

BIBLE LESSONS

BOOK NUMBER FIVE

THROUGH THE BIBLE IN 52 LESSONS

LESSON NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE

JESUS CHRIST IN MATTHEW

PART ONE

The very first question in Matthew is found in Matthew 2:2: “Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” About thirty-three years later the Lord Jesus Christ was hanging on the cross of Calvary. Note what was written above His head: “And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

Matthew 27:37

“Jesus Christ the King of the Jews.”

Now let us compare:

Matthew 1:1

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

And:

Acts 2:22

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.”

Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of David the King. He was the son of “father” Abraham. From Judah through David we find the royal line. Judah was Abraham’s great-grandson. Jesus Christ was born in the house of David, of the seed of David, in the city of David, to occupy the throne of David. In Matthew Jesus Christ is called “the Son of David” or “David’s Son” eight times. In Matthew, Christ is called “the Son of man” 31 times. He is called “the Son of God” 9 times. He is called “Jesus Christ 6 times. Once He is called “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Nazareth was a city despised by the Jews. Note the question:

John 1:46

“And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.”

“Jesus of Nazareth” was a title of reproach.

Note:

Matthew 2:23

“And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene:”

Note:

Luke 4:16

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”

Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God; that is, He was put on display by God. Where? In the midst of Israel. How? By miracles, signs and wonders.

Acts 10:38 and 39

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree.”

Note this Divine approval was in Jerusalem and in the land of the Jews.

In this connection we should carefully note the words of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in:

Matthew 15:24

“But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

As we study the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews, in Matthew, let us keep in mind several other Scriptures.

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Romans 15:8.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Galatians 4:4.

“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” Hebrews 2:16.

“Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” Hebrews 10:9.

Jesus Christ, in Matthew, was truly a minister of the circumcision confirming promises which God, by His Prophets, made unto the Israelites. Note the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in:

Matthew 5:17

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”

Now read:

Matthew 23:1 to 3

“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.”

In Matthew we shall learn that Christ was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law. This is very much like the truth presented in:

Acts 5:31

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

In Matthew, we learn the truth of John 1:11: “He came into his own, and his own received him not.”

Now let us develop the truth of Matthew in the light of the following statements:

Matthew 3:1 and 2

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 4:17

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

Matthew 10:5 to 7

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 21:43

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

Three times we read, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Then after this is stated the last time, we read, “the kingdom of God shall be taken from you.”

Now note:

Mark 1:14 and 15

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

Here we learn that sometimes “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of heaven” are used synonymously. The expression “the kingdom of the heaven” or “the kingdom of the heavens” is used more than 30 times in Matthew. We find in Matthew “the kingdom of heaven is

like, or likened unto” 9 times. “The kingdom of God” is found 4 times in Matthew. The King was at hand with His kingdom.

THE KINGDOM AT HAND—THE GRACE AT HAND

Compare with:

Titus 2:11

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”

Now let us note the different things “at hand” from Matthew until Paul’s death:

“The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:2.

“My time is at hand.” Matthew 26:18.

“The hour is at hand.” Matthew 26:45.

“The kingdom of God is at hand.” Mark 1:15.

“The Jews’ Passover was at hand.” John 2:13.

“The Lord is at hand.” Philippians 4:5.

“The day of Christ is at hand.” II Thessalonians 2:2.

“The time of my departure is at hand.” (Paul’s) II Timothy 4:6.

“The end of all things is at hand.” I Peter 4:7.

For Israel “the kingdom of God,” or “the kingdom of heaven,” was at hand. From Israel the kingdom of God was taken away. Then we read these words in:

Romans 10:12 and 13

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

And we read in:

Romans 14:17

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

In:

Colossians 1:12 to 14

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

and

II Peter 1:11

“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

We learn from these Scriptures that there are different aspects and phases of “the kingdom of God.” We also learn the Lord declared that “the kingdom of God” would be taken

away from Israel. He was not saying that salvation would no longer be offered to individual Israelites.

This leads us to two statements:

First. Unless we learn that the Lord Jesus, in Matthew, was not only offering salvation to individual Israelites, but that He was also presenting the kingdom to the Nation Israel, we shall not be able to intelligently interpret, appropriate, and apply some of the kingdom teachings of the Messiah.

Second. If we carefully read Peter's question for the apostles and the Lord's answer in Matthew 19:28, we can better appreciate the question of the apostles in Acts 1:6.

Matthew 19:28

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Acts 1:6

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying. Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

We must realize that there is a difference between the messages of Matthew 10:5 to 7 and Titus 2:11 and 13.

Matthew 10:5 to 7

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Titus 2:11 to 13

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

“The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “Go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” “Looking for that blessed hope.”

Now let us again read:

Romans 15:8

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”

And:

Hebrews 10:9

“Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

Now for these two interesting questions:

1. "Did Jesus Christ come to perpetuate an old religion or to establish a new religion?"
2. "Is Christianity, as taught by the Apostle Paul, the flower and fruit of Judaism?"

Note what the Lord Jesus, in Matthew, states concerning new wine in old bottles:

"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." Matthew 9:17.

Note again the words in:

Matthew 5:17 and 18

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

A careful study of the sayings and doings of Christ, in Matthew, will teach us that Jesus of Nazareth was born under the law; that He was trained according to the Jewish religion in a Jewish home. In Matthew 23:1 to 3, we learn that even unto the end of His ministry in the land of the Jews He recognized the authority of those who sat in the seat of Moses. He did not unseat them until after His death and resurrection. Although living under the Old Covenant He presented the principles of the New Covenant, and preached the kingdom gospel.

PART TWO

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

"FROM THAT TIME"

At the time Christ began His public ministry we read these words: "FROM THAT TIME Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17.

About three years later, after Christ had presented His Messianic claim and His Divine credentials and the rulers of Israel had rejected Him, we read: "FROM THAT TIME forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Matthew 16:21.

We here see that there seems to be a very definite division in Matthew's Gospel marked by these words, "from that time."

When the Lord Jesus began His ministry and message as indicated in Matthew 4:17, He had moved from Nazareth to Capernaum.

Capernaum was on one of the principal roads, a strategic center of the holy land, visited by thousands. Later on the Apostle Paul made his headquarters in such cities as Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus and Rome. These were all strategic centers. After the testimony of the Lord Jesus in Capernaum, note what He said concerning the judgment of that city compared with the judgment of Sodom:

Matthew 11:23

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

Here we have some conception of the mighty works done by the Lord in Capernaum. And let us remember that we have no record of many of the sayings and doings of the Lord Jesus Christ:

John 20:30

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.”

John 21:25

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”

When we learn that we have a record of just a few of the many teachings and miraculous works of the Son of God, how we should study over and over every word that we have in the Divine record until our minds and hearts are filled to overflowing.

Now let us note the record in Matthew, from Matthew 1:1 to the time the Lord Jesus made His home in Capernaum (Matthew 4:13) and proclaimed His message of Matthew 4:17. Note again: “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

In Matthew 1:1 to 17 we have the genealogy or ancestors of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus, from Abraham to Joseph and Jesus, forty-two generations. By way of contrast: in John’s Gospel Christ says, “BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM.” John 8:58.

Note:

John 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Christ was in the form of God ages before Abraham was born. Then Jesus Christ was born as Abraham’s seed. Hebrews 2:16 and 17.

In Luke 3 we find the ancestors of Mary back to Adam. In the genealogical record in Matthew One, we find four women mentioned, “Thamar” (verse 3), “Rachab,” (verse 5) “Ruth” (verse 5), “Bathsheba” (verse 6). The godly Israelitish women are not listed with the men of that nation. But these four women are mentioned to teach us the truth of I Peter 5:10, that God is the God of all grace. Thamar and Rachab were harlots. Ruth was from the Moabites, the people under the curse of God. Bathsheba was the wife of a Hittite. If you will study the Old Testament Record of these four women, you will have an interesting study.

Let us remember that Gentiles became Jews by religion.

Note this statements in:

Esther 8:17

“And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king’s commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.”

Here we note that Persians became Jews, in order that they might enjoy the favor and blessing of God, and communion with His people. Gentiles had to become Jews by religion.

Although Joseph was not the father of Jesus, he was the husband of Mary who was the mother of Jesus. Jesus had the legal right to David’s throne as the King of Israel. In Luke Three

we learn that He had the birthright. He certainly had the Divine right in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6 and 7. He was the Seed of David, the Seed of Abraham, born in the House of David, in the City of David.

Surely the Scriptures teach that the throne of David is to be occupied in the coming Kingdom age. Ezekiel 37:24.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Let us note again Genesis 3:14 to 16. In these verses we read “the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.”

Now note:

Isaiah 7:14

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

And:

Galatians 4:4

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”

MATTHEW TWO

Here we have the visit of the wise men from the east. Herod wanted the wise men to tell him when they had located Jesus, the Holy Child. Herod said he too wanted to worship Jesus. Note how the wise men were led to Bethlehem and what they did when they found Mary and Jesus:

Matthew 2:9, 10, 11, and 12

“When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.”

Then Herod was angry and sent his soldiers to murder all the little children under two years of age in and near Bethlehem. Joseph had been told by the angel of the Lord to take Mary and Jesus into Egypt and there He remained until Herod was dead. There is no Scriptural or accurate historical record of anything that Jesus did in Egypt.

We shall note in our study of Luke just one or two incidents in the childhood of Jesus. But for some reason the Holy Spirit has not told us very much about the childhood of Jesus. There has been much speculation and conjecture and some have minutely described His education in the Jewish schools and His carpenter work with His father, but this may be more fiction than fact.

We note, with interest:

Luke 4:16

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”

Here we have the Scriptural statement that Jesus had been taught the religion of the Jews and had worshipped in the Jewish congregation on the Jewish Sabbath.

Now note:

Matthew 2:23

“And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”

FROM NAZARETH TO CAPERNAUM

Matthew 4:13

“And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim.”

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Note the statement of John the Baptist in:

John 1:31

“And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.”

and the statement of Paul concerning John the Baptist in:

Acts 13:24:

“When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.”

Then note the words of the resurrected Christ in:

Acts 1:5

“For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

Note also the ministry of John the Baptist stated in:

Luke 1:16 and 16

“For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.”

And:

Luke 1:80

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.”

Christ later stated that John the Baptist was the Elijah of Malachi 4:5 and 6 if Israel had so accepted Him.

Malachi 4:5 and 6

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Note Matthew 11:14, “If ye will receive it, this is Elijah, which was for to come.”

Christ said, John was the greatest man born of woman “For I say unto you, Among those that are born of woman there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” Luke 7:28.

Note John’s message: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.” Matthew 3:11.

John preached to Israel. Israel was still protected and preserved as a nation under the Abrahamic Covenant. Israel was under the Old Covenant when John preached to them. They were still worshipping in the Jerusalem temple and still observing the feasts of Jehovah, according to Leviticus 23. Their sins were still being covered on the day of atonement by the sacrifices presented by their high priest.

Note:

Luke 16:16

“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”

Some have tried to prove by this that the beginning of John’s ministry brought an end to the reign of law, the end of Israel’s Old Covenant. But this is not at all true. The law stood until the veil in the temple was rent at the time that Christ died on the cross.

Let us note Hebrews:

Hebrews 10:9 and 10

“Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Note again:

Hebrews 10:19 and 20

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh.”

Note again:

Colossians 2:14

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”

In these and other Scriptures we learn that Christ took the law out of the way on the cross.

THE TWO BAPTISMS OF THE LORD JESUS

Matthew 3:13 to 17

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And to a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 20:18, 22, and 23

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death.” “But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.”

Luke 12:50:

“But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”

In reading the account of the baptism of the Lord Jesus by John the Baptist, it is well to remember the truth of:

Hebrews 2:16 and 17

“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

As we read of the baptism of Christ on the cross unto death, we think of Romans 6:3:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”

Whatever mode or formula of water baptism may be used, the all important baptism is the Divine baptism unto the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every Bible Christian is identified with Christ in His death baptism, His burial and His resurrection. Only the omnipotent God can place the believing sinner in Christ and baptize him into the One Body. Ephesians 4:4 and 5.

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

In Genesis 3:1 to 21, we have the record of the temptation and fall of the first man.

Note:

Genesis 3:6

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

Note also:

I John 2:16 and 17

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

As Satan approached Eve in the three-fold appeal, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, he did likewise with Christ.

Note:

Matthew 4:1 to 11

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him; All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him. and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

Later on Christ uttered these words: “Or else, how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.” Matthew 12:29.

Satan is the strong man. Christ was able to conquer and bind him. Note Hebrews 2:14 and Colossians 2:15.

Then note:

Luke 10:1

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy Also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.”

Luke 10:17 to 19

“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold. I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

Now note:

John 12:31

“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.”

John 16:8 and 11

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One Who can deliver the sinner from the power of Satan. Note the instructions to the Christian found in:

Ephesians 6:10 and 11

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” Matthew 4:23.

When Jesus proclaimed “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17) He was preaching “THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM” and he was “healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.”

Note the instructions of Christ to the twelve apostles: “And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:7 and 8.

There is not the slightest suggestion here that Christ and His apostles were preaching that the Saviour was to die on the cross and that sinners would be saved by faith in His shed blood. Such a message is the gospel by which sinners are today saved. But this is not “the Gospel of the Kingdom,” which Christ and the Twelve and the Seventy were preaching.

Note the reaction about two years later when Christ did tell His chosen disciples that He was going to die:

Luke 18:31 to 34

“Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”

“They understood none of these things” concerning the death and resurrection of Christ, although they had been preaching the Gospel for many months. What Gospel? The word “gospel” is a general term and must be qualified or defined specifically to know what is implied in the use of the word. It means “good news”. So far as the individual sinner is concerned, no one was ever saved on any other grounds than the shed blood of Christ. But “gospel” in the Bible means more than one thing.

But now let us compare:

Luke 9:2 and 6

“And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.”

With:

I Timothy 1:11

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”

And:

I Timothy 5:23

“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.”

And:

II Timothy 4:20

“Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.”

The ministry of physical healing had a very prominent place in “the Gospel of the Kingdom.” But we note in connection with the Gospel, which Paul called “MY GOSPEL”, even the most faithful saints were not miraculously healed.

When “the Gospel of the Kingdom” is mentioned in the Bible, the Nation Israel is in view. Let us again be reminded that in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only was salvation offered to individual Israelites, but the Kingdom of Heaven was presented to the nation.

QUESTIONS—LESSON TWENTY-FIVE

QUESTIONS—PART ONE

1. WHAT IS THE FIRST QUESTION IN MATTHEW?
2. WHOSE SON WAS JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 1:1?
3. WHY WAS THE SAVIOUR CALLED “JESUS OF NAZARETH?”
4. IN WHAT SENSE WAS CHRIST A JEW? KING OF THE JEWS?
5. TO WHOM AND HOW WAS JESUS OF NAZARETH APPROVED BY GOD?
6. WHAT WAS CHRIST’S MINISTRY ACCORDING TO ROMANS 15:8?
7. UNDER WHAT WAS CHRIST BORN ACCORDING TO GALATIANS 4:4?
8. QUOTE JOHN 1:11.
9. WHAT MESSAGE WAS PROCLAIMED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST, THE LORD JESUS AND THE TWELVE? TO WHOM?
10. QUOTE MATTHEW 15:24.

11. WHAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST IN MARK 1:15 “THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND” AND MATTHEW 4:17 “THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND?”
12. WHAT WAS THE LORD TO TAKE AWAY FROM ISRAEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 21:43?
13. INTO WHAT KINGDOM ARE BELIEVERS TODAY TRANSLATED ACCORDING TO COLOSSIANS 1:13?
14. WHAT WAS AT HAND ACCORDING TO TITUS 2:11? IS THIS STILL AT HAND?
15. IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AT HAND AS IT WAS IN MATTHEW 4:17?
16. WHERE ARE THE TWELVE APOSTLES TO SIT AND WHEN, ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 19:28?
17. STATE THE TRUTH OF ROMANS 10:12 AND 13.
18. WHAT WAS CHRIST TO DO AND WHAT DID HE DO ACCORDING TO HEBREWS 10:9?
19. WHAT TWO-FOLD PROGRAM WAS GOD CARRYING ON WHILE JESUS OF NAZARETH WAS HERE ON EARTH?
20. DID JESUS CHRIST COME TO PERPETUATE AN OLD RELIGION OR TO ESTABLISH A NEW RELIGION?

QUESTIONS—PART TWO

1. TO WHAT CITY DID CHRIST MOVE TO CARRY ON HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY?
2. IN WHAT LANGUAGE DID CHRIST COMPARE THE JUDGMENT OF CAPERNAUM AND SODOM?
3. MARKED BY THE WORDS, “FROM THAT TIME” WHAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHRIST’S MESSAGE IN MATTHEW 4:17 AND MATTHEW 16:21?
4. HOW MANY GENERATIONS IN THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST ARE MENTIONED IN THE FIRST CHAPTER OF MATTHEW?
5. WHAT SIGNIFICANCE IS ATTACHED TO THE FOUR WOMEN MENTIONED IN THE GENEALOGY OF JOSEPH IN MATTHEW 1? NAME THE FOUR WOMEN.
6. WHAT DID THE GENTILES BECOME IN ORDER TO GET GOD’S DIVINE BLESSING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TIMES?
7. COMPARE THE ANCESTORS OF JOSEPH IN MATTHEW 1 AND THE ANCESTORS OF MARY IN LUKE 3. STATE THE DIFFERENCE.
8. IN WHAT VERSE OF MATTHEW 1 IS THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST MENTIONED?
9. WHAT VERSE IN ISAIAH 7 WAS FULFILLED WHEN THE NAME IMMANUEL WAS GIVEN TO JESUS CHRIST?
10. HOW WAS CHRIST MADE ACCORDING TO GALATIANS 4:4?
11. STATE A FEW FACTS CONCERNING THE WISE MEN’S VISIT TO THE MANGER OF JESUS AND THE STAR THAT LED THEM.
12. WHAT DID HEROD DO BECAUSE OF HIS ANGER? WHAT SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED BY THE MURDER OF THE BABES?
13. IN WHAT MANNER DID JOHN THE BAPTIST FULFILL MALACHI 4:5 AND 6?

14. WHAT WAS JOHN'S BAPTISM MESSAGE? WHAT SIGNIFICANCE?
15. TO WHOM DID JOHN THE BAPTIST PREACH? HOW GREAT WAS HE?
16. WHAT IS SAID ABOUT CHRIST'S SABBATH HABIT IN LUKE 4:16?
17. STATE A FEW FACTS CONCERNING CHRIST'S TWO BAPTISMS.
18. GIVE THE STORY OF CHRIST'S TEMPTATION BY SATAN. AND HOW HIS POWER WORKED IN THE MINISTRY OF HIS APOSTLES.
19. STATE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM" AND PAUL'S "MY GOSPEL."
20. IN WHAT SENSE, IF ANY, IS CHRIST NOW WHAT HE WAS (ROMANS 15:8) A MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION?

LESSON NUMBER TWENTY-SIX

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT—GOLDEN RULE— "OUR FATHER" PRAYER

In chapters five, six and seven of Matthew are recorded "the Sermon on the Mount," "The Golden Rule," and "The 'Our Father' Prayer."

There is a Divine reason why none of this is found in the Gospel of John, and why Paul made no reference to them in his messages of grace to the Gentiles.

Let us note "The Golden Rule":

Matthew 7:12

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

This is very much law, and not compatible with the message of grace later revealed by Christ from heaven.

Note: "For this is the law and the prophets."

Note God's Word concerning the law in:

Galatians 3:10 to 12

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them."

And:

Romans 10:5

"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them."

Note again:

Galatians 3:21

"Is the law against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

In Paul's message of grace we learn how love is the fulfilling of the law.

Note:

Galatians 5:22 and 23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.”

Also:

Romans 13:8 to 10

“Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

This will help us to understand how the law of the Spirit of life works in the believer: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4.

In the “Our Father” prayer, note Matthew 6:12 and 14: “And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

This is further explained in:

Matthew 18:34 and 35

“And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

Now compare these verses with:

Ephesians 4:32

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

How different! God hath forgiven you. For Christ's sake.

Note again:

Colossians 2:13

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

THE BEATITUDES

We quote the Beatitudes of Matthew 5:1 to 12:

1. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:
2. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,
3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Blessed are those who do many different things. Certainly because we are today saved by grace, we should not fail to do what God would have us do.

But compare with the above these words found in:

Ephesians 1:3

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

We might ask this question: How faithful would a saint have to be today to inherit the earth?—Note again Matthew 5:5: “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.”

THE PEACE-MAKERS

Note:

Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”

Let us compare with:

Colossians 1:20

“And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself: by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

Again we quote:

Galatians 3:26

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

God’s children should be peacemakers. But the Lord Jesus Christ was the Peacemaker Who made the peace an the cross. This is the peace-making that makes believing sinners the children of God.

But surely God’s children, although they are saved by grace, should be poor in spirit, should mourn, hunger and thirst after righteousness, should be merciful, should be pure in heart.

And no child of God wants to give up the reward promised in:

Matthew 5:11 and 12

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil again you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

The child of God is told to rightly divide the Word of Truth: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15.

And note:

I Corinthians 2:13:

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

How will the child of God under the present reign of grace, interpret, appropriate and apply such instructions as:

Matthew 5:40 to 42

:And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away?”

And what are we to do with:

Matthew 5:29, and Matthew 6:17, and Matthew 5:48?

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell.”

“But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face.”

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Most certainly no obedient Christian will eliminate from God’s spiritual program any one of the Lord’s commands which the Lord desires the Christian to obey.

There must be, in the Bible, some intelligent, Divine principle by which the children of God may know what part of the teachings of Christ in the Four Gospels is compatible with the grace message which the same Christ taught Paul by revelation. In what sense can the believer today obey:

Matthew 5:23 to 25:

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.”

Perhaps we can find help in the study of the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth chapters of Matthew by noting:

Matthew 4:17

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

Matthew 5:17

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”

Matthew 10:7

“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

The Sermon on the Mount, including the “Our Father’s” prayer, has a “kingdom of heaven at hand” setting.

THE LAW SETTING

Let us now read:

Matthew 8:4

“And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.”

This is strictly an Old Testament message. Certainly we have no Scriptural right to give out any such instructions today. Thus we see a mixture of law and “kingdom of heaven” in these chapters in Matthew.

TWO GENTILES IN MATTHEW

In Matthew 8:5 to 13 and in Matthew 15:21 to 28, we have the record of two Gentiles who received blessings from the Lord Jesus while He was on earth. The Gentile in Matthew 8 was a Roman centurion. The Gentile in Matthew 15 was a Greek woman. Concerning the man, Christ said, “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” Matthew 8:10. To the woman He said, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.” Matthew 15:28.

In studying these two incidents we should keep in mind what the Lord said to the Greek woman. We quote:

Matthew 15:24

“But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

We also quote:

Matthew 10:5 and 6

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

To the Greek woman Christ said, “let the children first be filled;” “it is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to dogs.” Mark 7:26 and 27. Matthew 15:26. To the Gentile man He said: “But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 8:12.

Therefore, in Christ’s dealings with these two Gentiles is suggested God’s program and order. While Christ was on earth He said, “sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” After His death, He said, “first to the lost sheep of Israel,” then to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. Acts 3:26. Acts 13:46. Romans 1:16 and Romans 11:11.

Let us remember the two Gentiles as Gentiles of “great faith” and humility. Let us note the fact concerning the Gentile man. He was not only very humble and of great faith, but he took his place as one who was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, knowing that Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Ephesians 2:11 and 12. He asked the Jews to intercede for him. He loved Israel and had built them a synagogue.

Now note the fact concerning the Gentile woman: “And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” Matthew 15:27.

Indeed, with great faith and great humility, she recognized her place as a Gentile.

Since these incidents God’s order and spiritual program has been changed. No one has Divine authority, in this period of grace, to carry on the program of:

Matthew 10:5 to 9:

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses.”

Note the testimony of the Apostle Paul some years later:

Galatians 1:15 and 16.

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”

Acts 22:17 and 21

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”.

Romans 15:15 and 16

“Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 14:27.

“And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

Let us note when God opened the door of faith to the Gentiles and let us be sure, in our Bible study, that we do not have that door opened before God did. In another lesson we shall compare the open door of Acts 14:27 with Acts 11:18.

PETER TO ISRAEL

Let us note:

Galatians 2:8:

(“For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.”)

Now carefully look into the ministry of Peter and his associates in the first seven chapters of Acts and you will learn that they are in the cities of Israel (Matthew 10:23) laboring under the orders of Matthew 10:5 to 9. “Not in the way of the Gentiles.” They were preaching the kingdom and healing.

THE TURNING-POINT

In Matthew 11 we begin to see the truth of John 1:11: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not”

Even in chapter ten Christ said:

Matthew 10:34 and 35.

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law”

Some day Christ will come and bring peace on earth in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6 and 7. He made peace by the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20.

He said to the disciples:

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” John 14:27. “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33.

Individual sinners may have God’s peace today in God’s way:

Romans 5:1

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 10:15

“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

Now note Christ’s words in:

Matthew 11:14

“And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.”

Compare with:

Malachi 4:5 and 6

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Now read:

Luke 19:41 and 42

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept. over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”

Why? “Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” Luke 19:44.

Many individual Israelites received Christ.. But Christ’s coming was the Nation’s visitation. Christ was born to take David’s throne. Luke 1:32 and 33. God’s messengers declared “peace on earth.”:

Luke 2:14:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

But Israel’s rulers said, “we will not have this man reign over us.” Finally they said, “we have no king but Caesar,” when Pilate said, “shall I crucify your King?” John 19:15.

Then remember those blessed words of Christ:

Matthew 11:28 and 29

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls”

Although rejected by the rulers, Christ offered rest and pardon and peace to anyone who would come unto Him.

ISRAEL’S UNPARDONABLE SIN

In Matthew twelve, we have the record of Israel’s unpardonable sin. Note the words of Christ just before He declared their sin:

Matthew 12:16

“And charged them that they should not make him known.”.

Then He declared the truth concerning Gentile salvation in:

Matthew 12:18 and 21

“Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.”

“And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.”

It was not good news to the Jews that the Gentiles were going to be blessed. They hated the Gentiles. Note what the Jews did when the Lord Jesus and Paul spoke of Divine blessings for Gentiles:

Luke 4:28

“And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath.”

Acts 22:22

“And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.”

Israel accused Christ of casting out demons by the prince of demons (Matthew 12:24). Then said Christ:

Matthew 12:28 and 32

“But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”

“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

ISRAEL’S PARDONABLE SIN

Then read Christ’s prayer on the cross for those who had sinned against the Son of man:

Luke 23:34

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”

Then note:

Acts 3:14, 15, 17, and 19

“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.”

“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”

The murderers of the Son of man were offered forgiveness. Some repented. The rulers continued to reject. Then Peter preached to them again:

Acts 5:29 to 32

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”

There was the witness of the Holy Spirit. What would they do? Would they commit the unpardonable sin?

Note Stephen’s words to them:

Acts 7:55, 56 and 51

“But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

Then what happened? They added to their sins and their father's sins by killing Stephen. This brings to mind the words of the Lord Jesus:

Matthew 23:31 to 33

“Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

QUESTIONS—LESSON TWENTY-SIX

1. In what chapters of Matthew do we find the record of the Sermon on the Mount?
2. State the Golden Rule.
3. Mention five of the Beatitudes and just how they would be interpreted to fit into “the dispensation of grace” given to Paul (Ephesians 3:1 to 3).
4. Compare and explain the difference between the petition in the “Our Father” prayer “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” with Ephesians 4:32.
5. Note the dispensational setting of the Sermon on the Mount and the Kingdom Prayer—Matthew 4:17 and Matthew 10:7, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Explain the difference between Matthew 10:5 to 7 and Titus 2:11 to 13.
6. How would a member of the Body of Christ today obey Matthew 5:39 to 42?
7. How should a Christian today anoint his head in accordance with Matthew 6:17?
8. Study Matthew 7:24 to 29 and tell who is like the man who built his stormproof house upon the rock.
9. Is there any sense in which a saint healed of a physical disease could obey Matthew 8:4 and show himself to the priest?
10. Give the account of the healing of the Gentile centurion's servant, recorded in Matthew 8:5 to 13 and Luke 7, mentioning several things about the centurion and Christ's words concerning his great faith and Israel.
11. Explain the significance of “let the children first be filled” and “the children of the kingdom shall be cast out.”
12. Let us read carefully the record of the healing of the man sick of the palsy in Matthew 9:1 to 8. This is the only record we have where Christ healed the soul before he healed the body. What words did He use in healing the soul and what did the scribes think?
13. In what verse in Matthew 9 is the call of Matthew, the publican, recorded?
14. Name the twelve apostles recorded in Matthew 10:2 and 3. To whom were they sent according to the verses that follow and with what message and ministry?
15. Is Matthew 10:6 to 9 God's spiritual program for today?
16. State the words of Christ's judgment upon Capernaum.
17. What is promised in Matthew 11:28 to 30 to those who come to Christ?
18. Give the verses in which Christ referred to the unpardonable sin of Israel. State that sin. In the light of Romans 5:20 and Ephesians 2:1 to 8 can we say that any sin of any sinner today is unpardonable if that sinner will accept God's grace and pardon?
19. What was the attitude of the Jews toward the Gentiles?
20. What was accomplished for Israel by Christ's prayer on the cross recorded in Luke 23:34?

LESSON NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN

MUTUAL REJECTION

In Matthew 3:7, in Matthew 12:34, and in Matthew 23:33 Israel is called “ye generation of vipers.”

After the Lord Jesus warned Israel concerning the unpardonable sin, He told them of the great sign that would leave them without excuse.

Matthew 12:40 and 41

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.”

After the Son of man was raised from the dead He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. Note what Peter said in Acts 2:36:

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ”

Some Israelites repented. Others refused.

Romans 11:7 and 8.

“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.)”

Note:

Romans 10:21

“But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”

An interesting question: “How long was all day long?” During the Old Testament times God sent many prophets to Israel. Christ tells in Matthew 21:35 and 36 what Israel did to those Divine messengers. Many miracles were performed by those prophets in the midst of Israel. But they were a disobedient and gainsaying people. But God said: “All day long I have stretched forth My hands.”

Now read:

Matthew 21:37 to 39

“But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son. they said among themselves, This is the heir: come, let us kill him,

and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.”

And:

John 12:37 to 40

“But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them”

But even after all of this God still stretched forth His hands to that disobedient and gainsaying people until Stephen said in:

Acts 7:51 and 52

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your father persecuted? and they have slain them which chewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.”

With the murder of Stephen Israel was committing the sin against which Christ warned them in:

Matthew 12:31 to 33

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.”

After the warning to Israel, Christ said:

“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” Matthew 12:50.

THE SEVEN KINGDOM PARABLES

1. THE SOWER. Matthew 13:1 to 23.
2. THE WHEAT AND THE TARES. Matthew 13:24 to 30 and 37 to 43.
3. THE MUSTARD TREE. Matthew 13:31 and 32.
4. THE LEAVEN HID IN THE MEAL. Matthew 13:33.
5. THE TREASURE HID IN THE FIELD. Matthew 13:44.
6. THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE. Matthew 13:45.
7. THE NET FILLED WITH GOOD AND BAD FISH. Matthew 13:47 to 49.

In the midst of His teaching of these parables, note the question of the disciples and the answer of the Lord Jesus

Matthew 13:10, 11, 13 and 35:

“And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.”

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

It is rather unfortunate that there is not unanimity of opinion or understanding among God’s people today as to the interpretation and application of these parables.

We quote two of the parables:

Matthew 13:31 to 33.

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

Some very godly Christians teach that the Mustard Seed and the Leaven speak of the Church with the Gospel, which began in a small way and will continue to spread and influence all the human race until the world is Christianized and the universal righteousness described in Hebrews 8:11 shall be realized.

Note:

Hebrews 8:11

“And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.”

But with this interpretation we run into contradiction in two other parables in this same group. In the Parable of the Wheat and Tares note:

Matthew 13:24 and 25

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.”

Matthew 13:37 to 43

“He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a

furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Observe these two facts:

1. The wheat was not sown among the tares; but the tares among the wheat.
2. Note the condition here on earth at the end of the age. This condition does not agree with the universal righteousness of Hebrews 8:11.

In the Parable of the Drag Net, we have the same condition at the end of the age:

Matthew 13:47 to 51

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him. Yea, Lord.”

Other godly Christians believe that they have answered this seeming contradiction by teaching that the leaven represents evil corresponding to the tares sown among the wheat. They cite the Lord’s words, “beware of the leaven.” They say that a large mustard tree is abnormal. Therefore the large mustard tree of Matthew 13:31 speaks of what is known as Christendom, which takes in all the false as well as the true, which is called Christianity.

Surely the Parable of the Sower does not suggest a converted world.

Note the Parable of the Pearl:

Matthew 13:45 and 46

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

There is likewise a division as to the meaning of this Parable. Some say, selling all to obtain the Pearl, is to give up everything for Christ and salvation and this agrees with Christ’s words in Matthew 19:21; Matthew 16:24 to 26; Luke 13:24 and Luke 12:32 to 34.

The reply to this interpretation is, that this would be incompatible with the grace gospel for this age found in Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Titus and other Epistles.

Note:

Romans 4:4 and 5

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

II Timothy 1:9:

“Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

Ephesians 2:8 and 9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast”

Many godly Christians teach that the Pearl is the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood. Acts 20:28. But then the question, if this Pearl, or Church, is the same as the Body of Christ, did Paul tell the truth in Colossians 1:23 to 27 concerning the Church as the Mystery? Whatever our interpretation we should know that salvation is not for sale. It is the gift of God.

We should be positive regarding this Parable of the Treasure hid in the field. By referring to Exodus 19:5 and Psalms 135:4 we, learn that God calls Israel His treasure.

Now note:

Matthew 13:44 and 38

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

“The field is the world.” Israel is God’s treasure hid in the world. Surely Christ is going to take the world and Israel is going to be redeemed.

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

Note the words of Christ in:

Matthew 13:16 and 17

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”

Now note:

John 16:12 and 13

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

Note also:

Acts 26:16

“But rise; and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.”

We quote also:

Galatians 2:7

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.”

And:

Ephesians 3:3

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words).”

UNTIL THE LAW

Now compare these Scriptures with

Romans 5:13

“For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”

THE LAW WAS ADDED

Galatians 3:19

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.”

WHAT ISRAEL’S PROPHETS FORETOLD

I Peter 1:10 and 11

“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

When we speak of progressive revelation we confine this progress to the limits of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Let us remember that, spiritually speaking, concerning any revelation of Divine truth, anything that is new is not true and anything that is true is not new. No new Divine truth has been given by inspiration of God since the Book of Revelation and Paul’s revelations were given. Divine truth may be stated in different words, but if it is Divine truth, it is already in the Bible.

But many things that the prophets did not know were revealed to the Twelve. Many things that the Twelve did not know while Christ was on earth they learned after the Holy Spirit came. But many things that the Twelve did not know, either before or after the resurrection of Christ, were revealed to Paul. Paul received his revelations on the installment plan, although he received an abundance at one time.

II Corinthians 12:1 to 12

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago. (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether In the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which It is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the

revelations. there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

CHRIST'S WORDS AND WORKS

In Matthew 13:54 we read:

“And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?”

14:32 and 33

“And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.”

By reading the contexts we shall learn more of the wonderful words and the wonderful works of the Lord Jesus Christ:

John 7:46 and John 7:31

“The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.”

“And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?”

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus in:

John 14:11:

“Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.”

In Matthew 14 we read of the two great miracles:

1. Christ feeds 5000 men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes.
2. Peter left the ship to walk on the sea to meet Jesus.

Matthew 14:30 to 32:

“But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.”

THE HUMAN HEART

The Lord gives the picture of the human heart in:

Matthew 15:19 and 20

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.”

IN TYRE AND SIDON
INTO THE COASTS OF CESAREA PHILIPPI

Matthew 15:21:

“Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.”

And:

Matthew 16:13:

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?”

THE CHURCH—THE KEYS

We have already referred to the Lord’s dealings with the Greek woman of great faith and her words “the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.” Now we quote the words of Christ in Cesarea to His disciples:

Matthew 16:14 to 20

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

UPON THIS ROCK

There has been much controversy concerning some of these statements which Christ made to Peter.

First let us note who men said that Jesus was:

1. In John 3 we learn what Nicodemus said, “Master, Thou art a Teacher come from God.”
2. In another Scripture some thought Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead.
3. Now note Matthew 16:14: “Some say, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets.”
4. Some asked in their perplexity “Who is this Son of man?” John 12:34.

5. Then Peter's confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:16.

Note Christ's response, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven." Matthew 16:17.

This reminds us of the words in:

I Corinthians 12:3

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

Then note one of the conditions of salvation in Romans 10:9: ". . . if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Note also:

John 20:31

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Now note carefully:

Matthew 16:18

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

"Thou art Peter" or the Greek word is "Petros." Upon this rock "PETRA." "Petra" is a larger rock. Now let us note the words of Peter and Paul:

I Peter 2:4 and 6

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"

Ephesians 2:20 to 22

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

I Corinthians 3:11

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

In the light of these verses, and also in the light of all other Scriptures we must repudiate the foolish claim of Roman Catholicism, that the Christian Church is built up on the man Simon Peter; that the headship authority of the present Pope at Rome has come down to him by apostolic succession from Peter through other men to the present incumbent. The only case of apostolic succession is recorded in Acts 1:15 to 26, where Matthias took the place of Judas. In the case of the death of James (Acts 12:1 to 3) no one was selected to take his place. Paul had his

own place and he was the apostle chosen by Christ to indoctrinate the Church at Rome. He taught them altogether contrary to the teaching which Catholics today receive from their priests.

Others teach that “upon this rock” meant upon Peter’s confession. It is true, that any and every sinner who believes in the heart and confesses with the mouth the eternal Deity of Jesus Christ, immediately becomes a member of the Body of Christ.

But the Word of God declares in I Corinthians 3:11: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

“Simon” or “Simeon” means “heareth.” Faith cometh by hearing. Every sinner, who hears the gospel of Christ and believes, is a Simon; and in the light of I Peter 2:5 he becomes a Simon Peter

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priest-hood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

THE KEYS

But what about:

Matthew 16:19?

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

And:

John 20:23

“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

When Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost he stood up with eleven other men. Acts 2:14. Note again that Peter had no authority over Paul.

Galatians 2:7

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.”

Note what Paul did to Peter:

Galatians 2:11 and 12

“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood, him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.”

In our study of Acts we shall learn that Peter is the principal human actor in that Book, in the first ten chapters. But Peter has no place in the Book of Acts, except as he has dealings with Paul, after the words of Acts 13:2:

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

Now note:

II Timothy 2:2

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

Note that in the great truths concerning the Church Timothy learned from Paul and not from Peter. Timothy was one of Paul’s successors, but not with the same apostolic authority. Neither did Paul learn these truths from Peter:

Galatians 1:16 and 17

“ . . . Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; . . .”

And note also:

Galatians 2:6:

“But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me.”

Now let us compare the statement of Matthew 16:19, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven” with:

Ephesians 3:1 to 3

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words.”

And:

Galatians 2:7 to 9:

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.”

DID PETER FORGIVE SINS?

Now how did Peter forgive sin, or bind on earth?

Note his words to Cornelius:

Acts 10:25 and 26

“And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.”

Now note Peter’s message:

Acts 10:43

“To HIM give all the prophets witness, that through HIS name whosoever believeth in HIM shall receive remission of sins.”

Christ forgave sins. Note:

Mark 2:5 to 7

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?”

Surely, if Peter had even claimed that he could forgive sins it would have been blasphemy, but he never made such a claim. He was not the Very Right Reverend Simon Peter. He had no archbishops nor cardinals under him. He did not belong to an order of priests except as a believer-priest with apostolic authority.

Note his words in:

I Peter 5:1 to 5

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

The Romanists wholly ignore I Corinthians 3:10:

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master. builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”

Neither do they believe the words of Romans 4:4 and 5 written to the saints at Rome

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Note how Corinthian idolaters became saints and got into the Church:

I Corinthians 6:11

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

I Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Peter’s keys had no more to do with this than with the salvation of sinners today.

GOD’S WAY OF SALVATION

II Thessalonians 2:13

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

To be sure, the Twelve had apostolic authority, special power, and exclusive Divine prerogatives. But they had no authority over Paul. Let us remember that Paul was Christ’s special Apostle, to whom, and through whom, was revealed the deep truths concerning the Church which is the Body of Christ. The mysteries of the Church are revealed in connection with the name “Body.” So far as we have any Scriptural record, Peter never spoke of the Church as the “Body.”

Note what Peter said in:

II Peter 3:15 and 16

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

As to the meaning of the keys of the kingdom, we must not only remember that the Twelve were ministers in Acts principally to Israel but that they are to resume that ministry in the coming kingdom age. Matthew 19:28.

TELL NO MAN THAT HE WAS JESUS THE CHRIST

Matthew 16:20

In Matthew 16:20 and 21, we note a radical change in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is marked by the words, “from that time forth.” The same division is marked in Luke 12:52, “for from henceforth.” Note Luke 12:50: “But I have a baptism to be baptized with: and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” Concerning the death baptism, Christ uses this language in Matthew 16:21:

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

This message is very much different from “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Now the King is to be rejected and crucified. Presently He will be saying, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you.” Matthew 21:43.

The King’s messengers were no longer to testify to Israel “Jesus is the Christ,” or Messiah. In John 20:31 we are told that the miracles and signs of the Lord Jesus were performed and recorded that they might believe that Jesus was the Christ. Therefore, we shall expect to find very few signs or miracles from Matthew 16 to Matthew 28, except the great sign, Christ’s body in the earth three days and three nights; the sign of Jonah.

Later on we read; in Acts 2:36, Acts 17:3 and Acts 18:5, that the apostles were testifying to Israel that Jesus was the Christ, the very thing Christ, in Matthew 16:20, told them not to do. This should convince any student of the Scriptures that when Christ on the cross prayed, “Father, forgive them,” the order of Matthew 16:20 was temporarily rescinded. So there were many signs

and miracles again for Israel from Acts 2 to Acts 18. Remember also that John's water baptism was that Christ might be manifest to Israel. John 1:31. So we find an absence of any record of water baptism between Matthew 16 and 28: It begins again with signs in Acts 2.

In Matthew 16:21, when Christ spoke of His rejection, He was saying in other words, that He was going to fulfill the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Every Christian should memorize that wonderful chapter. Christ was to be despised and rejected. He was to be led as a Lamb to the slaughter. He was to be the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world. According to the literal translation of Isaiah 52:14, Christ was to be disfigured when put to death. According to Psalms 22:16 they would pierce His hands and His feet.

Now note this difference in Matthew and John. In Matthew we reach the third year of the public ministry of Christ before we have the plain statement concerning His rejection and death. But in John, in the very first chapter, we read, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." John 1:11. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 1:17. "Behold the Lamb of God which beareth away the sins of the world." John 1:29. Then note John 2:19 and 21:

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spake of the temple of his body."

Here Christ spake of His death and resurrection.

CHRIST'S TRANSFIGURATION

In Matthew 17:1 to 13, we find the record of Christ's transfiguration. Peter, James and John went with Christ into the mountain.

Note:

Matthew 17:2 and 3

"And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him."

Note what Peter said concerning the same, years later:

II Peter 1:15 to 18.

"Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For ye have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."

We learned in Deuteronomy 34:4, that Moses did not get into the Holy Land. We learn in that same chapter that God buried Moses' body, In the transfiguration scene Moses is in the Holy Land. In Jude 9 we learn that Satan contended for the body of Moses; but Michael withstood him. Moses' body was never found by the Israelites. God took it. But now we see that Moses' body was transfigured with Christ's and Elijah's.

Some have said, that as Christ in Matthew 5:17 declared He had come to fulfill the law and the prophets, God speaking the words of Matthew 17:5, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased hear ye Him," was confirming this truth. Moses represented the law and Elijah the prophets. Others teach that as Moses died and rose again, and Elijah went to heaven without dying, the transfiguration speaks of:

I Thessalonians 4:16 and 17:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

In Romans 5:14, we are told that Adam was a figure of Christ. In Hebrews 11:17 to 19, we learn that Isaac on the altar delivered was the figure of the death and resurrection of Christ. The Old Testament tabernacle with its services-ceremonies and sacrifices was a figure of Christ and His work. Hebrews 9:8 to 12. Christ was not only prefigured by Adam and Isaac, but He was prefigured by many other characters, offerings and sacrifices.

Note:

I Peter 1:11

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

All the time Israel’s prophets were testifying of the sufferings and glory of Christ, Christ was in the form of God.

We read in Isaiah 52:14, (in the Hebrew) that Christ was to be disfigured. Then His glory, His transfiguration, was to follow. So the Bible is the story of the prefigured, the disfigured, and the transfigured Christ.

Let us remember, in this connection, that our glory too must follow our suffering:

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Romans 8:18. “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” I Peter 4:13. “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.” I Peter 5:1.

Now let us note what Christ, Moses and Elijah were talking about, when they were on the Mount:

Luke 9:30 and 31

“And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”

This makes us think of Luke 24:26 and 27, the words of Christ after His resurrection

“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Thus we see that while Christ was being transfigured, he was talking about being disfigured.

Of course any sensible person, not deceived by Satan, will know from these and other Scriptures that Jesus Christ was God’s foreordained Sin-bearer and not a religious martyr who came to an untimely end. If Christ came as a way-shower, to tell men that they could be saved by His ethical teaching, by character and good reputation, He could have gone back to heaven from

the mount of transfiguration. But He went down from that mount to go to Gethsemene and Calvary; for He knew the truth of I Peter 1:18 to 20 and Hebrews 9:22, “Without the shedding of blood no remission” “redeemed by the blood of the sinless Lamb of God.”

QUESTIONS—LESSON TWENTY-SEVEN

1. What was the sign of Jonas or Jonah?
2. According to Romans 10:21, how long did God stretch forth His hands unto Israel? What does He call them in that verse?
3. What did Stephen say to Israel in Acts 7:51 and 52? Whom did Stephen see in heaven? What did Israel do to Stephen?
4. Mention the seven parables? What happened to the seed of the sower? What is the field in the parable of the wheat and tares? What will be done to the tares? By whom and when? How would you explain the treasure hid in the field?
5. What is said in the Parable of the Pearl? In what sense can salvation be purchased? Who obtained eternal redemption for the believer according to Hebrews 9:12?
6. How would you explain progressive revelation in the Bible?
7. Tell the details of Christ’s feeding of the 5000 and mention statements made concerning Christ’s works and words in John 7:31 and 7:46.
8. In what coasts was Christ when He met the Syrophonecian Greek woman?
9. What did He say concerning this woman? What place did the woman take?
10. To what Rock do you believe Christ was referring in Matthew 16:18?
11. Explain the keys of the kingdom given to Peter in the light of Acts 2:14, Galatians 2:8, Acts 2:36 and Acts 15:7? How did Christ forgive sin?
12. Explain the difference between Peter’s keys and the dispensation to which Paul referred in Ephesians 3:1 to 3.
13. Why did the Eleven condemn Peter when he had preached to Cornelius, according to Acts 11:1 to 5? What does this prove concerning the ministry of the Twelve in the first nine chapters of Acts?
14. Read I Peter 5:1 to 5 and state if Peter there claimed to be anything like a pope or a Lord over God’s heritage? What did he say about subjection?
15. What did Peter say about Paul in II Peter 3:15 and 16? What do we note in Galatians 2:7?
16. Note Paul’s visit with Peter recorded in Galatians 1:13 to 20 and Peter’s visit with Paul in Galatians 2:11 to 16. Do you think that Paul recognized Peter as the head of the Church?
17. Now explain why Christ, in Matthew 16:20, instructed His apostles not to tell Israel that He was the Messiah? Did Peter disobey these instructions in Acts 2:36 on the day of Pentecost?
18. Why did Christ say to Peter, “Get thee behind me Satan” when Peter told Christ not to go to Jerusalem and die on the cross? (Matthew 16:21 to 24).
19. Tell the story of the transfiguration and something of its significance.
20. What were Christ, Moses and Elijah talking about at the time of the transfiguration?

LESSON NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT

MATTHEW CHAPTERS 18 TO 20

CHRIST AND LITTLE CHILDREN

“At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 18:1 to 4. “Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” Matthew 18:14. “Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.” Matthew 19:13 to 15.

Many Christian parents have been disturbed as to what the Bible teaches concerning the salvation of little children. Some theologians have taught that baptism by sprinkling superseded circumcision, and because circumcision was required for fellowship with God and His people (Genesis 17:14), and because babies eight days old were circumcised (Genesis 21:4), therefore the little child must thus be sprinkled to be saved. But such a doctrine is not taught in the Scriptures.

Note I Timothy 2:4 concerning God’s will: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” And Matthew 18:14: “Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.”

In Romans 5:12 to 21, we read how sin and death came by Adam, and righteousness and eternal life by Jesus Christ. Surely a little child who dies before the age of accountability is not conscious of his spiritual responsibilities in the matter of receiving God’s remedy for sin any more than he is responsible for his inherited sinful nature. If the child’s ruin is by Adam, his redemption is by Christ. Some one may ask, “where does predestination come in?” I Timothy 2:4 to 6 answers that question. Then so many say, it would be a blessed thing if most people should die before they reach the age of responsibility. What do you say to this?

TWO OR THREE GATHERED

Let us read Matthew 18:20: “For where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them.” And John 4:21: “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.”

Surely we find here a radical change from the requirements under the Old Covenant. Read Exodus 25:22: “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.” When we get into Paul’s Epistles we read of the Church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla.

From the days of Moses until after Christ died on the cross the House of God was the temple at Jerusalem. But today the House of God is the Body of Christ.

I Timothy 3:15

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Note also:

Ephesians 2:19, 21 and 22

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God:

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Since Christ revealed to Paul the truth concerning the Body of Christ no assembly-hall, or auditorium, has been called “the House of God” by the Holy Spirit. The House of God is made up of redeemed men and women, and is called the Body of Christ.

I Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Romans 12:5

“So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

We again mention the petition in the “Our Father” prayer, “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,” “For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:15.

Now read:

Matthew 18:34 and 35:

“And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

Read first Matthew 18:21 and 22, where Christ told Peter to forgive those who sinned against him seventy times seven times. Then follows the story of the man who owed the king ten thousand talents and some other man owed this man one hundred pence. The man had nothing to pay so the King canceled his debt of ten thousand talents. That represents what the Jews owed their God. The sins of others against the Jews compared with their sins against God, was one hundred pence compared with ten thousand talents. They would not forgive their fellowmen the debt of one hundred pence while God was willing to forgive them all. Matthew 18:32 and 33.

So his lord was wroth. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if you do not forgive.

Read with this story Luke 7:40 to 44 and 47 and 48:

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors.” “And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.”

Again let us read:

Acts 13:39

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

And:

Ephesians 4:32

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

We do thank God that our forgiveness of others is not on the grounds of the law; but under grace, after God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven us all our sins and justified us from all things.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

In Matthew 19:16 to 26, we have the record of a rich, young, moral, upright, religious ruler, who came to Jesus and asked, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” Matthew 19:16.

Remember Christ said, “the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” Matthew 8:20. They called Him a demon-possessed Samaritan and many other names. But here is a man with everything that should make him happy. He had kept the commandments from his youth up. He was young. He was rich. He was a ruler. And yet to the humble Nazarene he came for a different kind of inheritance. Note I Peter 1:3 and 4: “An inheritance uncorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.”

Note Christ’s reply and the young man’s predicament and decision: “Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.” Matthew 19:21 and 22.

Then the words of Christ in Matthew 19:23: “Then said Jesus unto His disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Today, in the reign of grace, we would not tell a rich man to first give up his riches and then follow Jesus, in order to receive eternal life. Because the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23. God’s truth is expressed for this age in Romans 3:24: “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Also in Romans 4:5: “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

It may be that great riches would keep the rich man from receiving the free gift. If he should receive Christ and become a spiritual and obedient child of God, he would not keep his riches while many of his fellow-saints were destitute and many missionaries were waiting for financial support.

THE ELEVENTH HOUR LABORER

As we noted the difference between the conditional petition in the “Our Father” prayer, and the forgiveness under grace, and the difference between the message of eternal life while

Christ was on earth and later on, under Paul's grace message, so we must interpret the laborers of Matthew 30 in the light of Pauline truth.

Note:

Matthew 20:1 to 16:

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house. Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Whatever application we may make of this story in this day of grace, we must keep in mind Romans 4:4 and 5: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt, But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And I Corinthians 3:8, 9 and 11, 14 and 15: "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God, ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." And II Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

In this day of grace, note Ephesians 2:8 to 10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; Not of works lest any man should boast, For ye are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

A sinner may be saved by the same grace, with the same Divine gift, at the first hour or at the eleventh hour. And note Ephesians 2:7: "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" But the Scriptures plainly teaches that redeemed sinners will receive different rewards for service

THE APOSTLES' REWARD IN THE KINGDOM

Note in Matthew 20:20 and 21, the request made by the mother of James and John: “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand; and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom.” Matthew 20:21.

Why did Christ reply to that ambitious mother “ye know not what ye ask.” Note Peter’s question and Christ’s reply in:

Matthew 19:27 and 28

“Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

The mother of James and John and also the twelve apostles did not understand that the Prophecy concerning Christ’s death and resurrection would first be fulfilled; that Christ would go to Calvary’s cross rather than to David’s throne. Some months later, even after His death and resurrection, they said, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” Luke 24:21. Then a few days thereafter they asked of Christ, “Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Acts 1:6.

Inasmuch as Peter, James and John “understood none of these things” concerning Christ’s approaching death and resurrection (Luke 18:32 to 34), we should not be surprised at the question of the mother of James and John. Within fifteen years from the day James’ mother asked that question, James was beheaded. Acts 12:2. Some years later Peter was to die as Christ had prophesied. Compare John 21:18 and 19 with II Peter 1:8 to 12

Matthew 20:22 and 23.

“But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask, Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able. And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.”

CHRIST ENTERS JERUSALEM

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all record what is often called, “Christ’s triumphant entry.” This was in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” Therefore, what is prophesied in Zechariah 9:9 is fulfilled in Matthew 21:4 to 11.

Note Matthew 21:6 to 8

“And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.”

But it was not long after that entry that Jesus Christ said, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out,” and above His head on the cross was written, “King of the Jews.” There He was wearing a crown, but it was made of thorns. The ass in the Bible speaks of meekness, humility and poverty. Remember the words of II Corinthians 8:9, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

But the real triumphant entry is recorded in:

Revelation 19:11 and 12 and 16

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew but He Himself.”

“And He had on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

That nineteenth chapter of Revelation tells of Christ the conquering King. He is not there crowned with thorns, but with diadems. The white horse speaks of the victor. Christ will not be judged by the world the next time; but He will judge the world. Note John 5:22: “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” “Which in His times He shall shew, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.” I Timothy 6:15.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

It is in connection with the Parable of the Vineyard that Christ uttered the words of:

Matthew 21:43

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

Before we study this parable, let us note several verses in Psalms 80 and Isaiah 5.

Psalms 80:8, 11, 13 to 15

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it.
She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.
The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.
Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;

And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.

Isaiah 5:1, 4 and 7

Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Let us remember that Israel, in the days of Samuel, rejected Jehovah as King: "And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay: but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your King." I Samuel 12:12. Then they rejected the Son of man as King. Note, Pilate presents Jesus to Israel as King: "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate said unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no King but Caesar. Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led Him away." John 19:14 to 16.

Then remember the message of mercy to Israel and another presentation of the King in Acts 3:14 to 21:

But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

And:

Acts 5:29 to 32:

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

But the rulers of Israel continued to reject their King. Then came the words of the Holy Spirit by Stephen and his murder: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One of Whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." Acts 7:51 and 52.

Now we quote:

Matthew 21:33 to 43

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his

servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Note that the chief priests and Pharisees knew that Christ spoke the parable against them:

Matthew 21:45

“And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.”

Now let us note Matthew 22:1 to 7, which should be studied with the Parable of the Vineyard. We quote Matthew 22:7: “But when the King heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”

In Matthew 23:38 Christ said: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” In Luke 21:20 to 22, Christ said, their house would be desolate when the armies surrounded Jerusalem. That would be the fulfillment of Matthew 22:7.

Therefore ye learn that the judgment pronounced in Matthew 23:38 was delayed until more than 35 years after Christ spoke the words.

It will be quite difficult to understand some of the messages in the first chapters of Acts unless we realize that Divine action in the matter of Israel's judgment was deferred for some years.

This will be seen by comparing Matthew 23:31 to 33 with Acts 3:25 and 26 and Acts 3:15 and 17:

Matthew 23:31 to 33

“Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

Acts 3:25 and 26

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities”

Acts 3:15 and 17

“And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”

Compare the terrible, unmerciful denunciation of Israel in Matthew 23 with the Divine message of mercy in Acts 3. Whether or not you decide that it is another offer of the kingdom to Israel, you will certainly acknowledge that something has caused the Lord to change His attitude toward the “hypocrites,” “fools,” and “blind guides,” of Matthew 23:16, 17, 19 and 23.

Note Acts 3:25 and 26, a message of mercy to the murderers of the Prince of Life: “Ye are the children of the prophets.” “Unto you first.” Compare these statements with “ye are the children of murderers,” “Ye serpents,” of Matthew 23:31 and 33. Certainly there is no indication in Acts 3:12 to 26 that the kingdom is being taken away from Israel. Surely Israel’s house is not yet desolate in Acts 3 and Acts 5. Note Acts 5:31: “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

But what a change in Stephen’s message! Read Acts 7:51 and 52.

In Matthew 23:1 to 3, we are taught plainly that Israel was very much under the law or Old Covenant, up to the time Christ died on the cross.

Matthew 23:1 to 3

“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.”

Let us note the place of the Gentiles at the time John the Baptist, Christ and the Twelve were preaching to Israel his message of baptism and repentance.

Ephesians 2:11 and 12.

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

Ephesians 4:18

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

I Corinthians 12:2

“Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.”

The Gentiles are called a foolish nation, no people, and dogs “But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.” Romans 10:19. “But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.” Matthew 15:24 to 26.

Now note what happened about thirty years later when the Jews thought that Paul led some Gentiles into the Jewish temple:

Acts 21:28

“Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.”

This verse and other Scriptures teach us something of the Jews’ feeling against the Gentiles. Note

Acts 10:28:

“And he said unto them; Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

Acts 11:1 to 5:

“And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me.”

We are sure that John the Baptist did not preach to Gentiles. He preached to Israel “repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Note Paul’s message in:

Acts 20:20 and 21 and 24:

“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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

In I Corinthians 3:10 Paul calls himself a wise Master-builder who had laid a foundation.

Now read:

Ephesians 3:1 to 3:

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words.”

Therefore, we must observe the Divine principle in II Timothy 2:15, if we would intelligently interpret, appropriate and apply the Word of God.

Note:

II Timothy 2:15:

“Study to skew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

QUESTIONS—LESSON TWENTY-EIGHT

1. What did Christ say about little children? What do you think the Bible teaches concerning the salvation of children?
2. What did Christ promise concerning two or more gathered in His name? What did He say to the woman at the well about worshipping God?
3. What is understood by the expression, “the House of Israel,” “the House of God” before Israel was set aside, and the House of God during this present reign of grace?
4. What is taught concerning the forgiveness of sins in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, in the story of the two creditors and the two debtors?
5. What question did the rich young ruler ask Christ? Why did the ruler go away sorrowfully?
6. Give in detail the parable of the labourers from the first hour to the eleventh hour, and the teaching of the Lord that they all receive the same pay.
7. Who is to sit on the twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel, according to Matthew 19:28? Do you think the Apostle Paul will be there? If not, why not?
8. Mention the request of the mother of James and John. What was the Lord’s answer?
9. Mention Christ’s two baptisms and the significance of each of them.
10. What Scripture was fulfilled when Christ rode into Jerusalem on the ass? What did the people cry?
11. Read Revelation 19:6 to 20 and tell what Christ is to do when He comes on the white horse.
12. In Isaiah 5 and Psalm 80 who did God call His vineyard? According to the Parable of the Vineyard, in Matthew 21, who did God send to Israel and what did Israel do with the Lord’s servants?
13. What did the keepers of the vineyard do with the Heir? What was fulfilled concerning the stone and the builders?
14. In what sense did God take the kingdom away from Israel and when was it taken away?
15. In Matthew 23, we learned that Christ called Israel’s rulers a generation of vipers; in Acts 3 He called them the children of the prophets. Do you think that the kingdom had been taken from Israel in Acts 3:14 to 26?
16. Compare Matthew 22:7 with Acts 3:17 to 21 and Acts 3:25 and 26. The murderers were not killed until after the period covered by the Book of Acts had ended. Their city was not destroyed. Did not God defer action in the matter of executing His judgment of Matthew 23:38 to 41?
17. Compare the “first” of Mark 7:27. Acts 3:26, Acts 13:46 and Romans 1:16, and state God’s order in the Book of Acts with respect to Jews and Gentiles. Why to the Jew first after Christ’s denouncement in Matthew 23:38 to 41?
18. According to Matthew 23:1 to 3, who sat in Moses’ seat? Why did Christ. tell His disciples to obey their instructions?
19. What was the attitude of the religious Jews against the Gentiles in the matter of their salvation? At the time of Christ’s ministry on earth, what was the place of the Gentiles according to Ephesians 2:11 and 12? What were they called?

20. According to Ephesians 3:1 to 3, what did Christ give to Paul for the Gentiles. Did Christ tell Paul to follow the instructions of those who sat in Moses' seat?

LESSON NUMBER TWENTY-NINE

CHRIST'S COMING—END OF THE WORLD

Note the question of the disciples in:

Matthew 24:33

“And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

Now referring to the Lord's answer to these very important questions, let us note:

Luke 21:20 to 25

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.

Also:

Luke 21:27, 28 and 31:

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then lookup, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

These verses from Luke will help us to better understand Matthew 24.

Note again:

Luke 21:22

“For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.”

Several times Israel's prophets during the Old Testament days foretold Israel's great tribulation.

Compare:

Jeremiah 30:7 to 9 and 29 to 31.

Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will

break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

With:

Matthew 24:21 and 22 and 29 to 31

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Here we find in Jeremiah and Matthew the Lord's prophecy concerning Israel's trouble and Israel's deliverance.

About 70 A. D. the Roman army surrounded and entered Jerusalem and killed more than a million Israelites and burned up their city and left Jerusalem desolate. But God did not send His angels and gather His elect from one end of heaven to the other. This is yet to be fulfilled.

When the siege of Jerusalem took place, about 70 A. D., there was no fulfillment of:

Zechariah 14:2, 3 and 4

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”

This is yet to be fulfilled. Note what is to follow: “And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.” Zechariah 14:9.

“And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.” Zechariah 14:16.

We must conclude in the light of Luke 21:22, that the Prophets of Israel prophesied concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., as well as the coming siege of Jerusalem.

Let us note the order of events in:

Matthew 24:5 to 10:

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you:

and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.”

1. ANTI-CHRISTS
2. WARS
3. FAMINES
4. PESTILENCE
5. EARTHQUAKES.

Now note Revelation 6:1 to 17:

1. WHITE HORSE AND RIDER
2. RED HORSE AND RIDER
3. BLACK HORSE AND RIDER
4. PALE HORSE AND RIDER
5. EARTHQUAKES

This chapter explains that war, famine, pestilence, earthquake, are meant—We might conclude that the White Horse and the Rider represents the Anti-Christ who is to come.

Note:

Matthew 24:40 and 41:

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”

Inasmuch as there is no suggestion of a resurrection of the dead in this chapter we must not confuse this gathering from the four winds with the rapture of the Body of Christ. It is a question here whether the righteous will be taken or left.

But not so in:

I Thessalonians 4:14 to 18

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

ENDURE UNTO THE END

Now note:

Matthew 24:13 and 14:

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

We note here who is to be saved: “He that shall endure unto the end.” The question then, “the end of what?” What question was Christ answering: “What shall be the sign of the end of the world (age) ?” Matthew 24:3. Inasmuch as some of the Lord’s servants are to be faithful unto death, it is difficult to know whether the Lord means enduring unto death or until the sound of the trumpet, the end of the great tribulation.

But we are not saved during the present reign of grace by enduring unto the end. Note the contrast:

II Timothy 1:9

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:24. “Justified freely by His grace.” The word freely here is the Greek word “dorian” and means “without a cause.” In Romans 3:28, it is “without the law.” In Romans 4:4 and 5, it is “without works.”

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Now compare:

Matthew 24:14

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

With:

Colossians 1:5, 6, and 23

“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world: and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.”

“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”

Note also Acts 19:10: “And this continued by the space of two years: so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” And II Timothy 4:17: “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.”

The gospel, which Paul declared had been preached to every creature under heaven, to all the Gentiles, was not “the gospel of the kingdom” which Christ and His apostles preached. Neither did the end come, as the end is described in Matthew 24. Therefore, we must conclude that before the end comes the gospel of the kingdom is going to be preached again. Whenever “the gospel of the kingdom” is preached the nation Israel is in view. This is not the message of the apostles to the Gentiles, in this day of grace.

We see, therefore, that we must interpret and apply the ministry and message of Christ on earth in the light of revelations concerning the dispensation of the grace of God, which Christ gave through and to the Apostle Paul after He went back to heaven.

Presently we shall briefly compare the program of John, the Lord Jesus, the Twelve and the Seventy (Luke 9:1 and Luke 10:1) as they proclaimed “the gospel of the Kingdom,” with the somewhat different program that Christ gave to Paul in the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God.

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS
THE SHEEP AND GOATS
Matthew Twenty-Five

The kingdom of heaven at the end of the age shall be likened unto five wise virgins with lamps and oil, and five foolish virgins with lamps but no oil.

Matthew 25:6 to 12

“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.”

Inasmuch as the foolish ones are called “virgins,” it is not easy to say just how to interpret this parable. It is by no means certain that the parable is to be applied to the coming of the Lord Jesus for the Church which is His body.

As the correct translation of verse 8 is “our lamps are going out,” there are some Christians who teach that these foolish virgins represent those who were once saved and then lost their salvation. Again others teach that the lamp represents the individual’s testimony and the oil speaks of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the foolish virgins represent members of Church organizations who have never received the Holy Spirit.

It is doubtful whether the coming of the Son of man, according to Matthew 25:13, is His appearing for the Body described in Ephesians and Colossians. Christ is never called “the Son of man” in His relation to the Body.

However, the Scriptures do teach that only such church members as have been born of the Spirit are truly saved. There will be many unsaved professing Christians on earth when the Lord comes to take His Church to glory; and these unsaved ones will be left on earth, if not destroyed.

Perhaps we can receive help as to the meaning of the parable by studying the judgment described in Matthew 25:31 to 46. We quote:

Matthew 25:31 and 32 and 34 and 40:

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divided his sheep from the goats.”

“Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

Here we have another Scripture which is very difficult to understand. We have Jesus Christ as the Son of man, as the King, sitting on a throne. This throne is to be set up after He comes to earth. He is to be both Judge and King. Nations will be judged by Him and divided, as a shepherd separates sheep and goats. To those on the right hand the King is to say, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34. To those on the left hand, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Matthew 25:41.

There is nothing to suggest that “fire” judgment is because of unbelief. Getting into the kingdom after Christ comes will be because of giving food and clothing to the brethren of the King, because of visiting the sick and those in prison.

How can we reconcile this with John 3:18: “He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God?”

Now note again II Timothy 1:9: “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.”

Also Colossians 1:13 and 14: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

And Romans 4:5: “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

In these Scriptures we learn, first; that the individual is condemned because of unbelief. Second; that believers are already in Christ’s kingdom. Third; that they are saved, not by works, but according to God’s purpose, not from the foundation of the world, but before.

Of course we learn in God’s Book that faith without works is dead, and that we should give food and raiment to the needy.

We quote:

James 2:14 to 17

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

We are told in Romans 12:13 that Christians should distribute to the necessity of saints and should be given to hospitality. We read this message in Hebrews 6:10: “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

I Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

We have two other messages in Corinthians:

II Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

And:

I Corinthians 3:14 and 15:

“If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.”

But we must study and interpret all of these Scriptures in the light of God’s grace message for this age.

The clearest presentation of God’s grace message is found in Ephesians 2:8 to 10:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Very definitely and emphatically are we here told that salvation is not of works; that the good works are to be manifested after the believing sinner has been worked upon by God, after he has been saved by the good work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In God’s message we are taught that the sinner is justified, sanctified, and saved unto eternal life, by faith without works, but that he will be rewarded according to his works.

God’s grace program is so clearly set forth in:

Titus 2:11 to 14 and Titus 3:5 to 8 and 14:

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation . . .”

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done.” “. . . our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

“. . . And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.”

Getting into Christ’s kingdom in the day of grace is different from entering in to His Father’s kingdom after He comes as the Son of man. Therefore we see that there is more than one kingdom message in the Bible.

As members of the Body of Christ we should know the difference between God’s purpose for, with, through, and by Israel and His eternal purpose in Christ (Ephesians 3:9 to 11).

We quote:

Ephesians 1:3 and 4:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND MY TIME IS AT HAND

Note the instructions of the Lord Jesus to His apostles in Matthew 26:18: “And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, MY TIME IS AT HAND: I will keep the passover at thy house with My disciples.”

For two years or more Christ's message had been "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In Matthew 21:43, Christ had said, "the kingdom shall be taken from you." Christ was the Stone which the builders rejected. Now "My time is at hand."

Now for the Passover, the Lord's Supper, the work of Judas the traitor, Gethsemane, the false witnesses, the illegal trials, the crown of thorns, the suffering, the crucifixion, the death and resurrection of the Son of God. So He says:

"MY TIME IS AT HAND"

Note how He stated this in:

John 12:27 and 31 to 33:

"Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour."

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die."

"For this cause came I unto this hour." This agrees with Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Christ became a man for the specific purpose of dying at a set time. He said in:

Matthew 26:24:

"The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man by Whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born."

Let us remember the statements in Acts 4:27 and 28 and Acts 13:29 and 30. Christ died in the manner He did, and at the time that He did, by God's determinate foreknowledge and in fulfillment of Israel's Scriptures.

Let us keep in mind that it was according to the Scriptures that Christ died for our sins. I Corinthians 15:3 to 6. Also keep in mind the truth of I Peter 1:18 to 21, that Christ was God's spotless Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world.

We read (in Zechariah 13:6) that Christ was to be wounded in the house of His friends, sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12 and 13), that they were to pierce His hands and His feet (Psalms 22:16) and gamble for His raiment (Psalms 22:18).

We read in I Corinthians 5:7:

"For Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

We know that the lamb of Exodus 12 spoke of God's spotless Lamb of God Which beareth away the sin of the world."

WHAT JUDAS DID

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him." Matthew 26:14 to 16. "And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great

multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.” Matthew 26:47 to 50. “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.” Matthew 27:3 to 5.

Then let us note the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in:

John 17:12

“While I was with them in the world I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”

And:

John 6:64, 70, and 71:

“But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him.”

“Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the Twelve.”

From these verses we learn that Judas was not a saint who lost his salvation. He was the son of perdition when he was chosen. Satan entered him for his special work, but when he was a lost sinner and not a redeemed saint.

THE PASSOVER—THE LORD’S SUPPER

Matthew 26:25 to 30

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

I Corinthians 11:23 to 26

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.

There are a few Christians who teach that the Lord's Supper was the continuation of Israel's Passover; and because in the coming kingdom age Israel is to be redeemed and the disciples are to eat and to drink with the Lord, that the Lord's Supper is not for Gentiles in the Body of Christ. They quote Matthew 26:28 and Ephesians 2:11 and 12, to show that Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from Israel's Covenants at the time that the Lord said, "this is My blood in the New Covenant."

But Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles and he declared that Christ instructed him to give this memorial to the Church "till He come." Literally, "till He shall have come."

CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE

With the Lord's experience in Gethsemane let us note:

Hebrews 12:3 and 4

"For consider Him That endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." "Such contradiction of sinners." "Unto blood striving against sin."

Read Matthew 26:30 to 56. Let us hold on to the words of Christ in verses 37 to 40:

"And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

And note this further word in:

Luke 22:43 and 44

"And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Here we learn something of the awful suffering of the holy Son of God Who knew that His hour had come when He would be made a curse, when He would be made sin. Galatians 3:13. II Corinthians 5:21.

In Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; we find recorded these words:

"Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." Luke 22:42.

When the Lord Jesus was but twelve years of age, He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:49. Then about twenty years later, He said unto His disciples, "My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34.

"Then said He: Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Hebrews 10:9 and 10.

God's will for His well-beloved Son meant not only miraculous works, His holy life of toil and sacrifice, but Gethsemane and Calvary. "For this cause came I unto this hour."

Christ, Himself, said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” John 12:24.

If Christ had not gone to Calvary to die for sinful humanity and by His resurrection and ascension become the firstfruits of them that slept, there would be no others in heaven. “But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

Because Christ, on the cross, did His Father’s will, believing sinners are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Christ went to Calvary so that God “might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:26.

Christ assured the apostles that He was not the helpless victim of circumstances in the hour of His death, that He was not a religious martyr Who came to an untimely end.

Note His words in:

Matthew 26:53 and 54:

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”

QUESTIONS—LESSON TWENTY-NINE

1. What question did the apostles ask Christ in Matthew 24:3 concerning the end of the age?
2. Read Luke 21:20 to 24 and tell when Israel’s desolation is to come and what is to become of Israel and Jerusalem.
3. What is to be fulfilled with regard to Israel and Jerusalem according to Zechariah 14:2 to 4? Who will be King over all the earth (Zechariah 14:9)?
4. What meaning would you give to the four horsemen of Revelation 6, in the light of Matthew 24:1 to 13?
5. Note Matthew 24:11 to 13. What meaning would you give to “he that shall endure unto the end?”
6. How does “the gospel of the kingdom” differ from “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24)?
7. Tell the story of the wise and foolish virgins. What did the wise virgins have that the foolish virgins did not have?
8. Tell the story of the judgments of the nations, as sheep and goats are separated. What will the King say to those on His left hand?
9. Now note what the King will say to those on His right hand. What kingdom is this prepared from the foundation of the world? Explain the difference between this kingdom and the kingdom of the Son of God’s love in Colossians 1:13 and 14.
10. In John 3:18 we read that sinners are not condemned if they believe on Christ. In Ephesians 2:8 to 10 believing sinners are saved by grace without works, unto good works. In Matthew 25:31 to 41 we learn that certain ones get into the kingdom because of deeds of kindness. Explain the difference.
11. How do good works enter into God’s spiritual program today? Mention the place of good works in James 2. Name some of the good works the believer should do in Romans 12.
12. Now compare Titus 3:5, “saved not by works of righteousness which we have done” with Titus 2:14: “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all

- iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” What lesson do we learn from these and other Scriptures?
13. In Ephesians 1:3 and 4, we learn that members of Christ’s Church today were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world and are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Compare with Matthew 25:34 “Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Explain the difference.
 14. Now compare the statements “The kingdom of heaven at hand” Matthew 3:2 and 4:17 with Matthew 26:18, Christ’s words, “My time is at hand.” What had Christ said concerning Israel and Israel’s kingdom in between these two statements?
 15. Do you think that Judas was first a saint and then lost his salvation? What did Christ say about Judas in John 17:12?
 16. Read carefully the account of the Passover and the Last Supper in Matthew 26. What did the Lord say to His apostles about His table in the kingdom? Now read I Corinthians 11 concerning the Lord’s Supper. Until what time are believers to take the bread and cup?
 17. Mention the events that took place in Gethsemene.
 18. What did Christ say in Gethsemene concerning His Father’s will? What did Christ accomplish for the believer by doing His Father’s will (Hebrews 10:9 and 10)?
 19. Mention at least five Scriptures to prove that Christ was God’s foreordained sin bearer and not simply a religious martyr.
 20. What do we learn concerning the sacrifice of Christ in I Peter 1:18 to 20; Acts 4:26 to 28 and Acts 2:22 and 23?

LESSON NUMBER THIRTY

THE TRIAL—CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

FALSE WITNESSES

“Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death: But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses.” Matthew 26:59 and 60.

Christ was in the presence of Caiaphas, the high-priest, the scribes and the elders. Simon Peter sat with the servants. Note what Christ said to the high-priest: “Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:64.

Note what followed: “What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands, Saying, Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ? Who is he that smote Thee?” Matthew 26:66 to 68.

And note what Peter did:

“Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But He denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.”

“Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.” And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, Which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.” Matthew 26:69, 70, 74 and 75.

Peter went away and wept bitterly and was wonderfully restored to fellowship and power. Judas, in sorrow and disgrace, went away and hanged himself. They were both sorry for their deeds. But what a difference!

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

“When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him they led Him away, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.” Matthew 27:1 and 2.

According to Isaiah 53:7, Christ was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

Note Matthew 27:13 and 14:

“Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee? And he answered him to never a word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.”

CHRIST OR BARABBAS

“The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus Which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified.” “Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.” Matthew 27:21, 22 and 26.

Barabbas means “the father’s son.” He was a murderer, a notable criminal, guilty of insurrection. Christ was the Father’s Son, the sinless man, the greatest benefactor of mankind the world has ever known. The Divine Record is, “He went about doing good.” “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.” Hebrews 5:8. “For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Hebrews 2:10.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” I Peter 3:18.

What a choice for Israel to make! Is it any wonder that Christ on the cross cried, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34.

Note the Lord’s message to Israel after they had committed that awful crime,

“ . . . Jesus Whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go .” “But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of Life, Whom God hath raised from the dead: whereof we are witnesses.” “But now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” Acts 3:13 to 15 and 17.

This is explained in Matthew 27:24 and 25:

“When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be onus, and on our children.”

Surely His blood has been upon them and their children, and it still is, and is yet to be.

Pilate's question is for each individual Jew or Gentile to answer today, "What shall I do then with Jesus Which is called the Christ?" What is the only sensible thing to do? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. "But as many as received Him to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1:12.

Christ went to Calvary to do His Father's will and by God's grace taste death for every man. Hebrews 2:9.

The all-important question for any and every sinner to answer is, "What must I do with God's all-sufficient remedy for sin?" "God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by That Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Acts 17:31.

In other words, we must either meet Christ as Saviour in this day of grace and hear Him say, "Come unto Me," or meet Him hereafter as Judge, and hear Him say, "Depart from Me."

IN HIS HUMILIATION

Note Philippians 2:8: "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Note what the eunuch was reading when Philip preached Jesus unto him:

"In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth." Acts 8:33.

Here we note something of how the Scripture was fulfilled:

"And they stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head. And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own raiment on Him and led Him away to crucify Him." "And they crucified Him and parted His garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots." Matthew 27:28 to 31 and 35.

HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE

Note Matthew 27:42:

"He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him."

Christ Himself had said the same thing in another sense. If He had saved Himself, He could not have saved others. We read what He said about the corn of wheat and about the twelve legions of angels. Now note what He said in connection with His statement concerning the corn of wheat: "He that loveth His life shall lose it; and he that hateth His life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." John 12:25.

If Christ had saved Himself, there would have been no salvation for us. So we say, with Paul, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift."

From the scene here described we can better understand:

Galatians 3:13

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”

And:

II Corinthians 5:21:

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

THE VEIL AND THE EARTHQUAKE

“Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with Him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things which were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.” Matthew 27:50 to 54.

Yes, truly, this was the Son of God. That veil for years and centuries had been hanging in the sanctuary between the holyplace and the most holy-place. Note Hebrews 9:7, 11, 12 and 24.

The high-priest parted the veil from bottom to top. God rent it from top to bottom:

“Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.” Hebrews 10:19 and 20.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA THE RICH MAN

Note Isaiah 53:9:

“And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death: because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.”

“When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: He went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone in the door of the sepulchre, and departed.” Matthew 27:57 to 60.

THE RESURRECTION

More than twenty times in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we find the record that Christ foretold His death. Generally when He mentioned His death He also foretold His resurrection.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” John 2:19.

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.” John 10:17 and 18.

“And they shall scourge Him and put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again.” Luke 18:33.

“And He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” Mark 8:31.

Thus we see that the Lord was not taken by surprise and we see the truth of Acts 4:27 and 28:

“For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.”

Concerning the resurrection of Christ, we have heard one of His apostles called “doubting Thomas.” Why?

“And when He had so said, He shewed unto them His hands, and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.” “But Thomas, one of the Twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.” John 20:20 and 24.

Note what Thomas said:

“Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” John 20:25.

But how about the other apostles?

Mary Magdalene, another Mary and Joanna went very early on the first day of the week to Joseph’s sepulchre and found it empty. “And they remembered His words. Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” Luke 24:8 and 7.

They hastened with the startling news to tell the Eleven:

“And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.” Luke 24:11.

Was Thomas any more of a doubter than the other ten? They were all unbelievers as to the fact of Christ’s resurrection. There was certainly no collusion nor conspiracy on the part of the Lord’s disciples to deceive anybody concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

We read in Acts 3:15 concerning the Jews, “They killed the Prince of Life Whom God hath raised from the dead.”

We find this statement in I Corinthians 2:8: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

The Jews, who killed the Prince of Life, who crucified the Lord of Glory, declared that if the report should get out that Christ were risen from the dead, “the last error shall be worse than the first.” They said to Pilate

“Sir, we remember that that deceiver said. while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away and say unto the people. He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.” Matthew 27:63 and 64.

Pilate gave them all the authority they asked for:

“Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as sure as ye can, So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.” Matthew 27:65 and 66.

Then note what they did after the resurrected Christ appeared to His disciples:

“Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye. His

disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." Matthew 28:11 to 15.

THE WOMEN FIRST AT THE SEPULCHRE

In Matthew 27:55 and 56, we learn that the women who had ministered unto Jesus were eye-witnesses of His crucifixion. It would seem that Mary Magdalene was the leader. These women too were the first to reach the sepulchre, even before daylight, on the first day of the week. Note what they saw:

"And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." "And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: For I know that ye seek Jesus, Which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Matthew 28:2, 5 and 6.

Then Jesus appeared and they held Him by the feet and worshipped Him: "Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." Matthew 28:10.

Even after the Eleven saw Christ, "some doubted" (Matthew 28:17).

Note the message of the Eleven to Israel some months later: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Acts 5:30 to 32.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matthew 28:19 and 20.

As Mark has been called "an abbreviated Matthew" we quote with Matthew 28:19 and 20, Mark 16:15 to 18:

"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Let us study this commission with the other commissions and messages of the apostles.

Matthew 10:5 to 8

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not unto the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."

Acts 1:8

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Acts 11:19

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.”

Acts 10:28

“And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

Acts 10:20

“Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.”

Acts 13:2

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.”

Acts 22:21

“And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

Romans 11:13 and Romans 11:11

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.”

Galatians 2:7 to 9

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.”

Ephesians 3:8

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

Ephesians 3:1 to 3

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words;”

Galatians 1:15 to 17

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called-me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.”

Galatians 1:12

“For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

II Timothy 2:2

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

II Timothy 4:1 and 2

“I charge thee therefore before God. and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

There has been much misunderstanding and controversy concerning the so-called “great commission.” The question is, did Christ in heaven give to Paul a commission that supplemented or superseded the great commission? Note that Paul preached in much infirmity of the flesh. Galatians 4:13. In connection with his superabundance of revelations, Paul received a thorn in the flesh. II Corinthians 12:1 to 12. The authority for His apostleship is stated in I Corinthians 9:1 to 10. Then note I Corinthians 3:10 the foundation that was laid by Paul, and Romans 15:14 to 20. We quote II Corinthians 12:12:

“Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”

Then again, I Corinthians 1:17 must be compared with the great commission

“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

If the Twelve, in Matthew 28:19 and 20, were authorized to preach the gospel of grace to Gentiles, why did they agree in Galatians 2:9 to go to Jews? Why was it unlawful seven years after the great commission for the Eleven to go to Gentiles? Acts 10:28. Why did the eleven apostles condemn Peter for preaching to a respectable God-fearing Gentile? Acts 11:1 to 5. If Paul worked under the great commission, why were revelations from heaven necessary to instruct him concerning “the gospel of the uncircumcision” and “the dispensation of the grace of God?” Galatians 2:7 and Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

It was years after the great commission was given before Christ from heaven instructed Paul to preach “His unsearchable riches” to Gentiles.

Carefully study the great commission in the light of the events in the Book of Acts and Paul’s grace message in his Epistles. Whatever commission we are under today.

Let us note and obey the message of:

II Corinthians 5:16 to 21:

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

QUESTIONS—LESSON THIRTY

1. What would you say concerning the witnesses who testified against Jesus Christ?
2. Relate Christ’s warning to Peter; how many times Peter would deny Him and how it was fulfilled. What did Peter do when the cock crew?
3. What Prophecy did Christ fulfill when He was silent in Pilate’s presence?
4. What man, with Christ, was presented to Israel by Pilate for their choice? What was the cry of the Israelites?
5. Relate what is recorded in Acts 3:12 to 15, concerning the release of the murderer. What is Christ called in Acts 3:15?
6. What did Pilate do when he said he was free from the blood of the innocent Christ?
7. What judgment did the Israelites pronounce upon themselves?
8. Note Pilate’s question, “What then shall I do with Jesus called the Christ?” What is said about Christ in John 5:22? Must not every person meet Christ as Saviour or as Judge?
9. How was Christ robed when they mocked Him as King of the Jews? What was the significance of the thorns in His crown?
10. Did the people tell the truth when they said, Christ saved Himself but He could not save others? Quote concerning Christ as the Corn of Wheat.
11. Where did the veil hang in the temple? What happened to it when Christ was crucified? What did the veil symbolize?
12. What Scripture was fulfilled when Joseph put the body of Christ in his own sepulchre?
13. Name several Scriptures in which Christ foretold His death and resurrection. What did He say in John 10:17 and 18?
14. In the death of Jesus Christ, what took place according to Acts 4:27 and 28?
15. Relate the visits of Christ in His resurrection body and why Thomas is called “doubting Thomas.”
16. What did the Jews fear concerning the Body of Christ? What request that they made of Pilate was granted? What happened?
17. What disciple was first at the sepulchre? Tell what took place there; what they saw and heard.

18. Quote the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20. How did this differ from the commission of Matthew 10:5 to 8? As we look into the first chapters of Acts did not the Twelve continue under Matthew 10:5 to 8?
19. Note carefully the commission of Mark 16:14 to 18. What was to follow faith, baptism and salvation? Should these signs follow today?
20. Where did Paul receive his orders according to Galatians 1:12 to 18? What did he receive according to Ephesians 3:1 to 3 and Ephesians 3:8?