be in view (*e.g.,* [Job 34:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job+34.20&t=NKJV); [Psalm 119:62](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+119.62&t=NKJV); [Matthew 25:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.6&t=NKJV)).

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

Thus, both “the time” and “the place” of Ruth’s appearance in Boaz’s presence speak of *judgment*. But Ruth herself, passing through that connected with judgment, was *blessed* ([Ruth 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3.10&t=NKJV)); and the reason is obvious. Ruth was *properly prepared* for this appearance. Ruth was *properly prepared* for that which lay ahead. Not only had Ruth washed herself, anointed herself, and put on raiment, but she had also threshed that which she had gleaned from the field prior to her appearance in Boaz’s presence. Had she brought the grain that she had gleaned from Boaz’s field with her to the threshing floor, there would have been nothing more for Boaz to do with it, for it had already been threshed. That which was of no value had already been removed.

In the light of [1 Corinthians 11:31-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+11.31-32&t=NKJV), Ruth had brought matters to pass in such a manner that events on the threshing floor could have had no affect on that which she had gleaned from the field. Or, in the light of [1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV), there could have been no “*wood, hay, stubble*” threshed from her gleanings. This had already been removed. Ruth was prepared *in every way possible* for the meeting with Boaz, on his threshing floor. Thus, *only blessings* could possibly have ensued.

Redemption of the Inheritance ([Ruth 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4&t=NKJV))

The redemption seen in Ruth chapter four, chronologically, occurred after all the events depicted in [Ruth 1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1-3&t=NKJV) had been completed. This redemption had to do with a work which occurred following events on the threshing floor, and this work had to do with two things: 1) Boaz’s redemption of a forfeited inheritance originally belonging to Elimelech’s family, and 2) Ruth, through Boaz’s redemptive work, becoming his wife. And once the inheritance had been redeemed, with Ruth becoming Boaz’s wife, the inheritance then belonged to them.

This, of course, in the antitype, has to do with a redemptive work to be performed by Christ, on behalf of Christians, following events at the judgment seat. And once the forfeited inheritance (originally belonging to Israel) has been redeemed, the one typified by Ruth will become the wife of the One typified by Boaz, with the inheritance then belonging to them.

(*The redemption of the inheritance* is the central subject of the last three parables in [Matthew 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13&t=NKJV). And that seen in [Ruth 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4&t=NKJV) will be extensively covered in subsequent studies dealing with these parables.)

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Chapter Nine

**God and Israel**

*If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she…*

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

*After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him…*

*Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, “Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews”…*

*And King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and on the islands of the sea.*

*Now all the acts of his power and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?*

*For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen.* ([Esther 1:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+1.19&t=NKJV); [2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+2.17&t=NKJV); [3:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+3.1&t=NKJV); [8:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+8.7&t=NKJV); [10:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+10.1-3&t=NKJV)).

The books of Ruth and Esther are companion books in Scripture, presenting two overall chronologies of interrelated events having to do with the marriage relationship as it pertains to regality. The book of Ruth presents a history of *Christ and the Church*, culminating with the Son possessing a wife to rule as consort queen with Him; and the book of Esther presents a history of *God and Israel*, culminating with the Father possessing a restored wife to rule as consort queen with Him. Both books begin in past time, carry the reader through events occurring during present time, and culminate at the same point in future time.

These are the only books in Scripture named for women, and no one knows who wrote either book. They both stand together in this respect. But they also both stand together in a far greater and more significant respect. These two books, together, *relate the complete story of both the Father and the Son as it pertains to a regal principle within the marriage relationship, set forth very early in Scripture*:

*And God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion…”* ([Genesis 1:26a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26a&t=NKJV)).

Man, created in the image and likeness of God, was created to rule the earth. But man could not rule alone. The woman, taken out of the man, was to rule as consort queen with him. She was *bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh*. And the man *could not rule as a complete being apart from the woman* ([Genesis 1:27-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.27-28&t=NKJV); [2:23-24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.23-24&t=NKJV)).

This will explain Adam’s act after Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit. Adam could not have eaten of *the tree of life* following Eve’s sin (the tree that would have provided the wisdom and knowledge to rule and to reign), for he could not have ascended the throne as a complete being. Eve had to be brought back into the position that she had occupied prior to the fall in order for Adam to rule and to reign, *as a complete being.*

Thus, Adam had no choice other than to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *with a view to redemption*. And redemption would be *with a view to both he and Eve, together, one day being in a position to eat of the tree of life and ascend the throne, as God intended when He created man*.

The sequence of events set forth through Adam’s act forms a type of the second Man, the last Adam, finding His bride — a part of His very being — in a fallen state and being made sin, *with a view to redemption* ([2 Corinthians 5:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.21&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 5:30-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.30-32&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Ephesians 5:21-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.21-29&t=NKJV)). And redemption in the antitype is the same as in the type. It is *with a view to Christ and His bride one day ascending the throne together, as God intended for man in the beginning, at the time of man’s creation.*

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

And, understanding this, the present ministry of the Spirit of God in the World — seeking a bride for God’s Son ([Genesis 24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV)) — can easily be understood. God has set aside an entire dispensation, lasting 2,000 years, during which time He has sent the Spirit into the world to acquire a bride for His Son.

But there is another facet to the principle set forth in [Genesis 1:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26&t=NKJV) and this is what the book of Esther is about. Abraham had a natural seed, through Isaac and Jacob, which was not only established in a theocracy on earth during Old Testament days but will be reestablished in a theocracy on earth during the Messianic Era.

And two things should be noted about Abraham’s natural seed, the nation of Israel: 1) This nation will not form part of the wife of Christ; and 2) in order to rule, this nation *will have to occupy* the same type relationship with another Person (with God the Father) as the Church will occupy with Christ — a Husband-wife relationship.

The latter is the reason Israel is seen in Scripture as *the wife of Jehovah*. This is a position that the nation *had to hold* in order to reign in the Old Testament theocracy, and this is a position that the nation *will have to hold* in order to reign when the theocracy is restored. There had to be such a relationship for Israel to rule and reign during Old Testament days, and *there will have to be* such a relationship for Israel to rule and reign during the Messianic Era.

A relationship of this nature *had to exist* in the past and *will have to exist* in the future *because of the God-established relationship between the man and the woman as it pertains to regality in* [*Genesis 1:26*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26&t=NKJV). Man simply cannot fulfill the reason for his creation apart from this relationship.

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

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

Vashti — Rejected

Israel’s past rejection is seen in the experiences of Vashti, the queen. This is the manner in which the book of Esther begins, following a brief introduction of the king and his kingdom ([Esther 1:1-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+1.1-9&t=NKJV)). Vashti *refused* to heed King Ahasuerus’ command, and, because of the far-reaching ramifications of her refusal, the king became enraged. Through her actions, Vashti had not only committed a transgression against the king but also against all the people of the provinces under his command as well. And, resultantly, the king *rejected* Vashti as queen, with a view to “her royal estate” being given to another ([Esther 1:10-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+1.10-19&t=NKJV)).

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

*1) From Moses to John*

Israel’s history, in one respect, can be traced back to God’s statement to Satan at the time of man’s fall ([Genesis 3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+3.15&t=NKJV)). *The Seed of the woman* was a reference to “Christ,” Whom Israel, 4,000 years later, brought forth.

The nation’s history, in another respect, can be traced back to Noah’s words concerning Shem ([Genesis 9:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+9.26&t=NKJV)). Of Noah’s three sons — from whom the entire human race descended — Shem alone was revealed *to have a God*. And so it is with the descendants of Shem, the nation of Israel ([Ephesians 2:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.12-13&t=NKJV)).

Then, the nation’s history, in another respect, can be traced back to God’s command and promise to Abraham ([Genesis 12:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+12.1-3&t=NKJV)). Abraham was the one called out of Ur to be the channel through whom the nation of Israel and the Messiah would come. And it was through Israel, the nation bringing forth the Messiah, that God promised *to bless* all the nations of the earth ([Genesis 12:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+12.3&t=NKJV); [John 8:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+8.37&t=NKJV); [Galatians 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.16&t=NKJV)).

And the nation’s history, in still another respect, can be traced back to God’s actions as they pertained to Jacob ([Isaiah 43:1-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+43.1-10&t=NKJV)). It was in the person of Jacob that God performed a creative act, setting his lineal descendants forth as *separate and distinct* from all the surrounding nations.

But the beginning of the nation *in relation to the theocracy* was not seen until Moses’ day ([Exodus 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+12.2&t=NKJV)). It was only during Moses’ day that God began to deal with Israel, on a national basis, in relation to the theocracy, as it pertained to sonship and the rights of primogeniture (*cf*. [Exodus 4:22-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+4.22-23&t=NKJV); [19:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+19.5-6&t=NKJV)).

A nation was born the night of the Passover in the land of Egypt. Death had occurred through sacrificial lambs, blood had been applied (showing a substitutionary death), and the Lord had passed over those households where the blood had been applied. Burial then occurred in the Red Sea, and the nation subsequently stood on the eastern banks of the sea in resurrection power.

The Passover, in this respect, marked the “*beginning of months*” for the nation of Israel ([Exodus 12:2ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+12.2ff&t=NKJV)).

And Israel under Moses, having left Egypt (a type of *the world* in Scripture), was to ultimately dwell in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *within a theocracy.* God Himself was to rule in the midst of His people, and this rule was to extend throughout the entire earth, with all the nations of the earth being blessed because of and through Israel.

The extent to which Israel was to rule and be a blessing (wherein the nation refused to heed the King’s command) is that which is in view in the extent to which Vashti’s actions reached (wherein she refused to heed the king’s command).

Vashti’s refusal in the type had far-reaching ramifications that extended not only to the king but to everyone in the kingdom as well ([Esther 1:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+1.1&t=NKJV), [11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+1.11-12&t=NKJV), [16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+1.16&t=NKJV)).

And Israel’s refusal in the antitype had the same far-reaching ramifications. Such a refusal extended not only to the King but to everyone in the kingdom as well ([Genesis 12:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+12.1-3&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 43:1-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+43.1-10&t=NKJV)).

The nations of the earth were to be blessed through Israel, as Israel occupied her God-ordained place in the theocracy ([Genesis 12:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+12.3&t=NKJV); [Exodus 19:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+19.5-6&t=NKJV)). And any refusal by Israel to occupy this place would have negative repercussions ([Leviticus 26:14ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+26.14ff&t=NKJV); [Deuteronomy 28:15ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+28.15ff&t=NKJV); [Hosea 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea+1.9&t=NKJV)). Through such a refusal, there would be a failure to carry out the King’s decreed manner in which He was to bless the nations, and this would result in these blessings being withheld.

Thus, such a transgression on Israel’s part would be directed not only toward God Himself but toward the Gentile nations of the earth as well. And a transgression of this nature on Israel’s part is exactly what is seen in Old Testament history.

The theocracy reached its heights during the days of David and Solomon (some four centuries following Moses and Joshua). But even during this period, conditions within the theocracy were still far removed from that which God had intended when He called the Israelites out of Egypt under Moses.

Then, following Solomon’s death and the division of the kingdom, things began to go even further awry. Matters progressively deteriorated, and the voice of the prophets (*e.g*., Elijah and Elisha) went unheeded. And this ultimately resulted in God allowing Gentile nations to come in and carry His people captive into the very nations that those being taken captive had previously been called forth to bless.

God allowed the Assyrians to come down in 722 B.C. and carry away the northern ten tribes. Then He allowed the Babylonians to come over in 605 B.C. and carry away the southern two tribes. And once the entire nation found itself under Gentile dominion, that period in Scripture known as “*the times of the Gentiles*” began.

“*The times of the Gentiles*” has to do with that period during Man’s Day when the Gentile nations exercise power and control in the world. This time began when the theocracy was taken from Israel, and it will end when the theocracy has been restored to Israel. The times of the Gentiles will come to a close only at that future time when God concludes His dealings with Israel, at the end of the coming Tribulation, at the end of Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week. It will be at that time, *not before*, that the theocracy will be restored to Israel.

*2) From John Until…*

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

*“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”* ([2 Chronicles 7:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Chronicles+7.14&t=NKJV)).

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

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

John the Baptist appeared as the forerunner of the Messiah, calling for Israel’s repentance, declaring that *the kingdom of the heavens was “at hand”* ([Matthew 3:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.1ff&t=NKJV)). Then Israel’s Messiah Himself appeared, calling for the nation’s repentance and extending the same offer of the kingdom to the Jewish people ([Matthew 4:17ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4.17ff&t=NKJV)). But though numerous Jews heeded the message, the nation at large continued in the same frame of mind that had marked Israel so much during the days of the Old Testament theocracy (*cf.* [Matthew 12:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.14&t=NKJV), [22-24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+12.22-24&t=NKJV); [23:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.13&t=NKJV); [John 9:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+9.14&t=NKJV), [33-34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+9.33-34&t=NKJV); [12:9-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+12.9-11&t=NKJV); [19:5-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.5-14&t=NKJV)).

Others were sent to the nation at this time — the Twelve, then the Seventy. But refusal on Israel’s part continued. And Israel climaxed this refusal by crucifying the very One Whom John had gone before, the One Who had commissioned and sent the Twelve and the Seventy, the Messiah Himself.

Then following the death, burial, and resurrection of Israel’s Messiah, a re-offer of the kingdom was made by the apostles and others (detailed in the book of Acts). But Israel still refused, continuing to persecute and even kill those sent to proclaim the message ([Acts 4:1-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+4.1-21&t=NKJV); [5:17-40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+5.17-40&t=NKJV); [7:51-60](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+7.51-60&t=NKJV); [8:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+8.1ff&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Matthew 23:31-36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.31-36&t=NKJV)). And the nation, following this re-offer of the kingdom, was then set aside while God called out from among the Gentiles “*a people for his name*” ([Acts 15:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+15.14&t=NKJV)). Israel was set aside for a dispensation, allowing the Holy Spirit, already in the world, to procure a bride for God’s Son from among the Gentiles.

All the preceding actions surrounding Israel can be seen in the experiences of Vashti in the book of Esther. Vashti, in her experiences, forms the type; and Israel, in the nation’s experiences, forms the antitype. But Vashti’s experiences form only part of the story, that of *disobedience and rejection*. There is another part to the story, a part that has to do with *obedience and acceptance*. And this part is seen in the experiences of Esther.

Esther — Accepted

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

Chapter one in the book of Esther has to do with *Israel’s rejection*, and chapter two has to do with *Israel’s acceptance.* Vashti, typifying Israel past and present, was *rejected* ([Esther 1:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+1.19&t=NKJV)); and Esther, typifying Israel yet future, was *accepted* ([Esther 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+2.17&t=NKJV)). Then the remainder of the book presents a number of details surrounding Israel’s acceptance, with the end of the matter being seen in the experiences of both Esther and Mordecai.

In the chronology of Esther, God views Israel as restored to her rightful place (*cf.* [Esther 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+2.17&t=NKJV); [5:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+5.2&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+5.12&t=NKJV); [7:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+7.1&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+7.5&t=NKJV), [7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+7.7-8&t=NKJV)) prior to the occurrence of certain events that actually precede this restoration ([Esther 3:1-9:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+3.1-9.14&t=NKJV)). Haman and his ten sons typify the Antichrist and his ten-kingdom confederacy. And Israel’s repentance, followed by God’s acceptance and restoration of the nation, will not actually occur, in the antitype, until after the overthrow of Gentile world power (which will be centered in the kingdom of the Antichrist at the end of the present age).

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

The fact that Esther is seen crowned in the book prior to and during the events surrounding Haman and his ten sons — which seemingly would be out of line with a proper chronology in the antitype — is perfectly aligned with the way God often presents things in His revelation to man. God often presents matters in His revelation as having already occurred before they have actually been brought to pass (*e.g.*, the crucifixion of His Son “*from the foundation of the world,*” four thousand years before it occurred in human history [[Revelation 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.8&t=NKJV)]; or His viewing Satan’s “*fall like lightning from heaven*” two thousand years before it actually does occur [[Luke 10:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+10.18&t=NKJV)]).

And also, God often provides a complete chronology of events in His revelation prior to providing details for things within the chronology (*e.g*., in [Revelation 12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12&t=NKJV), the first six verses provide a complete chronology of events, with the remainder of the chapter ([Revelation 12:7-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.7-17&t=NKJV)) simply providing a commentary for these events).

(Actually, the whole of Scripture is structured in the preceding fashion. [Genesis 1:1-2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.1-2.3&t=NKJV) provides a complete chronology of events covering 7,000 years of time. Then, the remainder of Scripture is simply a commentary on these opening verses, providing all the numerous and necessary details.)

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

God views the complete matter of Israel’s past and present rejection in chapter one, along with the complete matter of the nation’s future acceptance in chapter two. Then, the remainder of the book (Esther 3ff) forms not only a commentary on chapter two — providing necessary details — but, throughout this commentary, God continues to view Israel in the exalted position in which the nation is seen in chapter two (*e.g.*, [Esther 5:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+5.2&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+5.12&t=NKJV); [7:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+7.1&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+7.5&t=NKJV), [7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+7.7-8&t=NKJV)).

And, with these things in mind, note the commentary that God has provided — eight chapters ([Esther 3-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+3-10&t=NKJV)), which all reflect back on the fact that Esther had been made queen/that Israel will be made queen ([Esther 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+2.17&t=NKJV)). And this fact is *continuously* kept in view throughout the commentary.

Haman — Defeated

Chapters three through ten in the book of Esther, forming a commentary on chapter two, begin by introducing Haman, not seen in the book prior to this time. And, from the point he is introduced, Haman and his family occupy a place at the forefront of events seen throughout the remainder of the book, save the final ([Esther 10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+10&t=NKJV)) chapter.

Revelation concerning Haman begins with the king promoting and placing him in a prominent position of power and authority in his kingdom. The king “*advanced him* [Haman], *and set his seat above all the princes that were with him*” ([Esther 3:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+3.1&t=NKJV)).

And, because of Haman’s Exalted position, all the king’s servants were commanded to accord him honor (such honor, reverence, was normally shown in that day through falling to the knees and touching the ground with the forehead). But one individual refused. Mordecai, the Jew, refused to accord Haman such honor. Mordecai “*bowed not, nor did him reverence*.” And this infuriated Haman to the extent that he sought “*to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus*” ([Esther 3:2-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+3.2-6&t=NKJV)).

And Haman, seeking to destroy all the Jews throughout the kingdom, directed his efforts particularly against Mordecai, who had refused to accord him honor. But matters were brought to pass in such a way that Haman found himself on the road to ruin, rather than Mordecai or the rest of the Jewish people ([Esther 3:7ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+3.7ff&t=NKJV)). And, once Haman found himself on this road, the matter was exactly as stated by his wife, Zeresh:

*“If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom you have begun to fall, you shall not prevail against him, but shall surely fall before him”* ([Esther 6:13b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+6.13b&t=NKJV)).

Once Haman had turned against the Jewish people he found himself forced into situations and circumstances completely beyond his control, situations and circumstances that brought about events completely contrary to that which he had sought to effect. He found himself not only being forced to exalt Mordecai, whom he had sought to put down, but he also, in the end, found himself impaled on the very gallows that he had built for Mordecai ([Esther 6:1-7:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+6.1-7.10&t=NKJV)).

Then, if that wasn’t enough, his ten sons were subsequently slain and impaled on the same gallows ([Esther 9:10-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+9.10-14&t=NKJV)). And all of this brought an end to “the house of Haman,” allowing the Jewish people to occupy a rightful, prominent place in the kingdom.

This sequence of events, in type, foreshadows that which will one day occur in the kingdom of the Antichrist, and beyond. The King Himself will promote the Antichrist and place him in the position of power that He is destined to occupy, as Ahasuerus did with Haman. It is God alone Who rules in “*the kingdom of men*” through His sovereign control of matters. He is the One Who establishes and removes rulers, giving the kingdom “*to whomsoever He will*” ([Daniel 4:17-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+4.17-26&t=NKJV); [5:18-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+5.18-28&t=NKJV)).

And, in his exalted position of power, “*above all the princes*,” the Antichrist will command the same honor accorded Haman ([Revelation 13:2-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.2-8&t=NKJV)). He will have previously made a covenant with *many in Israel* ([Daniel 9:27a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+9.27a&t=NKJV)). But *numerous other Jews* will have rejected this covenant; and, in the light of the type in Esther, these Jews will apparently also have rejected the man making the covenant as well, refusing to accord him honor.

Then, because of this, the Antichrist, in his wrath, after three and one-half years, will turn against the Jewish people “*throughout the whole kingdom* [worldwide]” and seek their complete destruction, exactly as seen in Haman’s actions (*cf*. [Daniel 9:27b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+9.27b&t=NKJV); [Matthew 24:15ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.15ff&t=NKJV); [Luke 21:20ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+21.20ff&t=NKJV); [2 Thessalonians 2:3ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.3ff&t=NKJV)).

But once Antichrist has turned against the Jewish people, he will have placed himself on the same road of no return previously traveled by Haman. It will be a downward path, leading to the destruction of not only himself but also his ten-kingdom confederacy (wherein Gentile world power will be centered in that day), seen in the destruction of Haman and his ten sons in the type (*cf.* [Daniel 2:33-35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+2.33-35&t=NKJV), [40-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+2.40-45&t=NKJV); [7:7-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.7-12&t=NKJV), [23-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.23-28&t=NKJV); [Revelation 19:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11ff&t=NKJV)).

Once the Antichrist turns against the Jewish people, a period of progressively intensifying trouble will ensue. This period will begin with the breaking of the second seal ([Revelation 6:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+6.3&t=NKJV)) and will continue until the last of the judgments under the seven vials have been brought to pass ([Revelation 16:17-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+16.17-21&t=NKJV)). And conditions in the Antichrist’s kingdom will progressively deteriorate throughout this period until the point is reached where, except for the Lord’s intervention, mankind would literally destroy itself: “*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved*…” ([Matthew 24:22a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.22a&t=NKJV)).

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

Mordecai — Exalted

But, just as the book of Esther doesn’t end with the destruction of Haman and his ten sons, neither does Scripture end with the destruction of the Antichrist and his ten-kingdom confederacy. Scripture ends the same way in which the book of Esther ends — *the Jewish people exalted in a kingdom, following the destruction of their enemies* (*cf.* [Deuteronomy 30:1-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+30.1-10&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 2:1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+2.1-4&t=NKJV); [Joel 3:12-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+3.12-21&t=NKJV)).

Though the Antichrist will be seeking the destruction of the Jewish people, God, through His sovereign control of matters, will use the Antichrist’s efforts to bring about the very thing which He Himself desires. God will use the fires of this coming time of trouble to bring His people to *a place of repentance*.

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

God heard His peoples’ cry, He remembered His “*covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob*,” and He then sent Moses back to deliver them ([Exodus 2:23-3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+2.23-3.10&t=NKJV)).

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

And God, as in Moses’ day, will hear His peoples’ cry; and He will remember His “*covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob*,” and He will then send Jesus back to deliver them (*cf.* [Deuteronomy 30:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+30.1-3&t=NKJV); [Ezekiel 36:16-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+36.16-28&t=NKJV); [Matthew 24:29-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.29-31&t=NKJV)).

When matters were brought to a close in the book of Esther, Esther was given “*the house of Haman*” ([Esther 8:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+8.1&t=NKJV), [7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+8.7&t=NKJV)), which she placed under Mordecai’s control ([Esther 8:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+8.2&t=NKJV)); and also, when matters were brought to a close in this book, *Mordecai* was advanced in the kingdom, holding a position of power “*next unto king Ahasuerus*” ([Esther 10:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Esther+10.3&t=NKJV)).

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

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

God, in His sovereign control of all things, will bring all events to pass exactly as foretold by the prophets. *Nothing* will fail of fulfillment. *And Israel, in the end, will occupy her God-ordained place relative to both God and the nations of the earth, within a theocracy.*

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Chapter Ten

**Parable of the Treasure**

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.* ([Matthew 13:44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.44&t=NKJV)).

The last three parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, unlike the first four, were given only after Christ *had reentered the house*. The first four were given *outside the house, by the seaside*; and the last three were given *back inside the house* ([Matthew 13:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.1-3&t=NKJV), [36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.36&t=NKJV)). Christ reentered the house prior to giving these last three parables, for an entirely different situation existed from this point forward in the course of that which He was covering in these parables.

The first four parables cover the entirety of the present dispensation, as matters relate to the proclamation of *the Word of the Kingdom* among Christians. The dispensation, insofar as the proclamation of this message is concerned, will end, according to these parables, in *a completely leavened state* ([Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV)). Because of the working of the leaven during the course of the dispensation, producing a continuing deterioration throughout Christendom, conditions at the end of the dispensation will be as depicted by the church in Laodicea in [Revelation 3:14-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.14-21&t=NKJV).

In relation to the proclamation of and adherence to the Word of the Kingdom at the end of the dispensation, the Church is described in [Revelation 3:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.17&t=NKJV) as “*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*.” This is simply a description of conditions that Christ had called attention to some sixty years prior to the time John wrote the book of Revelation: “…*when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith* [‘the faith’] *on the earth?*” ([Luke 18:8b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+18.8b&t=NKJV)). And the manner in which the question is worded in the Greek text designates a negative answer. The Son of Man *will not find* “*the faith*” being taught throughout the churches of the land at the time of His return.

The Word of the Kingdom, taught universally throughout the first century Church at the beginning of the dispensation, will be completely absent in teachings throughout the Church at the end of the dispensation. Instead, in some quarters, that more closely aligned with the “*doctrines of demons*” will be taught ([1 Timothy 4:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+4.1-3&t=NKJV); *ref.*, Chapter 7). The working of the leaven throughout the dispensation will have gradually wrought this change.

Thus, the first four parables carry an individual through the whole of the present dispensation in the preceding respect. And in parables five through seven that which is being dealt with has to do with events beyond the present dispensation. These parables have to do with events occurring *after* the Church has been removed from the earth and *after* God has resumed his national dealings with Israel.

These last three parables could not have been given by the seaside, as the previous four had been. God will have completed his work of removing “a people for his name” *from among the Gentiles* (which “*the seaside*” symbolized) at this point in the parables. And these three parables *had to be given back inside the house* because it is also at this point in the parables that God will have resumed His national dealings with Israel ([Acts 15:14-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+15.14-17&t=NKJV)).

This is why Christ reentered the house prior to giving these closing three parables. The Church will have been removed into the heavens *at the close* of that dealt with in the first four parables, and God will have resumed his dealings with Israel once again prior to that dealt with in the last three parables. Thus, Christ *had to reenter the house* *prior to* giving these closing three parables, for Israel will once again be in view.

But, though that dealt with in these parables is intimately connected with Israel on the earth and cannot be brought to pass apart from God’s resumption of His dealings with His covenant people, these parables actually have to do more specifically with *the Church in the heavens*. These parables have to do with *a continued sequence of events pertaining to the Word of the Kingdom*. They simply continue the sequence of events from the preceding four parables, with a view to the Messianic Era.

All seven of these parables have to do with that taken from Israel — *the kingdom of the heavens* ([Matthew 21:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV)). And, since the Church was called into existence to be the recipient of that which was taken from Israel, the closing three parables (as the first four), of necessity, have to do centrally with *the Church* (though the Church, during the time covered by events in these parables, will no longer be on earth). But, as well, as previously shown, these parables also involve God having resumed His national dealings with Israel once again, for events depicted by these parables cannot be brought to pass apart from such dealings.

The Treasure; the Field

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

This parable reaches back into past events in order to establish a framework and foundational basis for dealing with future events — the central issue of the parable, *the purchase of the field* where the treasure was hidden. *The things leading into the purchase of the field* have to do with past events, occurring at Christ’s first coming; but *the purchase of the field itself* has to do with events yet future, events that will occur immediately prior to Christ’s return.

The purchase of the field is that which continues the progressive continuity of the parables in relation to time. All of that stated in the preceding part of the parable forms background material so one can properly understand and place this purchase within its correct biblical framework.

In the progression of that revealed in the seven connected parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, the “field” is specifically stated to be the *world* ([Matthew 13:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.38&t=NKJV)); and, through comparing scripture elsewhere, the “treasure” can only be identified as *Israel* ([Exodus 19:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+19.5-6&t=NKJV); [Psalm 135:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+135.4&t=NKJV)).

When Christ came the first time, He came only to “*the lost sheep of the house of Israel*,” offering to the people comprising this nation *the kingdom of the heavens* ([Matthew 4:17-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4.17-25&t=NKJV); [10:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.5-6&t=NKJV); [15:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+15.24&t=NKJV)). However, Israel spurned the offer, and the kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel. Then Israel was set aside, with a view to an entirely new entity (*the one new man “in Christ”*) being called into existence, to be the recipient of that which had previously been offered to, rejected by, and taken from Israel ([Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-10&t=NKJV)).

The Man finding the treasure, hiding the treasure, and selling all that He had can only be a reference to three events occurring in the past: *1) Christ’s ministry to Israel at His first coming, 2) Israel being set aside, and 3) Christ’s finished work at Calvary.*

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

And this purchase cannot be a reference to the purchase of salvation for all those in the world through Christ’s finished work at Calvary, as commonly taught. Christ selling all that He had is not synonymous with His purchase of the field. Such a teaching would make the parable deal centrally with salvation by grace through faith, something that none of these parables deals with.

These parables are not about salvation by grace through faith. Rather, they are about *the kingdom of the heavens* — a subject stated in each of the seven parables, leaving no room for anyone to ever misunderstand the subject matter of these parables. Thus, an erroneous view of Christ’s purchase of the field of this nature — making this purchase synonymous with His finished work at Calvary — not only completely removes the parable from its contextual setting but also from the clearly stated subject of the parable.

Comparing “scripture with scripture,” that which is involved in the purchase of the field in this parable becomes clear. This present earth, along with its inhabitants, will form *the inheritance* to be possessed by Christ and His wife during the coming age (*cf.* [Psalm 2:6-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+2.6-9&t=NKJV); [Romans 8:17-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.17-23&t=NKJV); [Revelation 2:26-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-27&t=NKJV); [3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)). And this is what must be *purchased, redeemed* prior to a new order of Sons being brought forth to rule from the heavens over the earth (*cf.* [Romans 8:18-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.18-21&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.5&t=NKJV), [10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.10&t=NKJV)).

The purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure has to do with *a redeemed inheritance — the redemption of the earth*. This is a future work of Christ, made possible because of His past and completed work at Calvary. Calling attention to Israel, the world, and Christ’s finished work at Calvary was necessary prior to any mention of the redemption of the inheritance. All these things set the stage for and lead into Christ’s statement concerning His future work in this respect.

This will all become clear through viewing a number of things from three different books in the next section of this study.

Three Books

The book of Revelation and the book of Daniel are often looked upon as companion books in Scripture, with one book shedding light upon and helping to explain the other. And the association between these two books is correct. Daniel and Revelation form companion books, with scripture from one helping to explain scripture from the other. One book cannot be properly understood apart from the other.

However, Daniel is not the only book in the Old Testament carrying this type relationship to the book of Revelation. Rather, it is one of many Old Testament books carrying a relationship to the book of Revelation of this nature.

Exodus, for example, could be looked upon as *The Apocalypse of the Old Testament*. The book of Exodus, throughout — in a type-antitype framework — covers exactly the same period of time covered in the first twenty chapters of the book of Revelation. Both books cover that period of time beginning with the present dispensation and ending with the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. And since both deal with the same thing, though from different perspectives, one will shed light upon and help explain the other.

But, for purposes of this study, discussion along these lines will be limited to two other books in the Old Testament that also carry this same type relationship to the book of Revelation. And those are the books of Ruth and Esther. The book of Ruth deals with the Church and a redeemed inheritance in exactly the same manner seen in the book of Revelation. And the book of Esther deals centrally with Israel in the Tribulation and beyond, in the same manner as also seen in the book of Revelation.

To properly understand the purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure, material in these three books — Ruth, Esther, and Revelation — must be viewed and studied together. And not only is this the case for a proper understanding of the fifth parable, but also for that seen in the sixth parable as well — the purchase of the pearl.

That seen in the book of Ruth and that seen in the book of Esther are both put together in the book of Revelation. And to properly understand the book of Revelation, this book *must be studied* in the light of that which is revealed in these two Old Testament books. Only through viewing the books of Ruth, Esther, and Revelation in this respect can the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen be properly understood.

That would be to say, events covered by the things in view in the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen are seen in different parts of the books of Ruth, Esther, and Revelation. In relation to that which is in these two parables, the book of Ruth deals with a wealthy Jew who redeems an inheritance and, through this redemptive process, takes a Gentile as his wife; the book of Esther deals with the restoration of Israel following the overthrow of Gentile world power, which will be headed up under the Antichrist’s ten-kingdom confederacy in the end time; and the book of Revelation puts these different things together, providing additional details.

The Spirit of God used two books in the Old Testament (Ruth and Esther) to show both sides of the matter. Then, in the New Testament, the Spirit of God placed that which is in both Ruth and Esther together in one book — the book of Revelation.

And possibly the best way to understand this is to go to the book of Revelation, present that which is in this book, and refer back to the books of Ruth and Esther. And, relative to the redemption of the inheritance, this material is contained in the first eighteen chapters of the book of Revelation.

Viewing these chapters in the book of Revelation after this fashion, there is a major turning point at the end of chapter four. And, in this respect, these eighteen chapters should be viewed from the standpoint of that revealed in chapters one through four first, then from the standpoint of that revealed in chapters five through eighteen.

*1.* [*Revelation 1-4*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-4&t=NKJV)

The first four chapters of the book of Revelation deal with the Church, both throughout the dispensation ([Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV)) and at the judgment seat at the close of the dispensation ([Revelation 1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-4&t=NKJV)).

In the first part of chapter one ([Revelation 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.10&t=NKJV)), the Church is seen removed into heaven, into the future Day of the Lord (a key to understanding [Revelation 1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-4&t=NKJV)). Then the remainder of chapter one presents the Church in Christ’s presence. Christ is seen as *Judge* ([Revelation 1:13-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.13-16&t=NKJV)), and *the complete Church* (all Christians) — all seven churches from chapters two and three, with the number “seven” showing *completeness* — is seen appearing in Christ’s presence to be judged ([Revelation 1:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.12-13&t=NKJV), [20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.20&t=NKJV)).

Then chapters two and three continue that which is revealed in chapter one, depicting the actual judgment itself. Note that each short epistle in these two chapters is structured exactly the same way — works, with a view *to overcoming or being overcome*. And each of the overcomers’ promises is *Messianic* within its scope of fulfillment.

And this is exactly what Scripture elsewhere reveals about the judgment seat. There will be a judgment based on *works*, with a view *to overcoming or being overcome*. And that which is in view relative to overcoming or being overcome is seen as having to do with occupying or being denied a position with Christ in His kingdom (*cf.* [Matthew 16:24-17:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.24-17.5&t=NKJV); [24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV); [25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV); [Luke 12:42-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+12.42-46&t=NKJV); [19:11-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.11-27&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV); [2 Corinthians 5:9-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.9-11&t=NKJV); [1 Thessalonians 1:5-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+1.5-10&t=NKJV); [4:16-5:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.16-5.9&t=NKJV); [2 Thessalonians 1:5-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+1.5-11&t=NKJV)).

Also, chapters two and three, viewed from another perspective, present a history of the Church throughout the dispensation, synonymous with that seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. Both sections of Scripture present a history of the Church in relation to *the Word of the Kingdom*. Both sections of Scripture reveal the dispensation beginning *with Christians producing acceptable works* (fruitfulness [[Matthew 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.8&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.23&t=NKJV); [Revelation 2:2-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.2-3&t=NKJV)]) and ending *with Christendom being seen in a completely leavened state* ([Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV); [Revelation 3:15-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.15-17&t=NKJV)]).

Then chapter four begins once again at the same point as previously seen in chapter one — with the Church being removed from the earth into the heavens ([Revelation 4:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.1-2&t=NKJV)). But this is only to reveal something subsequent to events at the judgment seat. It is to reveal the twenty-four elders relinquishing their crowns by casting them before God’s throne ([Revelation 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.4&t=NKJV), [10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.10-11&t=NKJV)).

This event will occur *immediately following* decisions and determinations at the judgment seat, as shown by the rainbow encircling the throne of God ([Revelation 4:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.3&t=NKJV)). The rainbow in Scripture appears only *after* judgment has occurred and is past. This is the manner in which the rainbow is first seen in Scripture ([Genesis 9:11-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+9.11-17&t=NKJV)), establishing an unchangeable first-mention principle that governs its use at any subsequent point in Scripture.

The rainbow encircled throne in [Revelation 4:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.3&t=NKJV) tells you that events at the judgment seat ([Revelation 1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-3&t=NKJV)) are *past*. Then, the remainder of the chapter relates something intimately associated and connected with the preceding decisions and determinations that will have occurred at the judgment seat — the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne.

Overcoming Christians, ruling with Christ over the earth during the coming age, are to wear crowns having to do with the domain over which they rule — crowns having to do with the government of the earth. And these crowns have existed since God established the government of the earth in the beginning.

These crowns were originally worn by angels ruling under Satan in his unfallen state. However, since his rebellion against God’s supreme power and authority, these crowns have been worn by two classes of angels — those originally ruling with Satan, but refusing to go along with him in his attempted coup; and those who did go along with him, continuing to rule with him.

One group — the former, which can only be identified with the twenty-four elders (two-thirds of the original contingent of angels under Satan, represented by two sets of twelve crowned rulers) — will relinquish their crowns willingly; but the other group — the latter, seen in [Revelation 12:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.4&t=NKJV) (the other one-third of the angels under Satan, which would be represented by a third set of twelve crowned rulers) — will not relinquish their crowns willingly, resulting in their crowns having to be taken by force.

(Note that “twelve” is the number of *governmental perfection*, and “three” is the number of *divine perfection*. Three sets of twelve crowned rulers would show *divine perfection in God’s original establishment of the government of the earth* — something that has not existed since Satan’s attempted coup [since those angels ruling under him (represented by the two sets of twelve) separated themselves from the other angels ruling under him (which could only be represented by a third set of twelve)].

But a restored divinely perfect form of governmental rule over the earth will exist once again during the Messianic Era when crowns from all three sets of twelve — crowns from the complete original contingent of angels ruling with Satan over the earth — are brought together once again and given to man.)

Those relinquishing their crowns willingly will do so immediately following events at the judgment seat. For, at this time, *for the first time in man’s history*, a group from the human race will have been shown worthy to wear these crowns. And, also for the first time in man’s history, these angels can relinquish their crowns, with a view to others wearing them during the Messianic Era ([Hebrews 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.5&t=NKJV)).

Those continuing to reign with Satan though will not relinquish their crowns until the time of Christ’s return. Their crowns will be taken by force, for the time will be at hand. *For the first time in man’s history*, a group from the human race will be on hand to ascend the throne, having been shown worthy to wear these crowns.

(For a full discussion of the twenty-four elders in Revelation chapter four, in the preceding respect, refer to Chapter 4 in the author’s book, [Bible One - In the Lord's Day BOOK by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/ITLD.htm), or [In the Lord’s Day](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-four.php#In%20the%20Lord%E2%80%99s%20Day) commentary in this site.)

*2.* [*Revelation 5-18*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5-18&t=NKJV)

Revelation chapter five marks a major turning point in the closing book of Scripture. Material preceding this has to do directly with the Church, covering the complete dispensation ([Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV)), but centering on events at the end of the dispensation ([Revelation 1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-4&t=NKJV)). These first four chapters center on events that begin with *the removal of the Church* ([Revelation 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.10&t=NKJV); [4:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.1-2&t=NKJV)) and end with *the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne* ([Revelation 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.4&t=NKJV), [10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.10-11&t=NKJV)). The former will occur at the end of the dispensation, *preceding* events at the judgment seat; and the latter will occur *following* events at the judgment seat.

Then, once all these events have occurred and all matters pertaining to these events have been taken care of, attention in the book is immediately directed to *the redemption of the forfeited inheritance* ([Romans 8:20-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.20-22&t=NKJV)). Events in chapter five introduce the matter, and events in chapters six through eighteen provide numerous details concerning the matter.

Though chapter five in the book of Revelation marks a major turning point in the book, it is not a divisional point. This chapter, along with subsequent chapters, forms a continuation of events from chapters one through four. The first four chapters form the background and foundational material for that revealed in the chapters that follow, chapters that have to do not only *with the Church in the heavens but also with Israel on the earth*.

The parallel can be seen in the parable of the treasure. This parable, given after Christ had reentered the house, *must* be looked upon as having to do with *the Church* because of the stated subject matter (the kingdom of the heavens); but this parable *must* also be looked upon as having to do with *Israel* as well because Christ was back inside the house when He gave it. Then, in the course of giving the first parable after He had reentered the house, Christ provided background and foundational material. And the parable was then brought to a close through dealing with the purchase of the field — the redemption of the inheritance.

The same things are seen in the books of Ruth and Esther. The first three chapters of the book of Ruth provide the background and foundational material (paralleling [Revelation 1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-4&t=NKJV)), and Boaz’s redemptive act in chapter four has to do with his purchase of the field, his redemption of the inheritance (paralleling [Revelation 5-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5-18&t=NKJV)). Then the book of Esther points to the fact that Israel also has to be involved in the matter (paralleling [Revelation 6-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+6-18&t=NKJV) [*cf.* [Jeremiah 30:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+30.7&t=NKJV); [Daniel 9:24-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+9.24-27&t=NKJV)]).

And, as the first three chapters of the book of Ruth cannot be separated from chapter four (as the things in the first part of the parable of the treasure cannot be separated from the purchase of the field), or as that which is seen in the book of Esther cannot be separated from the whole of the matter, neither can the first four chapters of the book of Revelation be separate from the chapters that follow. Revelation chapter five simply continues from chapter four, and the Church remains just as much in view as Ruth remained in view while Boaz was performing his redemptive act in Ruth chapter four. But, also as in the book of Esther (or in the parable of the treasure), Israel now comes into view.

*A) The Search for One Found Worthy*

In the book of Ruth, Boaz was a near kinsman who was able to redeem. And he is the one seen performing the required redemptive act, paying the required price, following a nearer kinsman relinquishing his right to redeem.

Boaz performed this redemptive act *following* Ruth becoming a member of the family ([Ruth 1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1&t=NKJV)), *following* Ruth gleaning in Boaz’s field and beating out that which she had gleaned throughout the time of the harvest ([Ruth 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2&t=NKJV)), and *following* Ruth preparing herself to meet Boaz, a meeting that occurred on his threshing floor at midnight ([Ruth 3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3&t=NKJV)). These first three chapters of the book of Ruth cover the entirety of the present dispensation, paralleling the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the first four chapters of the book of Revelation.

Then, Boaz’s redemptive act finds its parallel with events beginning in [Revelation 5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5&t=NKJV), events that parallel the purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure. The search in this chapter centers around One able to redeem, One worthy to break the seals of the seven-sealed scroll seen in God’s right hand.

A “*strong angel*” proclaims in *a loud voice*, “*Who is worthy to open the book* [‘scroll’], *and to loose the seals thereof?*” And no one “i*n heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth*” was found worthy, until attention was called to “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David*” ([Revelation 5:2-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.2-5&t=NKJV)).

One seen “*in the midst*” of God’s throne (referring to the center of power, the direction from which power emanates), now described as “*a Lamb*,” rather than “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah*,” comes and takes the scroll out of the right hand of His Father. He alone was found worthy, and the reason He was found worthy is given in both His description and that which is stated in the verses immediately following.

Specific attention is called to His being “*a Lamb*,” which can only be a reference to *His past work at Calvary*. Then, after He had taken the scroll from the right hand of His Father, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before “*the Lamb* [note, *not the Lion, but the Lamb*],” having harps and vials filled with odors, “*which are the prayers of saints*” ([Revelation 5:6-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.6-8&t=NKJV)).

Then the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sang a new song, saying,

*“You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,*

*And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on [over] the earth.”* ([Revelation 5:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.9-10&t=NKJV) [9b]).

A great multitude of angels then appeared “*round about the throne and the beasts* [‘living creatures’] *and elders*,” with their number described as “*ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands*.” And this great multitude proclaimed, “*with a loud voice*”:

*“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings”* ([Revelation 5:11-12b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.11-12b&t=NKJV)).

And, following this, attention is called to “*every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them*” making a similar proclamation, in unison:

*“Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be to Him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever”* ([Revelation 5:13b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.13b&t=NKJV)).

Note the continued reference to “*the Lamb*,” rather than to “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah*.” Why is this the case? The answer is simple. It is on the basis of His work as “*the Lamb*” that He is found worthy to take and break the seals on the scroll. It is because of His work as “*the Lamb*” (past) that He is found worthy to redeem the forfeited inheritance (future).

And this is the reason that this matter is dealt with in the parable of the treasure (He sold all that He had [past]) prior to purchasing the field, prior to redeeming the inheritance (future). It is all based on His past work as “the Lamb.” Apart from this past work, there can be no future redeemed inheritance awaiting Christ and His co-heirs.

(Redemption is always seen being effected through *the Lamb*, not *through the Lion*. Christ is referred to as *the Lion* only once in the book of Revelation, but He is referred to as *the Lamb* twenty-eight times throughout the course of this book.)

*B) Redemption of the Purchased Possession*

The actual redemptive work, pertaining to the inheritance, begins with events in Revelation chapter six and carries through to events in chapter eighteen. Events in chapter nineteen have to do with another facet of this redemptive work. They have to do with the bride becoming His wife. This is the subject matter surrounding the parable of the pearl in [Matthew 13:45-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.45-46&t=NKJV) and will be dealt with in chapter 11 of this book.

Judgments seen throughout the time of the Son’s redemption of the inheritance are presented in the book of Revelation under three sets of sevens — seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. As previously shown, “three” is the number of *divine perfection*; and “seven” is a number showing *the completeness of that which is in view*. Thus, the seven seals, trumpets, and vials show *divine perfection* *within these judgments*, which would be to say that they show *divine perfection within the Son’s redemption of the inheritance*.

The search in chapter five was only for One found worthy to break *the seals*. Nothing is said in this chapter about a search for One worthy to sound the trumpets or to pour out the vials, and the reason for this is evident. The judgments seen under the trumpets and vials are contained within the scope of the judgments under the seven seals. The trumpet judgments emanate from the breaking of the seventh seal ([Revelation 8:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+8.1-2&t=NKJV)), and the vial judgments emanate from the blowing of the seventh trumpet (*cf.* [Revelation 11:15-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+11.15-19&t=NKJV); [15:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+15.1&t=NKJV)). Thus, both the trumpet and vial judgments lie under the seventh seal, placing all the judgments within the scope of the seven-sealed scroll.

Christ, loosing the seals, will bring all things in this entire redemptive process to pass. *The inheritance will be redeemed (*[*Revelation 6-18*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+6-18&t=NKJV)*), and the bride — previously singled out and revealed at the judgment seat — will then become His wife (*[*Revelation 19*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19&t=NKJV)*), all exactly in accord with the type in* [*Ruth 4*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4&t=NKJV).

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Chapter Eleven

**Parable of the Pearl**

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful 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](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.45-46&t=NKJV)).

The parable of the pearl continues the thought of redemption from the previous parable, the parable of the treasure. The “Man” in both parables is *the Lord Jesus Christ*, and this Man selling all that He had in both parables is also the same, pointing to *Christ’s past, finished work at Calvary.*

But *the purchase* that the Man made — something different in each parable — is separated in time from His work at Calvary. The purchase in each parable, seen as a redemptive act in each, *follows* His work at Calvary. That is, neither *the purchase of the field* in the previous parable nor *the purchase of the pearl* in the present parable is synonymous with or occurred at the same time as His finished work at Calvary.

Thus, in the chronological sequence of events in these two parables, Christ’s purchase of both the field and the pearl is seen occurring following His selling all that He had, *i.e., following* the events surrounding Calvary. And, within the chronological framework of all seven parables, this dual purchase is seen occurring at a time following the present dispensation. In this respect, two millenniums lie between Christ’s finished work at Calvary and the purchase seen in both of these parables (*ref.* Chapter 10, this book).

Christ’s finished work at Calvary has to do with man’s eternal salvation, and there is no present or future work of Christ in this realm. *Everything is past.*

(Christ, *following His finished work, “sat down on the right hand of God.”* And, with respect to *this finished work*, Scripture states, “*For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified*” [[Hebrews 10:12-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.12-14&t=NKJV)].

There was no chair in any part of the earthly tabernacle, for the sacrificial work of the O.T. priests was never finished [[Hebrews 10:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.11&t=NKJV)]. They could not sit down. But Christ, *relative to His sacrificial work*, could sit down in the heavens, indicating that this work was *finished. “…there remains no more sacrifice for sins”* [[Hebrews 10:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.26&t=NKJV)].

However, the blood of that sacrifice, presently on the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary, is another matter. There is a present work of the Son in connection with His blood having been placed on the mercy seat. But this work is on behalf of those who have already been saved, on the basis of His past, sacrificial work at Calvary.

The present work of the Son is that of High Priest [[Hebrews 9:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+9.11-12&t=NKJV); [10:19ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.19ff&t=NKJV)]. He is presently providing a cleansing for Christians who sin, on the basis of His Own blood on the mercy seat in the heavenly sanctuary [[1 John 1:7-2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+1.7-2.2&t=NKJV)]. And this cleansing has nothing to do with one’s eternal salvation. It is a cleansing provided for those who are already saved, with a view to the One doing the cleansing bringing “*many sons to glory*” at a future time [[Hebrews 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.10&t=NKJV)].)

There though, of necessity, is *a present work* being carried on within the Godhead pertaining to man’s eternal salvation. But this is *not a work* being carried on by the Son after any fashion. This is a work performed by the Spirit. The Spirit breathes life into the one who has no life (present), based on the finished work of the Son (past). And through this complete work — *the past work of the Son*, and *the present work of the Spirit* — man, *“dead in trespasses and sins,” passes “from death into life”* (*cf.* [Genesis 1:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.2&t=NKJV); [2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.7&t=NKJV); [Ezekiel 37:1-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+37.1-10&t=NKJV); [John 5:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.24&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV)).

The last words of Christ prior to His death at Calvary were, “*It is finished* [*lit*., ‘It has been finished’]” ([John 19:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+19.30&t=NKJV)). Christ used a perfect tense of the Greek verb *teleo* (*tetelestai*), which means to bring something “to an end,” or “to a completion.” And the perfect tense points to action completed in past time, with the results of that action existing during present time *in a finished state*.

Everything necessary to effect man’s eternal salvation had been finished at that point, and Christ used this one Greek verb (*teleo*) in a perfect tense (*tetelestai*) to call attention to this fact. Then He simply “*gave up the spirit* [*lit*., He ‘breathed out’]” ([Luke 23:46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+23.46&t=NKJV)), for there was no need for Him to continue the sufferings that He was undergoing. *Everything had been completed*, allowing the Spirit to now breathe life into the one having no life (man dead in trespasses and sins) on the basis of the Son’s finished work.

But the two purchases seen in the parables of the treasure and the pearl in [Matthew 13:44-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.44-46&t=NKJV) point to a work of the Son beyond His work on Calvary. Thus, this latter work (a work actually subsequent to His work in the heavenly sanctuary) can have nothing to do with one’s eternal salvation, for that is based on *the Son’s finished work*. Rather, this latter work (as His present work in the heavenly sanctuary) has to do with *the purpose* for one’s salvation, *the reason* one has been saved.

(In the preceding respect, there is *a past, finished work* of the Son at Calvary; and, because of this past, finished work, the Son can perform *a present work* in the heavenly sanctuary; and, because of both His past and present works, there can be *a future work* with respect to that seen in the symbolism of the purchase of both the field and the pearl in [Matthew 13:44-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.44-46&t=NKJV).)

In the first of these two parables, in verse forty-four, the treasure points to Israel. *Israel* is God’s “*peculiar treasure*” ([Exodus 19:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+19.5-6&t=NKJV); [Psalm 135:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+135.4&t=NKJV)). Then, in the second of these two parables, in verses forty-five and forty-six, *the Church* comes into view.

Pearls are found in oysters, which come from the sea. And the oyster, a species found in the water that lacks fins and scales, would be unclean to the orthodox Jew ([Leviticus 11:9-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+11.9-12&t=NKJV)). The fact that the pearl comes from a species considered unclean by the orthodox Jew, as well as the fact that the oyster bearing the pearl is found in the sea (which refers to the Gentiles), the pearl could not be another reference to Israel (continuing, in this respect, from the parable of the treasure). Rather, the pearl would have to refer to another entity within God’s dealings with man.

The identity of the pearl, unlike the identity of the treasure in the previous parable, is not really given in so many words *per se* anywhere in Scripture. But, nevertheless, the intended symbolism through the use of the pearl can easily be determined. Through comparing “scripture with scripture,” *the “pearl*” can easily be seen as a reference to *the Church* (more specifically, *the bride*).

Christ gave these parables after He had gone back inside the house, and the treasure (Israel) comes into view because God will be dealing with Israel during this time, completing His dealings with the nation during Daniel’s Seventieth Week. But Christ is not seen purchasing the treasure in the first of these two parables, as He is seen purchasing the pearl in the second. Rather, in the first parable, He is seen purchasing *the field* where the treasure was hidden.

Thus, Christ purchases *the field* in the first of these two parables; then He purchases *the pearl* in the second. And the fact that these parables are about the kingdom of the heavens — necessitating Christians (the present recipients of the offer of the kingdom) being in view in relation to the redemption of the forfeited inheritance — will alone reveal that the pearl has to be identified with the Church. All of this will become evident during the course of this study.

The parable of the treasure shows one facet of the purpose for man’s salvation, and the parable of the pearl shows the other. The purchase of the field (the world) seen in the parable of the treasure has to do with *Christ’s future work of redeeming the forfeited inheritance* (seen in [Revelation 6-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+6-18&t=NKJV)); and the purchase of the pearl is a reference to the bride (saved through His finished work at Calvary and revealed through decisions and determinations at the judgment seat [[Revelation 1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-4&t=NKJV)]) *becoming His wife* (seen in [Revelation 19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19&t=NKJV)). And all this occurs on the basis of Christ being found worthy to purchase the field and the pearl in Revelation chapter five — found worthy solely on the basis of His finished work as “*the Lamb*” ([Revelation 5:6ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.6ff&t=NKJV)).

These two parables, along with most of the book of Revelation, draw from a somewhat simple type in the Old Testament — a type set forth in chapter four of the book of Ruth ([Ruth 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4&t=NKJV)). In this chapter of Ruth, *Boaz is seen redeeming a forfeited inheritance, with Ruth becoming his wife through this redemptive act*. And this chapter relates the complete story of events seen relative to the purchases in the parables of the treasure and the pearl, along with that seen in Revelation chapters five through nineteen.

None of these things in the gospel of Matthew or in the book of Revelation can be properly understood apart from understanding this one type in the Old Testament. God provided the numerous types seen throughout the Old Testament for a reason. These types have been placed there *to help explain the antitypes.* And these types are *important beyond degree*, for they will, numerous times, *open up and cast a flood of light on the various antitypes*. And this particular type in the book of Ruth is one case in point, which can only become increasingly evident to anyone who begins to mine the treasures contained therein.

The Type — The Antitype

Events in chapter four of the book of Ruth, where Boaz’s redemptive act is seen, must be understood within context. These events occurred *after* Ruth had become a member of the family ([Ruth 1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1&t=NKJV)), *after* Ruth had gleaned in Boaz’s field and beat out that which she had gleaned throughout the time of harvest ([Ruth 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2&t=NKJV)), *after* Ruth had prepared herself for meeting Boaz (Ruth 3a), and *after* Ruth had met Boaz on his threshing floor at midnight ([Ruth 3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3&t=NKJV) [b]).

And moving these things over into the antitype, Christ’s redemptive act, seen in chapter four of Ruth (typified by Boaz’s redemptive act), will occur at exactly the same time. It will occur *after* individuals have become members of the family (have become Christians), *after* those in the family have gleaned in the field (the world) and beat out that which they have gleaned throughout the time of harvest, after those in the family have prepared themselves for meeting Christ, and *after* they have met Christ on His threshing floor at midnight (met Christ at His judgment seat, at the termination of the present dispensation).

(The “*threshing floor*” and “*midnight*” both refer to *judgment* — one to *place*, and the other to *time*. See Chapter 8 of this book.)

Thus, Christ’s finished work at Calvary is not dealt with *per se* in chapter four of Ruth. Rather, this work is simply inferred or assumed, for Boaz in the type was able to redeem, and Christ in the antitype will be able to redeem.

This matter surrounding Christ’s finished work at Calvary was dealt with back in chapter one where Ruth and Orpah found themselves members of the family *through death.* The death of their husbands had dissolved the marriage relationship itself, and they were then members of the family only *through death, the death of others*.

And Christians are members of the family through exactly the same means — *through death, the death of Another.* This is why Paul, when first going to Corinth and finding a city filled with unsaved Gentiles, limited himself to one simple message — “*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*” ([1 Corinthians 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.2&t=NKJV)). It was Christ Who had died for their sins ([1 Corinthians 15:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.3&t=NKJV); [1 Thessalonians 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+5.10&t=NKJV)), and the only way they could become members of the family was through *the death of Another.*

Thus, the message surrounding that which occurred at Calvary is seen in chapter one of the book of Ruth, not in chapter four. The redemptive act seen in chapter four — type or antitype — is a subsequent work on behalf of those who are already members of the family (though *not a work for all family members*). Ruth alone is seen in Boaz’s redemptive act. Orpah, also a member of the family through death, had turned back [*cf.* [Luke 9:62](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+9.62&t=NKJV); [17:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+17.32&t=NKJV)]). And this redemptive work is seen occurring *after* the dispensation has run its course ([Ruth 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+3&t=NKJV)), *not before* the dispensation begins ([Ruth 1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1&t=NKJV)).

*1. The Nearer Kinsman*

Different kinds of legal matters within the Jewish economy at the time events in the book of Ruth occurred were carried on at the gates of the various cities scattered throughout the land, at the entrance way into these cities. Elders of a particular city would gather at the gate of that city and await anyone in the city who might have a legal matter to carry out or to resolve.

This is the reason chapter four begins with the statement, “*Then went Boaz up to the gate*…” ([Ruth 4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.1&t=NKJV)), and this is the apparent reason that Lot was seen seated in the gate of Sodom when the two angels entered Sodom in [Genesis 19:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+19.1&t=NKJV). Lot was apparently among those at the gate (among the elders of the city) who were there to carry out or to resolve legal matters on behalf of those in the city.

Boaz, at the gate, first stopped a nearer kinsman who had come by, and he instructed the nearer kinsman to sit in a certain place ([Ruth 1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+1&t=NKJV)). Boaz then singled out ten elders who were at the gate, took them aside, and instructed them to sit in the same proximity as the nearer kinsman ([Ruth 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2&t=NKJV)).

Boaz then explained the matter at hand, directing his remarks to the nearer kinsman, but making sure that the ten elders heard as well. He needed all of them to hear that which he had to say, for they all had to act — the nearer kinsman first, then the ten elders.

The subject surrounded an inheritance belonging to Naomi, which had been forfeited. Boaz wanted to pay the required price and redeem the inheritance, but there was a nearer kinsman who had first choice to act in this capacity. And the nearer kinsman, after hearing about the forfeited inheritance as Boaz explained the matter, said that he would redeem the inheritance ([Ruth 2:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2.3-4&t=NKJV)).

However, Boaz wasn’t through explaining all that was involved. Boaz then said,

*“On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.”* ([Ruth 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2.5&t=NKJV)).

The one who redeemed the inheritance, whether the nearer kinsman or Boaz, would also, at the same time, be redeeming (purchasing) Ruth; and Ruth, through this redemptive process, would become his wife. This was something that would automatically occur within the process of redeeming the forfeited inheritance, redeeming the field. Ruth, through this redemptive process, was also being redeemed (purchased), and would automatically become the wife of the one performing this redemptive act.

Much controversy has surrounded the identity (with respect to the antitype) of the nearer kinsman. However, there should be no controversy, for the nearer kinsman was *able to redeem*. And the only One *able to redeem* in the antitype is the One Who shed His blood at Calvary ([Revelation 5:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.1ff&t=NKJV)).

And though it was the Son Who shed His blood and died at Calvary, this was, as well, *the blood of God* ([Acts 20:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+20.28&t=NKJV)). This was *the day God died*.

Thus, just as there are two (*only two* [[Ruth 2:4b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+2.4b&t=NKJV)]) who were able to redeem in the type, there must also be Two (*only Two*) Who are able to redeem in the antitype. And these Two in the antitype are the Father and His Son, though the Father has placed all redemptive work in the hands of His Son.

This will explain why the nearer kinsman couldn’t redeem the inheritance and take Ruth as his wife. The nearer kinsman already had a wife, something seen in the antitype. God already has a wife. Israel is the wife of God.

Thus, whether in the type (past) or in the antitype (future), the Nearer Kinsman wasn’t free/won’t be free to perform the redemptive act. Such an act would have “marred [‘destroyed,’ ‘ruined’]” (type), would “mar [‘destroy,’ ‘ruin’]” (antitype), the Nearer Kinsman’s own inheritance.

*2. Boaz’s Work*

There was a law in Israel concerning the nearest kinsman either refusing or forfeiting his right to redeem an inheritance. And a central feature of this law had to do with the nearest kinsman relinquishing His right through removing his shoe and handing it to the kinsman next in line to redeem (*cf.* [Deuteronomy 25:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+25.7-9&t=NKJV); [Ruth 4:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.7-8&t=NKJV)).

Thus, in keeping with this law, when the nearer kinsman couldn’t redeem Naomi’s inheritance (though, through no fault of his own), he removed his shoe and handed it to Boaz. This act showed to everyone present (in this case, Boaz and the ten elders) that he had relinquished his redemptive rights to the kinsman next in line, to Boaz.

Thus, once this had been done, Boaz was free to redeem the forfeited inheritance. And the ten elders were also free to recognize Boaz as the one now able to act in this capacity, along with recognizing the price that he was to pay as legal and binding.

And, not only was this the case, but once the complete transaction had been carried out, it would also be recognized that Ruth was Boaz’s wife. Ruth automatically became Boaz’s wife through this legal transaction carried out at the gate of the city, witnessed by ten elders, among others present.

*“And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi.*

*Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day”* ([Ruth 4:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.9-10&t=NKJV)).

This was followed by all those who were present recognizing that which had occurred, along with their pronouncing a blessing on the union that had resulted from this transaction — that of Boaz and Ruth. And the remainder of the chapter, bringing the account to a close, records the genealogy of Boaz through this union ([Ruth 4:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.11ff&t=NKJV)).

*“…Boaz begot Obed,*

*And Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David”* ([Ruth 4:21-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.21-22&t=NKJV) [21b]).

Boaz and Ruth’s great grandson was King David. And David, in his reign over Israel, typifies Christ in His coming reign over the earth as the greater Son of David (*cf.* [2 Samuel 7:12-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Samuel+7.12-14&t=NKJV); [Matthew 21:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.9&t=NKJV), [15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.15&t=NKJV); [Luke 1:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+1.27&t=NKJV), [31-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+1.31-33&t=NKJV)).

And, as David reigned over Israel in Saul’s stead, following a time of rejection, Christ will reign over the earth in Satan’s stead, following a time of rejection. And, just as those who were faithful to David during his time of rejection were elevated to positions of power with David when he ascended the throne, so will it be when Christ ascends the throne. Christ will elevate those faithful to Him during His time of rejection to positions of power with Him when He ascends the throne.

Everything about Ruth chapter four is Messianic within its scope of fulfillment. This chapter deals with the redemption of a piece of land, which would be *a field*, pointing to *the world* in the antitype; this chapter deals with Ruth becoming Boaz’s wife, which, in the antitype, would point to *the bride becoming Christ’s wife*; and this chapter ends with the mention of David, pointing to *the greater Son of David* in the antitype.

The book of Ruth ends exactly where the opening section of scripture in Genesis ends — detailing events having to do with the seventh day, the Messianic Era out ahead. The inheritance (a field), once it had been redeemed, then belonged to Boaz and Ruth (now his wife) in the type; and the inheritance (the world), once it has been redeemed, will then belong to Christ and His Bride (who will then be His wife) in the antitype. And, in the antitype, *Christ as King* (*as the greater Son of King David*), *with His wife as consort queen, will rule over the redeemed domain*.

The Bride Becomes His Wife

The future marriage of Christ and His bride will occur exactly in accord with the type set forth in Ruth chapter four, not in accord with the way things are done in the modern world, whether in the East or in the West. As Boaz purchased Ruth through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance, so will Christ purchase His bride through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance (forfeited by the first Adam in Genesis chapter three [*cf*. [Romans 8:20-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.20-22&t=NKJV)]). And, as Ruth automatically became Boaz’s wife through this redemptive process, so will it be with Christ and His bride. The bride (having previously been revealed at the judgment seat) will automatically become Christ’s wife through His redemption of the forfeited inheritance.

*1. Redemption Completed*

The redemption of the forfeited inheritance is seen occurring in Revelation chapters six through eighteen. The seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five contains the redemptive terms for the forfeited inheritance (the earth), and chapters six through eighteen reveal the seals being broken and these terms being carried out (*ref*. Chapter 10 of this book).

Then, in chapter nineteen, after the terms set forth in the seven-sealed scroll have been carried out, after the inheritance has been redeemed, the bride is seen as Christ’s wife.

*“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage* [‘marriage festivities’] *of the lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.*

*And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness* [‘righteous acts’] *of saints.*

*And he said unto me, ‘Write Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper* [or, ‘marriage banquet, feast’] *of the Lamb.’ And he said unto me, ‘These are the true sayings of God’”* ([Revelation 19:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-9&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Revelation 21:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.9&t=NKJV)).

And note the reverential awe and excitement in heaven surrounding *the redemption of the forfeited inheritance*, which allows this statement concerning Christ’s wife to be made. The twenty-four elders, along with the four living creatures, “*fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia*” ([Revelation 19:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.4&t=NKJV)). Then “*a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all you His servants, and you that fear Him, both small and great*” ([Revelation 19:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.5&t=NKJV)). Then a voice was heard, described as that of “*a great multitude… many waters… mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns*” ([Revelation 19:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.6&t=NKJV)). And even John, having seen all this, could do little more than *fall at the feet* of the one showing him these things ([Revelation 19:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.10&t=NKJV)).

Thus, the book of Revelation, up to this point in the book, centers *far more* around the Church in heaven than around Israel and the nations on the earth. This book begins with the Church removed into heaven and judged, followed by the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne ([Revelation 1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1-4&t=NKJV)). Then it continues with the search for One found worthy to loose the seals of the seven-sealed scroll — containing the redemptive terms of the forfeited inheritance ([Revelation 5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5&t=NKJV)). And, in succeeding chapters, covering Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week, the book deals with the inheritance being redeemed, with the bride then being seen as Christ’s wife at the end of this redemptive process.

The redemption of the inheritance in chapters six through eighteen has to do with *the domain* which Christ and His wife, His consort queen ([Revelation 19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19&t=NKJV)), will rule over during the succeeding Messianic Era ([Revelation 20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20&t=NKJV)). And it is in the preceding respect that events in these chapters really have to do *far more extensively* with the Church than with Israel, though the Church will be in heaven when these events unfold on earth.

(Note [Revelation 5:1-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.1-7&t=NKJV) in the light of events surrounding the nearer kinsman and Boaz in [Ruth 4:1-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4.1-8&t=NKJV). The Father, in possession of the seven-sealed scroll, will be unable to redeem the inheritance [[Revelation 5:1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.1-4&t=NKJV)]. It would mar His Own inheritance. *These redemptive rights will have to be passed on to the Son* [[Revelation 5:5-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.5-7&t=NKJV)].)

*2. The Marriage Festivities*

When Scripture deals with the “marriage” of Christ and His bride, as in [Revelation 19:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-9&t=NKJV), the reference is always to *festivities surrounding the marriage*, not to a marriage itself. There will be no marriage *per se*, as we think of marriage in our modern-day culture. There wasn’t one in the type, and there won’t be one in the antitype either. And this is an easy matter to see in both the type ([Ruth 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth+4&t=NKJV)) and the antitype ([Revelation 5-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5-19&t=NKJV)).

The wedding festivities surrounding the marriage of God’s Son will occur in heaven *following* the redemption of the forfeited inheritance, for the entire redemptive process must be carried out before the bride can become Christ’s wife. And this can be clearly seen from the context of [Revelation 19:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-9&t=NKJV), where these festivities are mentioned. In this passage, these festivities are seen occurring *immediately following* the redemption of the forfeited inheritance ([Revelation 6-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+6-18&t=NKJV)) and *immediately preceding* Christ’s return to the earth ([Revelation 19:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11ff&t=NKJV)).

Near the end of Christ’s earthly ministry, He gave a parable concerning a whole panorama of events surrounding these marriage festivities. And this parable was given within the framework of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, first to Israel, then to the Church.

*A. The Parable (*[*Matthew 22:2-14*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.2-14&t=NKJV)*).*

This parable begins with a King arranging all the various festivities for the wedding of His Son, a royal affair ([Matthew 22:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.2&t=NKJV)). Then, following these preparations, the King sent forth His servants to call those who had been invited; but they wouldn’t come ([Matthew 22:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.3&t=NKJV)).

Another call was issued, but those who had been invited still wouldn’t come. And not only did they ignore this second call, but they made light of the whole matter, even going so far as to mistreat and kill those extending the offer ([Matthew 22:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.4-6&t=NKJV)).

And when the King heard what had happened, His anger was such that He sent forth His armies to both destroy those individuals and to burn their city ([Matthew 22:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.7&t=NKJV)).

Then, the call was sent forth to an entirely different group of individuals. Some from this group heeded the invitation, but others paid little to no attention. And, in the end, two types of individuals are seen — “both bad and good.” Those spoken of as “bad” hadn’t prepared themselves to attend the wedding festivities, and they, resultantly, didn’t possess wedding garments; but those spoken of as “good” had prepared themselves, and they, resultantly, did possess wedding garments ([Matthew 22:8-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.8-10&t=NKJV)).

And the end result of this invitation is then presented. Those who had heeded the call and had made proper preparations, possessing wedding garments, were allowed to participate in the marriage festivities. But those who had disregarded or had rejected the call, not having made proper preparations, not possessing wedding garments, were not allowed to participate in the marriage festivities. They were not even allowed within. Instead, *they found themselves in the darkness outside* ([Matthew 22:11-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.11-14&t=NKJV)).

*B. That to Which the Parable Refers*

The parable of the marriage festivities in [Matthew 22:2-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.2-14&t=NKJV) covers the whole panorama of that seen in the New Testament, from Matthew chapter one through the first half of Revelation chapter nineteen. This parable covers God’s complete dealings, throughout the New Testament, with both Israel and the Church in relation to the kingdom of the heavens; and it extends up to and includes the marriage festivities in [Revelation 19:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-9&t=NKJV), preceding the Messianic Era.

The kingdom of the heavens (with a view to the wedding festivities, seen in the parable) was extended to Israel through the gospel accounts, Israel rejected the offer, and the kingdom was taken from Israel ([Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV)). Then, another entity (the Church) was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected ([Acts 2:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+2.1ff&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Matthew 16:16-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.16-19&t=NKJV)).

But, as in the parable, there was a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, something seen throughout the book of Acts. The one now in possession of the kingdom (the infant Church) reoffered it to Israel, beginning in [Acts 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+2&t=NKJV).

However, as in the parable, rejection again occurred; and the servants extending the offer were mistreated, and even killed ([Acts 4:17-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+4.17-21&t=NKJV); [5:40-41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+5.40-41&t=NKJV); [7:54-60](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+7.54-60&t=NKJV)). And, because of this, the same thing again occurred as seen in the parable. Between 66 and 70 A.D., Titus and his Roman legions were allowed by the Lord to come against the Israelites in Jerusalem after a manner that resulted in both the destruction of the people and the burning of their city.

The call was then extended only to those seen in the parable as *other than the Jewish people*, those out in “*the highways*,” *Christians*. This part of the parable is covered in the New Testament by the epistles, though some of the epistles were written during the Acts period when the offer was still open to Israel (for the offer was also open to Christians, as well, throughout this period). And, as in the parable, some Christians would heed the call, others wouldn’t.

(The epistles — all of them — center on the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Christians during the present dispensation. And the central subject of all the epistles has to do with various facets of information surrounding this offer.)

And, as in the parable, the end of the matter will witness some Christians prepared to attend these festivities and others unprepared to attend. Proper or improper preparation is given in both [Matthew 22:10-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.10-12&t=NKJV) and [Revelation 19:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-8&t=NKJV). It has to do with possession or non-possession of *a wedding garment.*

Those properly dressed will be allowed to participate in the festivities, looking forward to that which lies ahead — the Son’s coming reign over the earth, with His consort queen. But those improperly dressed will be denied entrance into these festivities and left *in the darkness outside*, with *nothing* to look forward to during the Son’s coming reign, for they will occupy *no place in His kingdom*. They will occupy *no place among those forming the Son’s wife, His consort queen.*

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Chapter Twelve

**Parable of the Net**

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,*

*which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.*

*So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,*

*and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.* ([Matthew 13:47-50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.47-50&t=NKJV)).

The last of the seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, the parable of the net, begins by briefly mentioning events occurring throughout the present dispensation ([Matthew 13:47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.47&t=NKJV)); but the parable then immediately moves to and centers around events occurring at the end of the age, after the dispensation has run its course ([Matthew 13:48-50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.48-50&t=NKJV)).

The “*net, that was cast into the sea*” ([Matthew 13:47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.47&t=NKJV)) is a reference *to God’s work among the Gentiles throughout the present dispensation.* The “sea” refers to *the Gentiles*, and the “net” cast into the sea, drawing from the sea (cast out among the Gentiles, drawing from the Gentiles) refers *to God working among and removing from the Gentiles “a people for his name”* ([Acts 15:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+15.14&t=NKJV)).

After Israel had rejected the proffered kingdom of the heavens, another nation, separate from Israel, was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected ([Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:9-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-11&t=NKJV)). A nation, which was neither Jewish nor Gentile, was called into existence to be accorded the opportunity to bring forth fruit where Israel had failed. And this new nation, comprising a new creation “*in Christ*,” was to be taken from both of the prior two creations — from both the Jews and the Gentiles — though mainly from the Gentiles.

God set aside an entire dispensation, lasting two days, 2,000 years, during which time He would remove *from the Gentiles “a people for His name,”* though “*a remnant according to the election of grace* [believing Jews]” was to be included as well ([Romans 11:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.5&t=NKJV)). And, according to the parable of the net, the removal of these people had to do with *the kingdom of the heavens*.

This removal is likened to a net that was cast out among the Gentile nations, and those removed from the Gentiles via the net (becoming part of *the new creation “in Christ”*) are seen being removed *for* *a purpose*. Their removal is with a view *to the kingdom of the heavens*. Their removal is with a view *to being recipients of the proffered kingdom, the kingdom previously rejected by and taken from Israel.*

Thus, the removal from the sea itself is not the central subject of the parable. Rather, this information was given in order to introduce the central subject — *the purpose for their removal from the sea.*

All three of the parables that Christ gave after He had reentered the house draw from previous events — events occurring either *before or during* the present dispensation — but these parables center around events occurring after the dispensation has run its course. These parables have to do centrally with events occurring at the very end of the age, but within the age itself (the age lasts at least an additional seven years beyond the end of the dispensation, completing Daniel’s Seventieth Week). And events in the last parable (parable of the net) chronologically follow events in the preceding two parables (parables of the treasure and pearl).

Events in all three of these closing parables are seen in a chronology of this nature. Each of these parables begins by referring to events in past time. But the central subject of each parable is not about these past events. Rather, the central subject of each parable rests on these past events and has to do with *future events*, events occurring after the dispensation has run its course.

All three of these parables have to do with *the kingdom of the heavens*, and all three have to do with events that move toward the same revealed goal — *the end of the age and the beginning of the next age, the end of Man’s Day and the beginning of the Lord’s Day.*

The Separation

Those removed from the sea during the present dispensation ([Matthew 13:47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.47&t=NKJV)) are seen being dealt with at the end of the age after a revealed fashion. They are seen being separated into two main categories and then dealt with according to the category in which they had previously been placed ([Matthew 13:48ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.48ff&t=NKJV)).

Once those removed from the sea via the net have been brought “to shore,” the picture in the parable is that of separating “the good” from “the bad.” And once separated, the good are gathered into vessels, but the bad are cast away ([Matthew 13:48](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.48&t=NKJV)). Then the next verse reveals how this will be accomplished — carried out by angels ([Matthew 13:49](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.49&t=NKJV)). Exactly the same picture was presented earlier in this sequence of parables, at the end of the second parable, the parable of the wheat and tares. A separation occurred, the tares were bound in bundles to be burned, but the wheat was gathered into the Master’s barn ([Matthew 13:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.30&t=NKJV)).

And after the Lord had gone back inside the house, prior to giving the last three parables, He gave the explanation to that which had occurred at the close of the parable of the wheat and tares:

*“Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.*

*The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness”* ([Matthew 13:40-41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.40-41&t=NKJV)).

The preceding two verses parallel the two verses under discussion in the parable of the net ([Matthew 13:48-49](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.48-49&t=NKJV)). These verses reveal a separation of “*the wheat*” from “*the tares*,” a separation of “the good” from “the bad.” And this separation will occur at “*the end of this age*.”

*1. Subject of the Parables*

Bear in mind that the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen — all seven of them — have to do with *the kingdom of the heavens*. They have nothing to do with salvation by grace through faith (though salvation, with respect to eternal verities, would be alluded to several places in these parables [*e.g*., in the last parable through a removal from the sea]).

Salvation by grace through faith is simply not the subject of these parables. And when these parables deal with a separation (as seen in the second and seventh parables), along with the results of this separation, everything stated must be taken at face value and related to the subject at hand.

And whether or not this lines up with man’s ideologies or his doctrinal statements in the realm of eschatology (it invariably doesn’t) is of no moment whatsoever. An omniscient God, Who sees and knows the end as well as He sees and knows the beginning, has spoken. He has established these parables, structured them a certain way, and placed them in a particular order and place in His Word. And that which God has established, along with the manner in which He has established it, is *the end of the matter.*

In the closing parable, God Himself has revealed to man *the end* of all that which had been dealt with in the preceding six parables. There will first be a separation of those taken from the sea. This separation will occur at the end of the age (which will *follow* events surrounding the judgment seat and the subsequent marriage festivities of the Lamb), it will be carried out by angels, and it will occur in relation to entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom. Thus, the subject of all seven parables centers on *the proffered kingdom of the heavens*. This subject is given at the beginning of each parable, something which cannot possibly be missed. And this subject *must be kept in view* throughout these parables; else the parables cannot be properly understood.

*2. Those Being Dealt with in the Parables*

Those being dealt with throughout the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, as seen in previous studies, are *the saved alone*. Scripture doesn’t deal with the unsaved in relation to the message that pervades these parables — the kingdom of the heavens. The unsaved are *always* dealt with only in relation to the message of salvation by grace through faith, never in relation to the message of the kingdom. The message of the kingdom is for the saved alone, something that can be aptly illustrated from any of the seven parables.

But note the closing parable in this respect. Those dealt with in this parable are seen being removed from the sea via a net that had been cast out into the sea. That is, within the symbolism used, the parable pictures individuals being removed from the Gentiles; and their removal is for *a revealed purpose* — a purpose that, for part of them, would not be realized.

They were removed from the sea strictly *on the basis* of their having been in the net. And, once removed, they were no longer associated with the sea. That is to say, once removed, they were no longer associated with the Gentiles.

Thus, their removal from the sea is a metaphorical way of saying that they had been removed from the Gentiles. And, if removed from the Gentiles, there’s only one group with which they could possibly have then been associated — *the “one new man”* ([Ephesians 2:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.15&t=NKJV)). They had become part of *the new creation “in Christ”* ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.17&t=NKJV)).

A person is a Jew, a Gentile, or a Christian. And any terminology that fails to clearly distinguish between these three creations — *e.g.*, “Jewish Christian,” “Gentile Christian,” “professor” (as opposed to “possessor”) — emanates from man, not from the Scriptures. Scripture sees the matter as completely black or white, never as a gray area lying between any two of the three. A person is either *a new creation “in Christ,”* or he is not. And, if he is not, then he has to be either *a Jew* or *a Gentile.*

The matter is that simple. And, if this were understood, along with understanding that all the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen are about the kingdom of the heavens, there would be far less confusion when interpreting these parables.

(Though Scripture makes a clear distinction between Jew, Gentile, and Christian, Scripture, quite often, refers to individuals removed from the Gentiles [Christians] through the use of the term, “Gentiles” [*e.g*., [Acts 28:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+28.28&t=NKJV); [Romans 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+1.13&t=NKJV); [Galatians 1:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+1.16&t=NKJV); [2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+2.2&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 3:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.6&t=NKJV), [8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.8&t=NKJV)]. But Scripture *never* refers to these individuals as “Gentile Christians,” for Scripture *never* brings two of the three creations together in this manner. And when the expression “Gentiles” is used, the context is *always* very clear that those being referenced are Christians, not Gentiles *per se*.)

And, in keeping with the preceding, Scripture never pictures a mixture of saved and unsaved individuals through the use of a metaphor such as that seen in the parable of the net — individuals removed from the sea, removed from the Gentiles. The picture explains itself, if allowed to so do.

All in the net had been removed from the sea, and all those who had been removed from the sea were no longer associated with that which the sea represented. They were no longer associated with the Gentiles. Rather, they were, following their removal, associated with an entirely separate and distinct creation — *a new creation, “in Christ.”*

And their removal, along with everything that followed, was with a view to *the kingdom of the heavens*. Eternal verities are not seen in the matter at all. They can’t be seen. Such would be an impossibility. The matter surrounding their eternal destiny was settled at the time they were removed from the sea. And, had it not been settled, there could have been no removal. They could only have remained in the sea.

The Furnace

Only one class of individuals — though separated into two divisions — could possibly be in view through the use of the expressions, “good” and “bad,” or “*just*” and “*wicked*” ([Matthew 13:48-49](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.48-49&t=NKJV)). *All had been removed from the sea; all had been removed from the Gentiles*. Thus, no room could possibly exist for an inclusion of unsaved individuals in this parable. By the very nature of the subject matter (the kingdom of the heavens) and those being dealt with in this parable (those removed from the sea), *only the saved could possibly be in view.*

And, viewing that to which this parable refers, these saved individuals are seen being dealt with on the basis of prior decisions and determinations — decisions and determinations having previously been made at the judgment seat. And these decisions and determinations, emanating from the judgment seat, will have been based on prior faithfulness to one’s calling (judgment will actually be on the basis of “works,” but the works being judged will have resulted from *faithfulness*, or *unfaithfulness* [[1 Corinthians 3:12-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.12-15&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Hebrews 11:17-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.17-19&t=NKJV), [31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.31&t=NKJV); [James 2:21-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.21-25&t=NKJV)]).

But seeing the saved alone being dealt with in this parable presents major problems for numerous Christians, for some of the saved are seen being cast into “*the furnace of fire*.” And these same Christians, who would never consider thinking along the lines of Christians being cast into such a place, are invariably forced into an erroneous position, resulting in an erroneous interpretation. They are forced into the position of seeing saved and unsaved individuals (“good” and “bad”) being dealt with in the parable, along with seeing these individuals being dealt with in relation to eternal life or eternal damnation.

The preceding though is simply not what Scripture has to say about the matter. Scripture is clear that the parable deals with *the saved alone*, and these saved individuals are dealt with in relation to *the coming kingdom*. And the fact that those described as “bad” and “wicked” are cast into “*the furnace of fire*” must be understood within this framework. It must be understood within the framework of both *those* who are being dealt with and *that* which is being dealt with — *Christians, and the kingdom*.

Thus, to deal with this parable on the basis of eternal verities, with the unsaved being cast into the lake of fire, is *completely outside the scope of the subject matter seen in any of these seven parables*. Such a teaching, derived from these parables, is both textually and contextually wrong. Any thought of dealing with any of these parables after this fashion, from a Scriptural standpoint, *could not even be open for discussion.*

Dealing with the text after the correct fashion, *only one possible conclusion* can be reached. At the end of the age a segment of the saved, a segment of Christians, are going to be cast into what is called in this parable, “*the furnace of fire*.” And that is exactly what Christ had previously stated within His explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares:

*“And will cast them* [*i.e.*, the offensive and lawless ones, the tares in this parable, those doing the works of Satan] *into the furnace of fire: there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth”* ([Matthew 13:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV)).

This is *a particular furnace of fire* — “*the furnace of fire*.” The expression is articular in the Greek text in both usages in Matthew chapter thirteen ([Matthew 13:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV), [50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.50&t=NKJV)).

So, exactly what is being dealt with through this reference to “*the furnace of fire*”? Is this merely metaphorical language describing something other than that which is pictured? Or, should the expression be looked upon in a more literal sense, referring to something very much like that which is pictured?

Actually, when a person begins studying “Gehenna,” “outer darkness [*lit.*, ‘the outer darkness’]” and “the lake of fire” he will find exactly the same teaching as seen in these two parables. That which is seen in [Matthew 13:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV), [50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.50&t=NKJV) is not something peculiar to the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the net. Rather, it is merely part of the same teaching seen so many places elsewhere in the New Testament (*cf.* [John 15:1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+15.1-6&t=NKJV); [2 Thessalonians 1:5-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+1.5-10&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 6:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.7-9&t=NKJV); [10:26-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.26-31&t=NKJV); [Jude 1:20-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.20-23&t=NKJV)).

*1. Gehenna, Outer Darkness*

*Gehenna* is an Anglicized Greek word (*Geenna* in the Gk. text) used twelve times in the New Testament. The word appears eleven times in the three synoptic gospels ([Matthew 5:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.22&t=NKJV), [29-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.29-30&t=NKJV); [10:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.28&t=NKJV); [18:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+18.9&t=NKJV); [23:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.15&t=NKJV), [33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.33&t=NKJV); [Mark 9:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+9.43&t=NKJV), [45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+9.45&t=NKJV), [47](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+9.47&t=NKJV); [Luke 12:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+12.5&t=NKJV)) and once in the epistle of [James 3:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+3.6&t=NKJV).

Christ alone used the word in the gospel accounts. And He always used the word in contexts having to do with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens.

Then, in James, the word appears in a text having to do with the tongue — “…*it* [the tongue] *is set on fire of hell* [‘*Gehenna*’].” And, though the word is used in a somewhat different sense in James, it appears within a context having to do with the saving of the soul and the coming kingdom (*cf.* [James 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV), [21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV); [2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.5&t=NKJV), [14-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14-26&t=NKJV); [5:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+5.7-8&t=NKJV), [19-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+5.19-20&t=NKJV)).

*Gehenna* is the Greek word for *Hinnom* from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. *Hinnom* was the name given to a valley south of Jerusalem during Joshua’s day, named for the son of a person whose name was “Hinnom” ([Joshua 15:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+15.8&t=NKJV); [18:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+18.16&t=NKJV)). And, though this valley was used at times as a place where human sacrifices were offered during Old Testament days ([2 Kings 23:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Kings+23.10&t=NKJV); [Jeremiah 7:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+7.31&t=NKJV)), the valley was no more than the place where the refuse from Jerusalem was discarded at the time Christ was on earth.

(The word, *Hinnom*, has simply been transliterated in the English text of the Old Testament; but the same thing has not been done with *Gehenna* [Gk. for *Hinnom*] in the English text of the New Testament. Rather, in most versions, *Gehenna* has been translated “*hell*” each of the twelve times that it appears in the New Testament, resulting in confusion.)

Thus, *Gehenna*, at the time Christ and James used the word, was simply the name of the place where those in Jerusalem discarded their refuse. Even dead bodies (criminals, etc.) were, at times, cast into this place; and the fires burned continuously.

In this respect, Christ was doing no more than referencing a place (*not* “Hell”) where the refuse from the city of Jerusalem was discarded. And James was associating the misuse of the tongue with this same place.

Remaining within the gospel accounts, being cast into *Gehenna* always carries an identical association and meaning. Textually, in the gospels, being cast into *Gehenna* is always associated with *separation from regality* within Christ’s kingdom. It matters not which of the eleven references a person checks, he will find exactly the same thing each time. *Gehenna* has nothing to do with the unsaved and eternal verities. Rather, it has to do solely with *the saved in relation to the coming kingdom.*

And “*outer darkness*” is used exactly the same way in the three instances in which the expression appears, all in the gospel of [Matthew 8:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.12&t=NKJV); [22:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV); [25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV). The use of outer darkness is simply another way in which the Lord dealt with the same issue.

Viewing the matter from one perspective, those denied positions with Christ in His kingdom will find themselves in the place where the refuse from the city was discarded, *outside the city*. Viewing the matter from the other perspective, those denied positions with Christ in His kingdom will find themselves in a place separated from the One Who said, “*I am the light of the world*” ([John 8:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+8.12&t=NKJV)). With respect to occupying a position with Christ in His kingdom, they will find themselves in a place *outside*, a place associated with *darkness* instead of light — *the darkness outside*.

The use of *Gehenna* and *outer darkness* (the outer darkness) are simply two metaphorical ways that Christ used to call attention to the same thing. And these expressions are used in texts having to do solely with *the saved and the kingdom.*

*2. The Lake of Fire*

The description of “*the lake that burns with fire and brimstone*” in [Revelation 21:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.8&t=NKJV) is another way in which Scripture deals with the same thing again. “*The lake of fire*” is not only the place where unsaved man will spend eternity but also the place where Christians who do not overcome (the world, the flesh, and the Devil) during the present dispensation will find themselves during the coming dispensation. And, understanding this from the book of Revelation, will allow one to understand how saved people could be cast into “*the furnace of fire*” in [Matthew 13:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV), [50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.50&t=NKJV).

Revelation chapters two and three record seven short epistles to seven churches, and there is an overcomer’s promise at the end of each epistle. “*To him that overcometh*…” “*He that overcometh*…” ([Revelation 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.7&t=NKJV), [11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV), [17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.17&t=NKJV), [26-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-28&t=NKJV); [3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV), [21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)).

These epistles are addressed to *saved individuals* (those in a position to overcome); and the Lord has set rewards, compensations, prizes before these individuals as *an incentive, encouragement* for them to run the present race of the faith in a manner that will allow them to overcome rather than being overcome.

And each of the overcomer’s promises is *millennial* in its scope of fulfillment. That realized through overcoming, or not overcoming — as the case may be — will be realized during the 1,000-year Messianic Era alone.

The fact that these are *millennial* in their scope of fulfillment can be illustrated quite easily. Note the promises to two of the seven churches in [Revelation 2:26-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-27&t=NKJV); [3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV). No such scene as presented in these verses will exist beyond the millennium.

Christ and His co-heirs, beyond the millennium, will no longer rule over the nations, as this rule is pictured in [Revelation 2:26-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-27&t=NKJV). Rather, the Gentiles comprising these nations will be brought into positions of rulership themselves with Christ and His co-heirs, as this rule extends beyond the earth, out into the universe itself ([Revelation 22:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.2&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.5&t=NKJV)). And the Son, beyond the millennium, will no longer sit on His Own throne, as seen in [Revelation 3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV). Rather, He will sit on “*the throne of God and of the Lamb*,” from where universal rule will emanate ([Revelation 22:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.1&t=NKJV), [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.3&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.5&t=NKJV)).

It’s the overcomer’s promise to the church in Smyrna that has to do with the lake of fire, something that can be *only millennial* within its scope of fulfillment. That is, the condition alluded to for the non-overcomer in this promise will exist for *the duration of the Messianic Era*, *not* throughout the eternal ages beyond.

Scripture deals with *millennial rewards and/or loss*, never with eternal rewards and/or loss. This should be easy enough for anyone to understand, for if rewards are eternal, so is loss of rewards. And loss of rewards involves an association with *death* ([Romans 8:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.13&t=NKJV)), something that Scripture clearly reveals will be done away with at the beginning of the eternal ages beyond the millennium ([1 Corinthians 15:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.26&t=NKJV); [Revelation 21:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.4&t=NKJV)).

The overcomer’s promise to those Christians comprising the Church in Smyrna reads,

*“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”* ([Revelation 2:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Revelation 20:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.6&t=NKJV)).

There is a clear implication in this promise that those who do not overcome *will be hurt* of the second death. And any attempt to take this promise and make it mean something other than what it clearly states serves only to destroy the promise, something that the Lord sounded a solemn warning against ([Revelation 22:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.18-19&t=NKJV)). The promise that those who do overcome will not be hurt of the second death would be meaningless unless this promise is taken at face value and allowed to mean *exactly what it says*.

“*The second death*” in the book of Revelation is associated with *the lake of fire* ([Revelation 21:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.8&t=NKJV)). And those who do not overcome ([Revelation 21:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.7&t=NKJV)) are going to have their part in this lake of fire ([Revelation 21:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.8&t=NKJV)). That is, *they will be hurt of the second death by having a part in the lake of fire.*

Revelation chapter twenty one moves beyond the millennium into the eternal ages, and the first six verses provide the complete story concerning conditions as these ages begin. Note the words, “*It is done*,” in the first part of [Revelation 21:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.6&t=NKJV). This is the translation of a verb in the perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating that the matter has been brought to completion and presently exists in that state.

Then, beginning with the latter part of verse six and continuing through verse eight, overcoming and/or being overcome are again, for the last time, dealt with in this book. And this takes a person back to the same place seen in [Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV).

Then, the remainder of the book is simply a commentary for the eight verses that open and begin this section. First, a commentary is provided for the first part of this opening section. [Revelation 21:9-22:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.9-22.5&t=NKJV) forms a commentary for this part of the section ([Revelation 21:1-6a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.1-6a&t=NKJV)), which has to do with conditions beyond the millennium. Note how this commentary in chapter twenty-two closes: “…*and they shall reign forever and ever* [throughout the endless ages]” ([Revelation 22:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.5&t=NKJV)). Then, the remainder of chapter twenty-two ([Revelation 22:6ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.6ff&t=NKJV)) forms a commentary for the second part of this opening section, which has to do with conditions before and during the millennium ([Revelation 21:6-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.6-8&t=NKJV) [6b]).

And this will explain why, *outside the gates of Jerusalem during the Messianic Era*, one will be able to find “. . . *dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie*.” ([Revelation 22:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.15&t=NKJV)). This information is given to shed light on and provide additional detail for verses in the preceding chapter ([Revelation 22:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.7-8&t=NKJV)), and the information in these verses in the preceding chapter was given to shed light on the previous overcomer’s promises, particularly the one to the church in Smyrna dealing with “*the second death*” ([Revelation 2:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV)).

To distinguish between millennial and eternal conditions in this respect, note that those *outside the gates* during the eternal ages will be the Gentile nations, as the New Jerusalem rests on the new earth ([Revelation 21:24-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.24-27&t=NKJV)); but those *outside the gates* during the preceding Messianic Era, with the New Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth, will be the non-overcomers ([Revelation 22:14-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.14-15&t=NKJV)). And the place that they will occupy is described at least four different ways in Scripture — through the use of *Gehenna, the outer darkness, the furnace of fire, and the lake of fire*.

The picture surrounding an association between *Gehenna* and *the lake of fire* appears unmistakable. As *Gehenna* was the place of refuse for the earthly city of Jerusalem, *the lake of fire* will be the place of refuse for the heavenly city of Jerusalem. And as *Gehenna* was on the opposite side of the city from that side where God dwelled (*south*, as opposed to *north* [*cf.* [Leviticus 1:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+1.11&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 14:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.13&t=NKJV)]), thus will it be with the counterpart to *Gehenna* in the heavenly Jerusalem. The lake of fire will be located in a place completely apart from Christ and His rule. And those “*hurt by the second death*” during the Messianic Era will occupy this place for 1,000 years.

(Why would non-overcoming Christians have a part in the lake of fire? The answer is the same as the reason why the unsaved will subsequently be cast into the lake of fire.

The lake of fire was not prepared for man. Rather, it was prepared “*for the Devil and his angels*” [[Matthew 25:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.41&t=NKJV)]. It was prepared for those who had rejected God’s supreme power and authority, as Satan sought to exalt his throne [[Isaiah 14:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.13-14&t=NKJV)]. Thus, in this respect, the lake of fire is connected with *regality*.

And man, created to replace Satan and his angels, finds his connection with the lake of fire on exactly the same basis. *Saved man*, ignoring the very reason for his salvation [which is *regal*], will have his part in the lake of fire [which will be millennial]. And *unsaved man*, ignoring salvation and the reason for man’s creation [which, again, is *regal*], will have his part in the lake of fire as well [which will be eternal].)

Now, whether all of the preceding does or doesn’t line up with general thought within Christendom about life during the coming Messianic Era *is of no moment whatsoever.* Scripture plainly declares that part of those taken from the sea in the parable of the net — part of the saved — will be cast into “*the furnace of fire*,” and in this place “*there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*” ([Matthew 13:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV), [50](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.50&t=NKJV)). And that’s where the matter will be left.

The Kingdom

For the overcomers though — something not really dealt with in the parable of the net — conditions during the millennium will be entirely different. The promise to overcomers is that *they will not be hurt of the second death, they will be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ, and they will rule as co-heirs with Christ over the nations* ([Revelation 2:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11&t=NKJV), [26-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-28&t=NKJV); [3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)).

Christ and His co-heirs (who will form His wife, His consort queen) will rule over the redeemed inheritance, and this rule will last for 1,000 years. It will last until Christ and His co-heirs have *put down “all rule and all authority and power.”* It will last until *all enemies* (which includes *death*) have been put “*under his feet*” ([1 Corinthians 15:24-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.24-28&t=NKJV)).

It is at this time that [Matthew 13:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.43&t=NKJV) will be fulfilled:

*“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”*

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Chapter Thirteen

**Instruction in the Kingdom**

*Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."* ([Matthew 13:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.52&t=NKJV)).

The Word of the Kingdom — the message surrounding the kingdom of the heavens ([Matthew 13:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.11&t=NKJV), [19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.19&t=NKJV), [24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24&t=NKJV)) — is *the central message of the New Testament*. Whether studying the gospels, the book of Acts, the epistles, or the book of Revelation, an individual will be studying Scriptures dealing *centrally with a message pertaining to the kingdom*.

The person understanding this message will possess a proper foundation to build upon as he studies different parts of the New Testament. However, if this message is not understood, the converse of the preceding will be true. That person will possess an improper foundation to build upon; and his studies throughout any part of the New Testament will, accordingly, be adversely affected.

This is why an individual instructed in the Word of the Kingdom can be likened to the householder in the text. Not only will he be able to go to the Scriptures and *bring forth things that are “old”* (things he has already seen and understood) but he will also be able, from the things that are “old,” to begin seeing and bringing forth *things that are “new”* as well (things he has not previously seen and understood).

And, according to the text, he will be able to do this because he has been “*instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens*.” He now possesses *a key* to the Scriptures, a key that will open numerous passages of Scripture to his understanding, passages that otherwise would have remained closed.

Such an individual, as he studies and learns new things about the Word of the Kingdom, will progressively find himself being able to, more and more, take the “old” and see and understand that which is “new.” And the more that person comes into an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom, the more he will see Scripture opening up to him in this fashion. The latter, in this respect, is inseparably linked to and dependent on the former.

This is what an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom will do for an individual in his quest for a proper knowledge of Scripture. And, though this has been the experience and testimony of numerous Christians, this is not simply what they might have to say about the matter. Rather, *this is what the unchangeable Word of God has to say about the matter.*

The Word of God clearly reveals that a person instructed in the Word of the Kingdom can go to the Scriptures and bring forth out of this storehouse of unlimited treasures “*things new and old.*” But by the same token, apart from an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom, though an individual may be able to see and understand certain truths, the same situation referred to in [Matthew 13:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.52&t=NKJV) simply doesn’t exist.

The preceding will explain why this whole realm of teaching lays center-stage in Satan’s attack against the Word during the present dispensation. An understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is *the key* to a proper understanding of Scripture as it relates to Christians, and Satan knows this. He knows that if he can corrupt or destroy that which will open the door to a proper understanding of the numerous other scriptures bearing on the subject, he can best accomplish the purpose for his present work among Christians.

Satan’s efforts toward this end are something easily seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. These four parables present a chronology of Satan’s work as he seeks to subvert the Word of the Kingdom, and this chronology covers the progressive results of his work in this respect throughout the entire dispensation.

Satan’s attack in the first parable, the parable of the Sower ([Matthew 13:3-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.3-8&t=NKJV), [18-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.18-23&t=NKJV)), was seen to be against *those hearing the Word of the Kingdom*. He sought to stop the matter at that point, preventing individuals from understanding this message and subsequently bringing forth fruit. Four types of individuals are seen responding to the message, with Satan being successful in his attack against three of the four. Those seen in the first three of the four categories fell away and bore no fruit. But Satan’s attack against those in the fourth category proved to be unsuccessful. They heard the Word, received and understood the Word, overcame Satan’s attack, and bore fruit.

Then, the next parable, the parable of the wheat and tares ([Matthew 13:24-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.24-30&t=NKJV), [36-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.36-43&t=NKJV)), centers on Satan’s attack against *the ones bearing fruit from the previous parable*. Satan placed those with a false message (false teachers) in the midst of those bearing fruit, seeking to subvert the message and stop that which was occurring. That is to say, he sought to corrupt the true message through the introduction of a false message. And this was done with a view to stopping that which had resulted from a proclamation of the true message. This was done with a view to stopping those Christians who were bearing fruit from doing so.

Then the next parable, the parable of the mustard seed ([Matthew 13:31-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.31-32&t=NKJV)), shows *that which happened in Christendom over the course of time during the dispensation because of this false message*. The mustard seed germinated and took a normal growth for awhile. But then something happened, which caused it to take an abnormal growth and eventually become *a tree*. And after this abnormal growth had occurred — after the mustard bush had become a tree, something that it wasn’t supposed to become at all — the birds of the air (ministers of Satan, seen in the first parable [[Matthew 13:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.4&t=NKJV)]) found a lodging place therein.

And the fourth parable, the parable of the leaven ([Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV)), *completes the picture*. The false message introduced near the beginning of the dispensation is likened to leaven placed in three measures of meal (“Three” is the number of *divine perfection*, and “meal” is that which is used to make *bread*. Leaven [a corrupting substance] was placed in the meal [resulting in corruption in the bread]). And this leaven would continue to work (this false message would continue to permeate and corrupt the true message) until *the whole* had been leavened (until the whole had been corrupted).

This is the revealed direction that Christendom would take relative to the true message concerning the kingdom following the introduction of the leaven, following the introduction of a false message concerning the kingdom.

These four parables together show *a history of Christendom throughout the dispensation in relation to the Word of the Kingdom*. This message — *the central message of the New Testament* — was taught universally throughout the churches during the first century. But the introduction of a false message resulted in changes. Christendom itself took an abnormal growth; and this abnormal growth was such that the false teachers eventually found themselves welcomed within that which they, through their false message, had corrupted.

Corruption though didn’t stop at this point. The working of the leaven continued, and it would continue until this false message had permeated all of Christendom. This corrupting process would continue, according to the text, *“till the whole” had been leavened.*

And, viewing the matter solely from the standpoint of that which can be seen in the world today, what has been the end result of the working of the leaven? As the dispensation draws to a close, where does the Church find itself today?

The answers are easy to ascertain. All one has to do in order to see and understand that which has happened is to go into almost any church of the land (fundamental and liberal alike) and listen for any mention of things having to do with the Word of the Kingdom. *A person will listen in vain*. Because of the working of a leavening process that is in its final stages, the true biblical message surrounding Christians and the coming kingdom is practically nonexistent throughout Christendom today.

This leavening process recognizes no bounds or barriers. Fundamental Christendom finds itself just as permeated with the leaven, as it relates to the Word of the Kingdom, as does liberal Christendom. From the theology schools to the pulpits of churches to the pews in these churches, the whole of Christendom finds itself *in exactly the same state* insofar as that revealed throughout the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen is concerned.

Many of the fundamentalists, not understanding the true nature of the leavening process, look upon themselves as having escaped this corruption. But such is not the case at all. Insofar as any understanding and proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom is concerned, the fundamental groups find themselves in exactly the same state as the liberal groups. They find themselves *permeated through and through with exactly the same corrupting leaven*. There is absolutely no difference between the two groups in this respect. Neither understands nor proclaims this message.

Seminaries — fundamental and liberal alike — are training students in everything but the one message that will open the Scriptures to their understanding. And these same seminaries are turning out graduates who are filling the pulpits of churches with a message completely void of any reference to the Word of the Kingdom. These seminary graduates don’t know the truth of the matter, and, as a result, *their entire ministries are negatively affected*. The various flocks that the Lord has entrusted to their care are not being properly fed; and, in reality, for the most part, *Christians under their ministries are slowly starving to death.*

Christians throughout the churches today are simply not hearing the one message, above all other messages, which they should be hearing. And the reason is given in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen. The working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time has produced a corruption extending throughout Christendom that has all but destroyed the message surrounding the Word of the Kingdom. And, as a result of this corruption, the Bible, for the most part, remains *a closed book for the vast majority of Christians*.

The preceding is why a person, untrained in the theology schools of the land, but understanding the Word of the Kingdom, often has a better grasp of the whole of Scripture than many of those who are teaching in the theology schools. The person having an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom possesses *a key* to Scripture that a person without this understanding does not possess. *He can go to the Scriptures and bring forth things both “new and old”*; but the same thing cannot be said for those who lack this understanding.

Why?

Why will instruction in the Word of the Kingdom open the Scriptures to a person’s understanding like nothing else? Why is an understanding of this message so vital if a person is to possess a correct and proper grasp of Scripture? The answer could be looked upon in a twofold respect.

*First*, an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is the only thing that will provide the true Biblical picture surrounding *the purpose* for the Christian life. Why did God bring *the new creation “in Christ”* into existence? Why is God taking an entire dispensation to do a work among the Gentiles? Why is the Holy Spirit presently in the world performing a work among Christians?

And *second*, an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is the only thing that will provide the true biblical picture surrounding *direction* for the Christian life. What is the goal toward which everything pertaining to *the new creation “in Christ”* moves? What is the spiritual warfare about? What is the race of the faith about? What will be the end result of victory or defeat as it pertains to the warfare or the race?

An understanding of the Word of the Kingdom will answer questions surrounding the Christian life *unlike anything else in the Word of God*. This is the *only thing* that will present the complete biblical picture in its correct fashion. *Only out of this teaching* can all the issues surrounding the Christian life be properly addressed, and *only out of this teaching* can one find the true motivation for Godly Christian living.

But, if all the preceding is true — and it is — then why is this message so fought against in Christian circles today? It would appear that *acceptance* rather than rejection would always be the norm.

Such though is not the case at all. Rather, with rare exceptions, *rejection* is invariably the norm. And the reason is seen in the working of the leaven in [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV). The negative attitude of Christians toward the Word of the Kingdom is simply the end result of a work of Satan that has been going on for almost 2,000 years.

*1. Purpose of…*

The overall picture of the Word of the Kingdom in the New Testament begins with the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel in the gospel accounts. Israel spurned this offer, the offer was taken from Israel, and an entirely new entity was then brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected ([Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV)).

*The one new man, the new creation “in Christ”* ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.17&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.15&t=NKJV)) was brought into existence to bring forth fruit where Israel had failed. And, since Israel had spurned the offer, God, in relation to this *one new man*, turned to the Gentiles. God set aside an entire dispensation, lasting two days, 2,000 years, during which time He would perform and complete a work with *an entirely new creation*. And this would be accomplished through removing “*a people for his name*” from among the Gentiles, though with “*a remnant according to the election of grace* [believing Jews]” being included ([Acts 15:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+15.14&t=NKJV); [Romans 11:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.5&t=NKJV)).

And, in order to carry out His purposes surrounding this *new creation*, God sent the Holy Spirit into the world. Throughout the present dispensation, the Spirit of God is in the world performing a work in the antitype of that which is seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four.

As Abraham in this chapter sent his servant into the far country *to procure a bride for his son*, God has sent the Holy Spirit into the world *to procure a bride for His Son*. And, as in the type, so in the antitype — the search occurs among those in the family. The Spirit of God is conducting His search among those comprising *the one new man*, for this *one new man* forms the body of Christ, and the bride is to be taken *from the body* (*cf*. [Genesis 2:21-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.21-25&t=NKJV); [24:2-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.2-4&t=NKJV), [9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.9&t=NKJV); [Matthew 22:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.14&t=NKJV)).

And also as in the type, once the search has been completed, the bride will be removed. As Rebekah was removed from Mesopotamia, so will Christ’s bride be removed from the earth; as Isaac came forth to meet Rebekah, so will the Son come forth to meet His bride; and as Rebekah went with Isaac to his home, where *she became his wife*, so will the bride go with Christ to His home, where *she will become His wife* ([Genesis 24:61-67](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.61-67&t=NKJV); [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+4.16-17&t=NKJV); [Revelation 19:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-9&t=NKJV)).

*2. Direction for…*

The goal toward which everything pertaining to *the new creation “in Christ”* moves is exactly the same as the goal set forth in the beginning, in the opening two chapters of Genesis. The point out ahead toward which all things move is *the earth’s coming Sabbath*.

And it matters not whether one is viewing the reason for the existence of the one new man, the reason for the present dispensation, or the reason for the Spirit of God having been sent into the world, the point toward which everything moves is *always the same*. It has to be, for this is the way matters were set forth and established at the beginning of God’s revelation to man ([Genesis 1:1-2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.1-2.3&t=NKJV)).

And properly understanding the spiritual warfare and the present race of the faith is contingent on properly understanding things surrounding the goal that lies out ahead. It is contingent on properly understanding the reason God has brought *the one new man* into existence, the reason God has set aside an entire dispensation to deal with this *new man*, and the reason God has sent His Spirit into the world to perform a work during the dispensation.

Christians are engaged in a warfare against spirit beings in the heavens, which is part and parcel with the race of the faith in which they find themselves engaged; and whether Christians do or do not understand all the various things about this warfare and race, Satan knows every one of these things all too well. And he is ever lying in wait to defeat the Christian in the warfare or sidetrack him in the race.

And the end result will be either *victory* or *defeat*. An individual will either *overcome* in the warfare and race or he will *be overcome*. And what is at stake in either victory or defeat? The greatest thing God could ever design for redeemed man is at stake.

The Spirit of God is presently in the world opening the Word of God to the Christians’ understanding, calling their attention to one central fact — *They are being offered positions as co-regents with Christ in His kingdom, forming the bride that will reign with the Son as consort queen.*

*That’s what is at stake*. And knowing this, is it any wonder that Satan, very early in the dispensation, set about to accomplish the things outlined in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen? Is it any wonder that he has done and continues to do everything within his power to corrupt and destroy the true message surrounding Christians and the coming kingdom?

From Genesis to Matthew to Revelation

Several things must be kept in mind when studying the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. The first four were given outside the house, by the seaside; and the last three were given after Christ had reentered the house. This fact, often overlooked, is significant beyond degree if one is to understand these parables correctly. Then, a chronology is seen in the parables, which carries the reader from the beginning of the present dispensation to the future Messianic Kingdom.

As previously shown, the first four parables (given outside the house, by the seaside) present a history of Christendom as it relates to the Word of the Kingdom; and this history covers the entirety of the dispensation. To understand why conditions in Christendom are as they presently exist, one has to go back in history and follow the course of events leading into the presently existing situation.

And going back in history after this fashion involves one thing. It involves going to the Scriptures to see what the Word of God reveals about the matter, not what the various history books on the Church written by man reveal. All of man’s writings on Church history might as well be categorized as “secular” insofar as this aspect of Church history is concerned. That which man has written simply doesn’t deal with Church history in this respect, *though this is the main crux of the matter seen within the way Scripture deals with the subject.*

The earliest period of Church history is dealt with in the book of Acts, following the inception of the Church. This period covers that time when the kingdom was being reoffered to Israel (from 30 to approx. 62 A.D.). And accordingly, the message throughout this book, centers on *the proffered kingdom*.

The epistles (some written during the Acts period, some following) deal centrally with the same message seen in Acts — one having to do with the kingdom. These epistles simply form different facets of instructions written to Christians surrounding the same central message. And these epistles, as the book of Acts, provide information surrounding early Church history.

Both the book of Acts and the epistles deal with the Church during the first century only. But there are two places in Scripture that deal with a history of the Church throughout the dispensation. One is in the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, before the Church was even brought into existence; and the other is in Revelation chapters two and three, at a place in the book where the Church is being dealt with at the judgment seat in the heavens following the dispensation (though the record itself was given during the early years of the dispensation). Thus, one complete history is seen in Scripture at a point *preceding* the dispensation, and the other is seen in Scripture at a point *following* the dispensation.

In Matthew chapter thirteen, before the dispensation began, a history of the Church — in relation to the Word of the Kingdom — is seen in the first four parables. And, in Revelation chapters two and three, at a point in the book that follows the dispensation, a history of the Church — in relation to the Word of the Kingdom — is seen in the seven letters (seven epistles) to the seven churches.

The first presents a history of the Church in this respect from the perspective of the Lord using parables; the second presents a history of the Church in this respect from the perspective of the Lord using epistles to seven existing churches in Asia. But both show *exactly the same thing*. The Church is revealed to have begun one way (a mustard bush, an entity laboring for Christ’s sake [[Matthew 13:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.32&t=NKJV); [Revelation 2:2-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.2-3&t=NKJV)]), but the Church is seen ending another way (a tree, a completely leavened entity, one neither cold nor hot, one described as “*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*” [[Matthew 13:32-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.32-33&t=NKJV); [Revelation 3:15-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.15-17&t=NKJV)]).

Then, all of this is intimately connected with God’s original structure of His Word at the beginning. The parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three are structured after a fashion that is in complete keeping with the way God set matters forth at the very beginning of His revelation to man, in the opening chapters of Genesis. And this is easy to understand, for the latter rests upon and is inseparably linked to the former.

Scripture begins with a foundational framework upon which the whole of subsequent Scripture rests — six days of restorative work (a restoration of the ruined material creation, with man created at the conclusion of this work, on the sixth day), followed by a seventh day of rest, a Sabbath day. And the preceding relates the story of the whole of Scripture beyond this introductory framework.

Man, following his creation, fell. And he, through this fall, became a ruined creation, bringing about not only his own ruin but the ruin of the restored material creation once again as well. And God, following this ruin, again set about to perform six days of restorative work — which this time had to do with both man and the material creation. And this latter restorative work will be followed by a seventh day of rest — a Sabbath rest awaiting the people of God, the coming Messianic Era ([Hebrews 4:4-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4.4-9&t=NKJV)) — in exact keeping with the pattern set forth in the beginning.

Each day in the former restoration was twenty-four hours in length, including the Sabbath; and each day in the latter restoration has been/will be 1,000 years in length, including the Sabbath (*cf*. [Matthew 16:28-17:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.28-17.5&t=NKJV); [2 Peter 1:16-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.16-18&t=NKJV); [3:1-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+3.1-8&t=NKJV)).

All of Scripture beyond the foundational framework in the opening two chapters of Genesis rests upon and forms additional information for this framework. And it matters not whether one is dealing with the framework set forth at the beginning or with subsequent Scripture, all restorative work can be seen moving toward *the same goal — a coming Sabbath of rest.*

Then, with the preceding in mind, note the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. Events in these parables form one facet of a commentary on that which occurs during the two days immediately preceding the Sabbath, which covers the entire present dispensation. And, viewing events in the remaining three parables, which move beyond the present dispensation and progress into the Messianic Era itself, it’s easy to see and understand how all these parables move toward this same goal — the same goal set forth at the beginning of Scripture, the coming Sabbath. *Everything moves toward this goal*.

And exactly the same thing can be seen in the seven epistles to the seven churches in Revelation chapters two and three. This sequence of epistles simply forms another facet of a commentary on that which occurs during the two days immediately preceding the Sabbath. And, from the overcomer’s promises, along with that which is revealed in chapters one and four, it’s easy to see and understand that all of this (exactly as the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen) has to do with the Church in relation to the Word of the Kingdom and the coming Sabbath. *Again, everything moves toward this goal.*

Thus, it should be a simple matter to see that anything in the New Testament that has to do with the Church centers around things having to do with the coming kingdom. And though man may write his history books *completely separate from this message*, Scripture centers its revealed history of the Church *completely on this message.*

During the first century, Christians would have understood a history of the Church in keeping with Scripture, for the Word of the Kingdom was universally taught throughout the churches of the land. Today though, the situation is completely different. Because of the working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time, the message surrounding the Word of the Kingdom has become so corrupted that two things would be evident:

*First*, a Church historian wouldn’t know enough about the Word of the Kingdom to even include it within his account in the first place, much less ascribe to this message a central place in his account; and *second*, even should a Church historian write about the matter, Christians wouldn’t be able to understand that which he was writing about. Because of the working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time, the truth about the Word of the Kingdom has become so corrupted that it would be completely alien to their way of thinking.

And that’s where we are in a supposedly enlightened twentieth century Christendom, immediately preceding Christ’s return for the Church. We’re at a point where there is far more material available for Bible study and research than has ever existed in the history of the Church — everything from the extensive computer study and research programs to new books being printed every day. But we are also at a point where *the birds of the air are freely lodging in the branches of the tree, where the leaven has almost completed its work.*

Warning

The parables in Matthew chapter thirteen deal far more extensively with the negative than they do with the positive. More space is given in the first parable to those who fail to bring forth fruit than is given to those who do bring forth fruit. And the emphasis in the second, third, fourth, and seventh parables is on different facets of this same work of Satan as well. Only the fifth and sixth parables, which have to do with Christ’s redemptive work as it relates to the earth and to His bride, form an exception.

Thus, the central thrust of these parables is seen to be *far more negative than positive*. These parables have to do centrally with exposing the work of Satan throughout the dispensation in relation to the Word of the Kingdom, along with relating where this will lead, both during and following the dispensation.

As the dispensation draws to a close and Satan’s corrupting work nears its final stage, the whole matter goes almost completely unrecognized in Christendom. And the reason for this is easy to see and understand. The leavened state of Christendom is being viewed by those who have themselves been adversely affected by the leaven.

They are, in this respect, as the two disciples on the Emmaus road who were walking alongside the resurrected Christ and didn’t even know Him. Their inability to recognize the Christ of the Old Testament Scriptures resulted from their inability to properly understand these same Scriptures. It was only after these Scriptures were opened to their understanding, followed by Christ breaking bread, that their eyes were opened.

And Christians today, viewing a leavened Christendom and not seeing or understanding its true condition, are simply not viewing matters from a correct biblical perspective. Their inability to recognize the true condition of the Church stems from their inability to understand that which Scripture reveals about the matter. And, if their eyes are to be opened to the truth of the existing situation, such will occur only through the truth of the Word being presented to them and being accepted by them.

But will such occur during the present dispensation? Will the truth about the coming kingdom ever be proclaimed in such a manner that it will be accepted, allowing the eyes of Christians to be opened?

One here and one there will hear and understand the message, but not the Church at large. Conditions can only *deteriorate* in the latter respect. Such was assured — the pattern was set — when the woman placed the leaven in the three measures of meal. *Conditions can only deteriorate, until the whole has been leavened.*

