

The True Kingdom of God

by

William M. Wilson

Table of Contents

Chapter 1.....	The True Kingdom of God
Chapter 2.....	The Kingdom Parables
Chapter 3.....	The Bible is a Spiritual Book
Chapter 4.....	The Kingdom Nature

Introduction

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelations 3:22) The Spirit is travailing with the Church today in anticipation of Her bringing forth the purposes of God. This travail is like a woman about to give birth. She tries to be content but will not be satisfied until she receives the fruit of her desire. Paul said "I am in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." (Galatians 4:19) Paul said HE had the pains of childbirth just as many others who minister to His Church (see Philippians 3:7-14.) Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness know this feeling as well as those with a humble and contrite spirit. We cry out like David, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalms 42:1,2) Although we have been redeemed and filled with His Spirit, we yet long for a "salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." (I Peter 1:5) The "zeal of His House" (John 2:17) consumes us and His message deposited deep within us is "like burning fire shut up in my bones." (Jeremiah 20:9)

The Lord ignited a fire within me about the true Kingdom of God. The purpose of this writing is to furnish a fresh and timely exposition of Christ's words, "My Kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) Whereas much of evangelical Christendom has adopted the teaching of a natural and futuristic kingdom, this will be a timely and more complete look at scriptures which reveal that the Kingdom is spiritual, it's found in His Person and is available NOW. The kingdom is wherever men accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ. His nation and people are believers (I Peter 2: 9) united in faith, who have enthroned Him as King in their hearts. Since "the seeing eye and the hearing ear are from the Lord", (Proverbs 20:12) I pray as you read this that God "may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe." (Ephesians 1:17-19) God told Isaiah "Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me," (Isaiah 45:11) and Jeremiah "Call unto me. And I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not!" (Jeremiah 33:3)

References will be from the New International or King James version.

This document will be expanded as the Lord gives utterance. It can be copied, printed or distributed as the Lord leads. Replies can be sent to overcomer7@gmail.com

The True Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God is the unhindered expression of Gods' glory, through people, so He can touch the world. It isn't Judaism, Christianity or some future event. It isn't bound by or belonging to any certain name or religion. It is Christ, expressed in the earth through His spiritual Body, the Church. His Body isn't a predictable religious gathering, meeting at only assigned times and places. His Body is known by its seen and heard EXPRESSION of the grace of God.

Many today are searching for the true spiritual kingdom which Christ brought to all men. Jesus said "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33) and He didn't mean to seek for religion, "holy" places or only on set Sabbath days. He wants us to seek out and know where HE can be EXPRESSED. Jesus also LOOKED for the Father's MOVEMENT in the earth. He said "I only DO what I SEE the Father DOING." (John 5:19) "The Father.,,commanded me WHAT to say and HOW to say it." (John 12:49) "I do nothing on my own but speak just what THE FATHER HAS TAUGHT ME." (John 8:28) "My TEACHING IS NOT MY OWN. It comes from Him who sent me." (John 7:16) And John 15:15 reads "everything that I LEARNED from my father I have made known to you." Jesus was ALERT and SENSITIVE to God's grace about to set someone free. He "grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men," (Luke 2:52) and He "learned obedience through what He suffered," (Hebrews5:8) therefore, He LEARNED the Kingdom. When He "felt the power flow out from Him" (Mark 5:30)—He FELT the Kingdom. He strained to HEAR the voice of the Spirit and when the Father spoke to Him three times, He HEARD the Kingdom.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the Kingdom! One day when Jesus was asked by His disciples to teach them to pray, He said "This is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9) He prayed, "Thy Will be done! On Earth! As it is in Heaven!" A more correct translation of this phrase would be "Thy will be done, as in the heavens, so on earth". Jesus prayed that right here on Earth, the perfect will of God should be known and acted upon as quickly as it is now in the heavenlies. Shouldn't we be praying that way? This prayer reveals that the kingdom (His rulership) hadn't fully appeared yet, and the answer to Christ's prayer was yet to come. Christians have been praying "Thy kingdom come" for two-thousand years but they are largely ignorant of what they pray! If you dissect this prayer word by word, you can glean much more from it.

OUR FATHER shows Christ's relation to us as well as to God. Saying "Our Father," points to one's submission to God's authority in his own life. One can only say "Father," to that One who has brought us Life and to whom we freely submit.

THY KINGDOM reveals that we recognize His personal rule as Master in our life. We know that we "have been bought with a price (the blood of Jesus) and that "we are not our own." (1Corinthians 6:19,20) We now pledge allegiance to a heavenly King.

THY KINGDOM COME expresses our desire to have his will expressed in us. Paul said "He was pleased to reveal His Son, Jesus IN ME!" (Galatians 1:16)

THY WILL BE DONE shows our preference for God's will over our own. Isaiah said "Thou art the Potter, I am the clay." Jesus said "Not My will but Thine be done."

ON EARTH means here, practical and in reality. Just as "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," (John 1:14) so His Word should become expressed in us.

AS IT IS IN HEAVEN means that His Mighty Rule should be openly manifested here, in the Body of Christ, as smoothly and obediently as angels carry it out in heaven. There is no thought, reasoning or committee in Heaven! There are no boards, seminars or business meetings to rule on God's will. His will is acted upon instantly and exactly as given. The Church has forgotten her manners before heavenly beings and before her King! All the problems in our lifeless church would VANISH if we knew Christ as our KING and we were His bondservant. People come to church now and judge the message they hear, rate the musical performance, make excuses for not becoming like Jesus, they rarely pray and refuse to take up a cross! HOW can the kingdom come and His will be done on earth unless we HEAR, ACCEPT, and ACT on it?

Honest study shows that the kingdom of God hadn't been entered or enjoyed before Christ came to us. He preached that the kingdom of God was entirely different than anything else around at that time and wanted to show us that it wasn't a natural Israel or Jerusalem that He wanted. Jesus said "THE KINGDOM DOES NOT COME VISIBLY-THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU." (Luke 17:20,21) "MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD! MY kingdom is FROM ANOTHER PLACE." (John 18:36)

"MY" says it would be entirely of Christ! Bought and Cared For! I'm reminded of the slave rite in Exodus 21 which allowed a bought slave to go free after six years. If he wanted to keep his provided wife and their children, he would declare "I love my master...I will not go out free." His master would lead him to a door (John 10:9) and then mark him by boring through his ear with an awl, and the slave would remain in his service. This really goes against man's carnal nature to stay in slavery. Our flesh wants its independence, its own property and to yield to its

own desire. But, a saved bondservant cries out "I LOVE MY MASTER! I DON'T WANT TO GO OUT ON MY OWN! Take My Ear--I only want your Voice and Word in my inner man! More than deer thirst for water, I thirst for you! PIERCE ME AT THE DOOR!" "KINGDOM," a kingdom is that which is ruled over or what is OWNED. True kingdom citizens are actively obedient and actively relating to their governing Head. "IS," You know the wind by its MOVEMENT. (John 3:7) The I AM IS MOVING in the Earth, the Ark IS stirring and wants God's people to TAKE HIM to NEW places so His Grace can touch the Earth! "Faith IS the substance of things hoped for, it IS the evidence of things not seen. Without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please him: he... must believe that he IS, and that he IS a rewarder of them that diligently seek him!" (Hebrews 11:1,6) "NOT" remedies, religion, tradition, or a futuristic political system. It doesn't exclude or divide people. We need to memorize what Paul said, "The kingdom of God is NOT meat or drink but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17) A carnal man goes after natural prosperity (meat & drink) instead of spiritual prosperity. "OF," means relating to or about. "They are not OF the world, even as I am not OF the world." (John 17:16) That's how Jesus (before the soldiers took him) could say "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30) "THIS" the fragile, self-destructive and chaotic systems of man seen today. This (the one you see with your natural eyesight) present-tense, ever-changing, chaotic cosmos is never obedient to any system very long. Remember, "we walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Corinthians 5:7) Faith is greater than 20/20 vision; it's the evidence of things not seen. "WORLD" Hebrews 11:3 says "the seen was made by the unseen." Therefore, heaven is just as real as the world known now. The Kingdom of God (and subjects) is a real "other-worldly" realm. Paul said "Do not CONFORM any longer to the PATTERN of this WORLD, but be TRANSFORMED (different in ways and thoughts) by the renewing of your mind," (Romans 12:2) Remember...we're in the world but not OF it.

Jesus came, not only to bear our sin and reveal the nature of God, but also to reveal a new kingdom and covenant with man. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing." (Luke 9:11) In Luke 9:2 "He sent them out to preach the kingdom." Even after His resurrection (Acts 1:3) Jesus taught about the Kingdom! This was the central theme of His teaching and He wanted His followers to enter, understand and live in His Kingdom. Once empowered with the Holy Spirit themselves, every disciple could see and understand this new, powerful and spiritual realm of life. Acts 8:12 says "Philip preached the good news of the Kingdom." In Acts 19:8 Paul came "arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God" and Acts 28:23 says that Paul "from morning until evening-explained and declared the kingdom of God." Paul "boldly and without hindrance, preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 28:31)

John the Baptist began preaching "The kingdom is at hand." (Matthew 3:2) "At hand" meant that His kingdom was CLOSE-in TIME and POSITION. Jesus also preached "The kingdom is

near." (Matthew 4:17) He said "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Matthew 12:28) Luke 4:43 reads "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because THAT IS WHY I WAS SENT." He said "The law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it." (Luke 16:16) Jesus said "I tell you, among those born of women (including Abraham, Moses, David or the prophets) there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (Luke 7:2) Children of His kingdom are "children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:13). These are "made alive...and raised up with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:5,6). Jesus said "whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:4)

The first and truest account of life in the Kingdom of God is found in the book of Acts. The early Church was anointed, grew rapidly, met daily from house to house, had all things in common and went in and out of all other temples sharing the gospel. They were taught to "not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." (Colossians 2:16-17) "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." (Colossians 2:8) Time has seen all these things creep back into the Church and now the organized and lifeless religions of Catholicism, Judaism and Protestantism are pitifully bound by such things. True Christianity is NOT a religion; it's a RELATIONSHIP with God through Jesus Christ!

Jesus plainly stated a difference between the worldly, religious kingdom about to fade away and the spiritual kingdom ready to come on the scene. He used the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" to emphasize that this new reign would come in a supernatural manner from His higher world. He was always contrasting the heavenly and earthly world and wanted to awaken his disciples (and us) to the idea of an unchanging absolute perfection and supernatural character of His heavenly kingdom.

The fact that Jesus never gave any details or discussion how the kingdom of God would work out in relation to a natural political society should indicate the spiritual nature of it. Even when they came to trick him with the tax paying issue, Jesus confirmed his kingdom would not be a natural one by saying "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." (Matthew 22:21) He showed that the natural kingdom was due its tax and the spiritual one was due, also. Jesus never denied the coexistence of different kingdoms and their political systems but rather confirmed them, as do all New Testament writers. Christ revealed that His people would be in the world but not of it. In John 16:33 He said "In this world you will have trouble.

But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 17:14 says "for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is NOT that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it." Christ was concerned only with a spiritual kingdom for a "born again" humanity. The spiritual qualities that Jesus would emphasize for His spiritual Kingdom would not be the same as those of an earthly, political one.

Jews thought the Kingdom of God was based in Judaism and God's activity in the world would be to intervene on behalf of Israel. Israelites were anxious for God to bless them with a strong militaristic Messiah who would deliver them from Roman rule, establish a powerful political kingdom similar to King David's and bring them the fruits of a prosperous, conquering nation. Jesus wasn't the kind of Messiah that the Jews, or the disciples, were looking for. He didn't appear as a renowned prophet or a popular military hero. He wasn't a rich, proud, charismatic man looking for fame and fortune. His own brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world. For even his own brothers did not believe in him." (John 7:3-5) Not only did He not claim any political or nationalistic agenda for His Kingdom, he went about as a teacher and healer, casting out demons and forgiving sins. He claimed God was His Father and for this He was sent by the religious hierarchy to be crucified. In front of Pilate he proclaims the great truth "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." (John 18:36)

Into this carnal and religious world, Christ came as the true Messiah. The Roman political scene surely wouldn't allow Him and the Jews couldn't recognize him. "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him." (John 1:11) In His few years of public ministry, Jesus' message was misunderstood by people blinded by racial and religious prejudice. The woman at the well (John 4) had her "blindness" uncovered only after His miraculous intervention. Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan exposed the Jews prejudice toward other people.

His Grace and miracles were felt, seen and heard when they were poured out upon the needy and He's touching people today, therefore, the Kingdom of God is moving among us. Those who touch the kingdom regularly are blessed and the truly "crucified with Christ" can walk in His kingdom daily.

In Christ "God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell...and through him to reconcile to himself all things." (Colossians 1:19,20) In Christ, God manifested himself bodily for all mankind-powerful and available. Jesus revealed the very imprint of God's nature (Hebrews 1:4) and brought not only the preaching of His Kingdom but also its much needed performance. The grave spiritual situation and hour Jesus found Himself in, demanded a strong remedy and word.

As He surveyed the masses of people gathered to hear John the Baptist and then Himself, he saw them as a field ripe for harvest and sheep without a shepherd. The masses were wandering spiritually, unable to find life in Judaism. The crowds grew until Jesus was forced to teach from a boat but as His hour grew closer, His words to them grew more demanding of self-examination and sacrifice which caused many to leave Him. (John 6:66)

Many times in Jesus' ministry the spiritual condition of His hearers would be so poor, He couldn't work or teach powerfully. In John 11:33 "he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and in Mark 8:22-25 he had to take a man out of his town and pray for him twice. To heal Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:35-42) He had to put people out of the house before He could heal her because they had laughed Him to scorn. Matthew 13:54-58 reads "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? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren James, and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." He knew Israel's spiritual condition was so poor that they had natural eyes and ears but none spiritually to recognize Him, hear His message to repent and start bearing fruit. They could have reversed God's plan to take the Kingdom from them and give it to another people.

The Jews had not expressed God's kingdom on earth as He wanted and now God was going to take His calling and favor to another nation and people to express it. Israel had fallen from a great spiritual height and calling by not serving God wholeheartedly. When God called them out of Egypt He said to them "You have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19: 4-6) The same blessing and commission is now upon the Church! (See 1 Peter 2: 5-10) The Jew's own Law made provision for Gentiles to become Israelites (Exodus 12:48) and Israel could have been God's Light to reach the whole world. God had promised Abraham to be "heir of the whole world," (Romans 4:13) but Israelites only wanted their own little country, religion and nothing more. God's true Israel, the Church, is to take this vision as True Heirs and learn to "subdue and have dominion" in the earth. Jesus told His disciples " I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." (Luke 10:19) The Church is SUPPOSED to reckon themselves as Christ's AMBASSADORS (2 Corinthians 5:20) from our heavenly Jerusalem, here to reconcile the world to Christ and put down His enemies.

Many Old and New Testament scriptures reveal that God would turn from the Jews to the Gentiles to form a people and nation for His purposes. Jesus taught this in the parables; that the disobedient Jews would be punished and another people would take their place. An early council of the apostles in Jerusalem was called to decide upon the matter of Gentiles coming into the Church. After hearing testimony from Paul and Barnabus about God's grace and miracles among the Gentiles, James declares to the assembly that the Gentiles coming into the Church and becoming fellow heirs in Christ was the spiritual fulfillment of prophecy. (See Acts 15:16)

Jesus never sanctioned the temple, Jews, Jerusalem or Judaism. Christ showed that He had turned from Judaism when He said "I will build MY CHURCH." (Matthew 16:18) "My" would denote something that totally belonged to Him and that Judaism was a thing of the past. He used a new word, "church", to show a difference between them. Everything about the new Church would be spiritual and heavenly. Look at Ephesians 3:20; 2:6; 3:10; 4:8-12; 6:12. His Church would be built on ALL NEW ground with all new spiritual materials. Christ himself would be the Cornerstone, the foundation would be the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20) and the walls would be saints who are Living Stones. (1 Peter 2:5) This building would GROW INTO A TEMPLE which would be INHABITED BY GOD. (Ephesians 3:21,22)

The religious of Christ's day always questioned Jesus about the kingdom as in Mark 12:32, "And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love [his] neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offering and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' And no man after that dared ask him [any question]." Jesus gave this man precious insight into the mind of God. He revealed that the Law, with all its rules, (do's, don'ts and ceremony) wasn't what God was after. Samuel had revealed this, saying "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22) King David said this also in Psalms 51:16 "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart." In Matthew 9:13, Jesus said "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." A man who loves God and his neighbor as himself is considered more righteous than one who performs religious duty!

Another teacher of the Jews named Nicodemus came by night seeking answers and Jesus told him the secrets of coming into His Kingdom. He said "unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" and "unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." (John 3:3-5) Jesus told Nicodemus that it was going to take a spiritual birth to enter the new spiritual kingdom. This new kingdom would not be anything like the old natural one seen by the

religious world and was going to be one which flesh and blood couldn't enter (I Corinthians 15:50). Just as the religious of Jesus' day did not understand Him; people don't understand the kingdom of God today because they still try to do everything by the mind or flesh instead of by the Spirit.

Jesus told His disciples "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all [these] things are done in parables." (Mark 4:1) It wasn't unto the high, mighty or religious, but it was to true seekers and disciples that He wanted to reveal Himself and this coming Kingdom to. Jesus said "I thank thee, O Father... because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matthew 11:25)

The next chapter is about KINGDOM PARABLES. You will see further into Kingdom mysteries, Israel's judgment and Christ's return.

THE KINGDOM PARABLES

The parables are a progressive revelation about judgment on the Jews as well as mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Some were for the instruction of people living two thousand years ago and some are reaching to the end of the Church Age. Jesus didn't fabricate stories, but took actual past, present or future happenings and surrounded them in symbolic language to teach spiritual truth.

Parables like The Sower, Wheat and Tares and Binding the Strong Man reveal the enemy and his work. God's plan to recover a lost world using all nations to serve Him is shown in The Laborers and the Prodigal Son. His forgiveness, redemption and grace is shown in The Lost Sheep, Pearl of Great Price, and The Unjust Steward. Judgment on the Jews for breaking covenant and not bearing fruit comes through in The Barren Fig Tree, The Wicked Tenants, Two Sons, and The Talents. The Jews failure to accept His Son as Messiah and Bridegroom is displayed in The Wedding Feast, The Wise and Foolish Virgins and The Householders' Vineyard. Parables hiding truths of Christ's return are The Wise and Foolish Virgins, The Marriage Feast, The Net and The Wheat and Tares. The parables cover a wide range of God's activity with man and some cover thousands of years.

Jesus used parables to hide mysteries of the Kingdom from the religious scribes and Pharisees and reveal them for instruction to disciples. One day, the disciples asked Jesus why he taught in parables. He replied, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 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." (Matthew 13:10-17)

We can see from this, that Jews were already judged unworthy of a new covenant and kingdom and that God was calling out a new people and nation through Christ. Using parables pleased Jesus so much He said "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matthew 11:25)

The mysteries of the Kingdom would be first taught by Christ and then later by the Holy Spirit through Paul's teaching. Paul shows that one of the mysteries would be the Gentiles becoming fellow-heirs of Christ and the mystery of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27) We'll begin our study with...

THE SOWER

(Matthew 13:3-23, Mark 4: 3-20, Luke 8:5-15)

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

"In the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways." (Hebrews 1:1) God had sown spiritual seed into the spiritual field of Israel for centuries and was now come to judge those who had heard His word by how well they responded.

This parable shows that the word of the Kingdom must be received and nurtured to come to fullness with good results. Poor results would come from poor hearing and corresponding action. In the Sower, Christ commends or condemns the hearers for their level of obedience. God had told Israel previously to "break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns." (Jeremiah 4:3) Israel had not taken His advice to make room for His Word but became choked by religious tradition, stiff-necked, unfruitful and so calloused, God said they had a "heart of stone." (Ezekiel 36:26)

WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

(Matthew 20:1-16)

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, "You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?" "Because no one has hired us," they answered. He said to them, "You also go and work in my vineyard." When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foremen, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first." The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. These men who were hired last worked only one hour," they said, "and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day. But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

We can see in this parable that blessing or judgment came from one's relationship to the Landholder. Those who came last represent the Gentile Church which received the same blessings of Eternal Life and Fellowship as given to the Hebrews "called out" to serve Him first. To expound, let's start with...

THE LANDOWNER WENT OUT EARLY IN THE MORNING—God called the Israelites early (5,000-6,000 years ago) to become the first nation and people entering direct service and blessing for the

WORK IN HIS VINEYARD—God likens His fruit-bearing Kingdom to a vineyard which bears fruit in its' season, would employ all he could find, has a special fruit (grapes) that, when **CRUSHED** and **DISTILLED** would be spiritual Drink to "make glad the heart of man" (Psalms 104:15) The landowner came

AT DIFFERENT HOURS—God had tended Israel through the Law, Judges, Kings, and the prophets. See (Hebrews 1:1,2). Then He came

ABOUT THE ELEVENTH HOUR—This would have been just before sundown at five p.m. which is the end of a Jewish day. This would foretell the end of that age because Judaism was shortly destroyed and its age closed on A.D. 70 with the Gentiles being included in His calling just before it closed. The laborers called at the last hour points to the Gentiles being commissioned to join (or finish) the work. The third, sixth and ninth hour callings might represent periods under the Patriarchs, the Mosaic Law and priesthood and then Israel under the prophets until the time of Christ. At Christ's appearance, the Gentiles eagerly sought the things of God, but because of Jewish nationalism and racial prejudice they said

NO ONE HAS HIRED US—Gentiles hadn't been commissioned into Kingdom work as yet, for in God's timetable, God wasn't through searching throughout Israel for those who would come into His Kingdom and "fill the cup" of Israel. His searching continued through Christ. Notice that it was in the evening (a new day or age) when they were paid (received their rewards) in the order of the last ones first and the first were last. When the ones who were hired first came for their wages

THEY EXPECTED TO RECEIVE MORE—Jews wanted greater recognition and favor for being "Abraham's seed" and for having Moses' Law which they ministered. The main reward and desire of the Jews was to have a Messiah restore the Davidic Kingdom and give them a "piece of the pie." Jewish resentment was shown openly toward publicans, sinners, Samaritans and Gentiles in general and they believed that they were better than all races of people. This pride and resentment was shown also toward the early Church. The first workers said

YOU HAVE MADE THEM EQUAL TO US—In the New Covenant, Christ has made the Gentiles "heirs of God... joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17) and "fellow citizens with the saints." (Ephesians 2:19) (Acts 10:34) says "God is no respecter of persons." Then the owner said

DIDN'T YOU AGREE TO WORK FOR A DENARIUS?—Christ here reproves the Jews for asking for more than they had "earned" in God's service. The Jews were always rebellious, had never fulfilled any of their promises, earned any praise from God and were, therefore, due no reward. The owner asking "Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?" would be similar to God asking Israel "Don't you remember the terms of the covenant we agreed upon?" The blessings of His Covenant in Deuteronomy 28 were conditional upon Israel's obedience and all the curses listed there would come to them if they were disobedient. A recurring theme in the parables is

THE LAST WILL BE FIRST AND THE FIRST WILL BE LAST—the laborers placed into His Work at the last hour (the Church) will be the first to be paid rewards. They, as all Christians, are paid **MUCH MORE** than they deserve or than they are worth due to the grace of God. Jesus said "Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matthew 11:11)

THE WICKED TENANTS

(Matthew 21:33-45)

"There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,' they replied, 'and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.' 'Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.' When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them."

In this parable Jesus reveals that God's wrath was coming on the Jews for they had totally insulted Him who had lavished such care on His Vineyard and killed His Son who came to reclaim it. The Jews were familiar with the vineyard allegory from Isaiah (Isaiah 5:1-7) and they would have "smarted" when Jesus pointed to their wicked and rebellious ways. The parable says...

A LANDOWNER PLANTED A VINEYARD—This reflects God who secured Israel from Egypt and "planted" them in Canaan where He expected His fruit to come through them in the earth. Isaiah said the vineyard of the Lord was the House of Israel. Then he

PUT A WALL AROUND IT—God set the borders of natural Israel and set Himself around it for protection. When He had destroyed the power of Egypt which held His Seed in bondage, God covered Israel with a fire by night and a cloud by day. Under God's care they could sing, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord among the gods...Glorious in Holiness, FEARFUL IN PRAISES, Doing Wonders, Who is like unto Thee?" (Exodus 15:11) He is stirred by praise for "He dwells in the praises of Israel". (Psalms 22:3) "The nations of Canaan heard of Him in the midst of His people and "their hearts melted for fear." (Joshua 2:9-11) Next, He

DUG A WINEPRESS—God intended for Israel to fulfill its purposes just like His fruit (of the vine) to come to completion. Grapes are brought to the winepress when ripe, to make good wine. The wine from His vineyard was to flow throughout the earth, bringing the taste of the Joy of Salvation and causing men to say "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Psalms 34:8)

When Jesus changed the water into wine (John 2), He was showing that when He entered into the element of man (six vessels) the Holy Spirit would bring change and the fullness God desires. Then He

BUILT A TOWER—GOD wanted to view the nations of the earth from this Kingdom Tower of Israel to see His next Field to purchase, Treasure to buy or Land to cultivate. "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." (2 Chronicles 16:9) After this He

RENTED THE VINEYARD—The renters or farmers portray the Aaronic priesthood, judges and kings that were to minister to Israel. He rented the vineyard out to a plural number of men which shows that not only did God want man included in His Plan and Work, but also to be a partaker of His Glory. But Israel

KILLED AND STONED THE SERVANTS—Jews despised His authorities and killed or stoned the prophets sent to warn them so

AT LAST—God was through dealing with unfaithful Israel so

HE SENT HIS SON—but Jesus "came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11) The Jews, enraged at Jesus' implying He was the Son of God, said

LET'S KILL HIM AND TAKE HIS INHERITANCE—the Jews were worried that the people would make Jesus the King of the Jews and bother their place with Rome which would end their religious merchandising so they

TOOK HIM—at Gethsemane, falsely tried Him, had Pilate condemn Him, then

THREW HIM OUT—Jesus "suffered outside the city gate". (Hebrews 13:12) After the Jews heard this parable, they replied that God should destroy the wicked tenants and give it to others. Jesus acted upon their very words, for on the Day of Pentecost, all the blessings of the Kingdom of God were poured out on the Gentiles. Forty years after Pentecost, Jerusalem and Judaism was destroyed.

THE ELDER AND YOUNGER BROTHER

(Luke 15:11-32)

"There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he

began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

This parable exposes Jewish envy and prejudice toward Gentiles being included in the Father's Plan. Some call this the Prodigal Son or the Lost Son parable but the Elder and Younger Son is nearest to its interpretation. Most people think that the younger brother represents a lost person or a backslidden Christian. The younger son can't represent a lost person because it says he was a son and had an elder brother, neither of which could have been possible if he were not a member of the Family. He doesn't represent a backslidden Christian for that presents a time problem in interpreting who the older brother was.

I believe the older brother is Israel who came first in God's Family. This can be seen in Exodus 4:22, "Israel is my firstborn son," and in Hosea 11:1, "out of Egypt have I called my son." Jews became jealous and antagonistic when Gentiles were later accepted by faith and shown favor with God. The indifferent older brother was and always will be a relation to the Father but we can see who has the robe and the ring.

The Father's statement "He was dead but is now alive," explains the younger son being "born again" Gentile believers. Being younger, he would have been "birthed" later which also points to being "born again" in Christ. This younger son also comes last in time, pointing to the

Gentiles coming centuries later than the Jews to serve God. He was given the robe signifying the Gentiles had obtained "the righteousness of God which is by faith," (Romans 3:21) and the ring meant they had become "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Romans 8:17) Let's expound...

PORTION OF GOODS—he took this "made in the image of God" spiritual portion (inheritance) to rule over himself, but like all souls who refuse God's way and spurn their birthright, (Adam, Cain, Esau) he wandered

INTO A FAR COUNTRY—The far country means a spiritual condition (place) caused by sin that separates man's soul from God. Cain went to the edge of civilization when he was ejected from God's presence and then Noah's descendants under Nimrod built the religious Tower of Babel which brought down the wrath of God. A generation later, man

WASTED HIS SUBSTANCE—polluted in spirit, soul and body, the image of God becomes defiled and distorted, then man, independent of God turned to

RIOTOUS LIVING—immoral living as seen at Sodom and Gomorrah. Man went from spiritual independence into physical immorality which incurred the wrath of God. Man's evil brought the Flood in Noah's day and then fire. Not only ruined in spiritual and soulful realms, this man's physical being was then challenged by a

FAMINE IN THAT LAND—separated from God, man's soul grows empty and hungry. Spiritual famine is rough to a person seeking spiritual life, blessing or fulfillment. Amos 8:11 says "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." Further trouble comes to the Prodigal

AFTER HE HAD SPENT EVERYTHING—unrestrained, man goes from one vice to another, addictions to flesh and drugs or he runs to religions, which can be the worst bondage of all. "Spent all" means he had tried it all, paid dearly for it and found himself in a horrible condition. His condition forced him to be

HIRED OUT TO A CITIZEN OF THAT COUNTRY—"hired out" means to come under the control of another. I believe the employer here is the devil who finds man departed from God, helps him "spend all he's got" (physically, financially and spiritually) then gets him joined to himself. When the devil tempted Jesus, his ulterior motive was revealed in saying "If you will bow down and worship me." (Matthew 4:9) Satan entices man far enough away from God so that one will become joined to or owned by him. Jesus told the Pharisees, "your father is the devil" because they were doing the devil's work and exhibiting his nature. This citizen shamed and defiled his conscience even worse by having him feed swine, the ultimate Jewish defilement. Brought low by sin and emptied by the world and false religion, this one finally

"came to his senses" just as he was going to feed off that intended for an animal. He then realized that sin made him

NO LONGER WORTHY TO BE CALLED YOUR SON—The grace of God will allow men to be brought low sometimes to completely strip them of pride and trappings of the world. This is to "open their eyes" to their true condition, turn from their ways and come back to Him. The prodigal now realizes his own helpless state and heads home to Father with a servant's nature. But

WHILE HE WAS STILL A LONG WAY OFF, HIS FATHER SAW HIM- before Adam sinned or Israel rebelled in the desert, God knew he would have to PROVIDE HIMSELF (Jehovah Jireh) to atone for sin and bring man back to Himself. Jesus was "slain before the foundation of the world" (Revelations 13:8) and in Him, God could see billions of Gentile believers come home through the Cross. He had provided for them in the Law to become Israelites, sent Jonah to preach repentance to Gentile Nineveh and we read in Matthew 23:15, Acts 2:10 and 13:43 that Jews proselytized Gentiles.

God the great Initiator prepares and stirs the heart of man to bring a right answer from his lips (Proverbs 16:1) and will open their eyes and ears (Proverbs 20:12) to find Him. It's impossible for me to write about the boundless Grace of God without tears for I'm so thankful God saw me "afar off," lost and hurting and saved me June 12,1972. I was identical to this prodigal who didn't know that the

FATHER SAW HIM—"the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth." (II Chronicles 16:9) God spoke through the prophets about Gentiles coming into His kingdom. The Father saw him because He never quits looking, searching, ready to leave the safe ninety-nine for one lost lamb. Then the Father

KISSED HIM—He was embraced with REDEMPTION which means "to buy back." The kiss was a mark of honor, "Kiss the Son lest he be angry" (Psalms 2:12) and it reveals the great forgiveness of God who, beyond our faults, "accepted us in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6) In His joy, the Father gives the

BEST ROBE—the prodigal's poor physical condition and clothing is like "our righteousness which is as filthy rags." (Isaiah 64:6) But the Father Sees us IN CHRIST, Justified, Sanctified and Glorified. (Romans 8:30) He gives us Robes of Righteousness. He told the deceived and comfortable Laodicean church in Revelations 3:17 that it was naked and should come to him for its covering. Once a person comes in faith and accepts God's Grace as the only way, (Ephesians 2:8,9) He gives them His distinguishing

RING—the Father's signature of who this one is and that this son is a "Partaker of His Divine Nature." (2 Peter 1:4) Another proof that we ARE His sons is when "God sent the Spirit of His

Son into our hearts, who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'" (Galatians 4:6) The prodigal came back with a servant nature so the Father restored him.

Over the centuries, kings have used their rings to set their seal in wax to close or mark various documents and is applicable here because our King Jesus has set His SEAL on us through the operation of the Holy Spirit, (Ephesians 1:13) sealing us for another salvation in the end time. (1 Peter 1:5) He has already marked the Overcomers and the 144,000 (spirit-led lives) "who follow the Lamb wherever He goes." (Revelations 14:4) The prodigal came barefooted (no waLuke, citizenship or calling) so the Father puts

SHOES ON HIS FEET—Ephesians 6:15 says to have "your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." This would apply to the Gentiles reconciled to God through Christ who have been included in His priesthood to "reconcile the world unto Himself." (II Corinthians 5:19) The Robe, Ring and Shoes are articles showing association with the Father. The Father wants to show off "His workmanship" (Ephesians 2:10) of GRACE ! "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 3:10) God proved the power of LOVE and GRACE to the devil before in the life of Job, as He must to every generation.

The older brother represents those who love religion but don't have a good relationship with the Father. He had words, works, law and pride. He had the Father's Name but not His Nature. Paul warned us of those who had "a form of godliness but denying its power." (Ephesians 3:5) The Father ordered the servants to

BRING THE FATTENED CALF AND KILL IT—the Gentiles (Gods' younger son here) really had a feast with God after He "poured out His Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:17) during the FEAST OF PENTECOST, two thousand years ago. This fatted calf represents Christ's offering of Himself. Just as the calf was prepared for a feast, so Christ "for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross." (Hebrews 12:2) This prodigal, like all believers since Calvary, had only to come to Him needing Life and receive all the prepared blessings of God. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God HATH PREPARED for them that love him." (1Corinthians 2:9) The Father said he

WAS DEAD—even so all those "who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) Since "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) man gets separated from God but through regeneration in Christ,

IS ALIVE AGAIN—the "born again" receive "the free gift of God... eternal life" (Romans6:23)

HE WAS LOST AND IS FOUND—lost can mean not knowing where you are at, where you're going or not knowing how to get where you belong. Jesus said "I was SENT to SEEK and SAVE that which was LOST" (Luke 19:10) Meanwhile

THE OLDER SON WAS IN THE FIELD—the elder represents those in Judaism who were working their religion without any knowledge of what the Father was doing. This one wasn't close to the Father, was selfish and didn't agree with Father's decision to include new "outsiders" into the Fathers' House. He

HEARD MUSIC AND DANCING-ASKED WHAT WAS GOING ON- like the Jews on Pentecost Day, he said "what does this mean...They have had too much wine." (Acts 2:12,13) Unknown to the elder brother and elders of Israel, God had poured out His grace upon the Gentiles. The kingdom Christ offered wasn't one they desired, so they

REFUSED TO GO IN—like the invited guests in The Wedding Banquet, the Jews rejected Him (as was prophesied for centuries) and wanted only Mosaic Law. He said,

"I'VE BEEN SLAVING AND NEVER DISOBEYED YOUR ORDERS"— Jews didn't serve God willingly out of love but from duty. They Worked the Law; had a flesh religion, not a heart religion. Out of selfish pride the elder said

YOU NEVER GAVE ME A KID!—The elder brother (Jews) assumed his duration of works should have merit but it wasn't the Father's way. God could never praise or reward rebellious Israel. The elder was concerned with

MY FRIENDS—Israel had compromised with "friends", went after their gods and "lifted her skirts as a prostitute." (Jeremiah 2:20-3:3) These other worldly religious friends of Israel were definitely not acquainted with the Father. He had even said

EVERYTHING I HAVE IS YOURS—Romans 9:4,5 shows that Israel had been given "the adoption as sons, the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises."

The older brother staying Outside the House is portraying the stiff-necked and jealous Israel, who will be "cast off...until the full number of the Gentiles has come in." (Romans 11:25) During this long probation, the Church (younger son) has a long feast of communion with Christ. Notice I didn't call the younger son a Gentile in the previous sentence because Galatians 3:28 says the church "is neither Jew NOR Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The Mystery of Christ is that "he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."

Amen. We have to drop all prejudice of any race, religion or nation. The Mystery of Christ is that all nations can receive salvation in Him who has "made of the two" (Jews and Gentiles) ONE NEW MAN. In Him are no Protestants protesting some other church, no Zionists preferring some nation or Anti-Semites hating some nation or religion. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says "If any man be in Christ he is a NEW CREATION!" We are not born into nationalism or secularism, "of natural descent nor of human decision, but BORN OF GOD!" (John 1:13) This new creation is WITHOUT GENDER or RACE and nullifies Zionists' 3-R's - Race, Region and Religion. He ended the animosity of race and religion which blinds us, "nailing it to the Cross." (Colossians 2:14)

Jesus never gave a hint to the Jews that their nation or religion would ever be revived after the final judgment fell on them in A.D. 70.

THE GREAT BANQUET-WEDDING FEAST

(Matthew 22:1-14 and Luke 14:16-24)

"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet. But they paid no attention and went off-one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, ill-treated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless. Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are invited, but few are chosen."

These parables are so similar that I've placed them together. I will show where they differ, especially about the guest without a wedding garment.

These are parables of God's grace and judgment. God's grace is shown when the King goes beyond the "full" who don't deserve a feast, to share His Feast with the poor and hungry. His judgment falls on those who refuse His calling and despise His authority.

Christ taught His new kingdom was like a feast to which invitations were already sent, but given to a people unlikely to respond. He wanted to show that the connection between invitation and response was critical if one wanted to enter His kingdom. Performance is critical for a walk with God. A "sloppy agape," "cheap grace" and "all faith, no works" attitude won't mature seed or fruit fit for the King. Just like an R.S.V.P. invitation of today, invitations have to be accepted and responded to in order to be effective. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (James 1:22) Jesus taught "whoever DOES the will of my Father," (Matthew 7:21) and "If you love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

This parable shows an unusual resistance to a King's invitation. The King had also sent out servants to call and then escort the guests in, which shows that the guests knew of this coming feast for some time and yet avoided it to pursue their own business. Out of common courtesy one would respond to an invitation but this one came from the King which makes their avoidance and denial that much worse and reflects Israel who had lost a reverent fear of the Lord. He sent the servants to

TELL THOSE WHO HAD BEEN INVITED—the invited would be Israelites separated unto God by Abraham, Moses and efforts of the prophets. He said "I have redeemed thee, I have CALLED THEE by thy name; thou art mine." (Isaiah 43:1) God had traded other nations for Israel but it was ungrateful "because WHEN I CALLED, YE DID NOT ANSWER; when I spake, ye did not hear." (Isaiah 65:12) The King said

TELL / ESCORT THE INVITED—Oriental custom for such a feast would see servants go to invite guests and then return later when the feast was ready to escort the guests in. Upon arrival, guests would put on robes provided by the householder. This reveals that the guests were called twice. Israel's first calling came from John the Baptist preaching "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near." (Matthew 3:2) John was "the one about whom it is written: I will send my messenger ahead of you." (Matthew 11:10) After John's message, Jesus came with the second invitation, preaching "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17) But the invited Jews

BEGAN TO MAKE EXCUSES—the Sadducees, Pharisees, lawyers, scribes, temple priests and temple merchandisers (clergy) ALL despised Jesus' actions and teachings. The religious Jews refused to have a part of any "wedding" with Jesus as God's Son and Judaism refused to be included in His Kingdom. Jews wanted a Messiah-King like Saul or David and they didn't relish righteousness or repentance. They wanted land, merchant business and self-indulgence. That's why one said

I JUST BOUGHT A FIELD—This reflects the "white collar" Jews, probably richer Pharisees who had money and clergy connections to buy and sell land. The land here is Judaism's nationality, so important to Jews and this became more important to them than God. Others said

I BOUGHT FIVE YOKE OF OXEN—here's "blue collar" Jews (typified by buying oxen to plow a field) interested in their "works" and religious programs. The saying "You can't see the forest for the trees" applies to the Jews who couldn't see Jesus through all the trappings of religion. He told them "You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are." (Matthew 23:15) Another excuse was

I JUST GOT MARRIED—they sure did. The Jews married foreign wives and "married" false gods which enticed them into compromising and forgetting his commandments. This group is those who are shallow, just starting out, married to the cares of this life and other people. Notice that Jesus said "Every one that hath forsaken HOUSES...or WIFE, LANDS...shall inherit eternal life." (Matthew 19:29) He wants us to LEAVE (deny as first priority in our lives) what the Jews gave an excuse for! Giving three excuses showed they had no regard for WHO was asking, the WEIGHT of His Invitation nor the CONSEQUENCES of refusing His offer!

GO OUT QUICKLY-GET EVERYONE—this came to pass after Pentecost when thousands of Gentile believers were quickly ushered in to His House through the Gospel.

MAKE THEM COME IN...THAT MY HOUSE WILL BE FULL—this portrays the continual preaching of the gospel through the Church Age until "the fullness of the Gentiles" is in. God says to the Jews

NOT ONE OF THOSE INVITED WILL TASTE MY BANQUET—we see what has been true for 2000 years-God didn't intend for natural Jews to ever partake of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This is only extended to those who have gladly responded to His Invitation (R.S.V.P) and Entered In His House by faith. God wants to fill "those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matthew 5:6) He wants those who come in filthy rags (mans righteousness) to be covered with His PROVIDED Wedding Robe.

In Matthew's account, the King invites the guests, the guests make excuses and then do worse by killing the King's servants. "The king was enraged...(verse 6 & 7)

HE SENT HIS ARMY-DESTROYED MURDERERS-BURNED THEIR CITY.

The army happened to be Roman, they slaughtered several hundred thousand Jews and destroyed Jerusalem, exactly as He said, in A.D. 70.

ONE HAD NO WEDDING GARMENT ON—this one trusted in his own reasoning and clothing but found they fell short of the requirement to be in His House at His Son's Wedding. When spoken to, he also fell short, giving no reply or sign of a Relationship so vital to the hour and occasion. This one typifies the Jews who trusted in their own works and righteousness to

clothe them before God. They despised His Calling, His Son's Wedding and the requirements to make them ready.

The custom at a feast given by the wealthy or a King was that all guests were provided a robe to wear during the occasion. This one refused the gracious offer, preferred his own coverings, despised the protocol of this special occasion and flippantly responded. He made light of the occasion (wedding of a King's Son) and came Casually, Sensuously and with NO REGARD FOR THE KING!

This one exhibited the same sins of the formerly invited, but since he did arrive at the wedding, I see this one representing a Gentile who has come in later in the Church Age who has also neglected his duty and held God's Grace in contempt. I say he comes later in the Church Age because the order of events here is: 1. The invited don't respond (under the Law) 2. The invited (Jews) kill those servants bringing a second invitation (prophets, Jesus and early Church) 3. King orders the murderers and city destroyed (Jerusalem-70 A.D.) THEN... 4. The House is filled with guests (the Fullness of the Gentiles) THEN... guest with no robe is tossed out. Several of Jesus' parables (Wheat and Tares, Elder and Younger Brother, Laborers in the Vineyard, etc.) cover thousands of years.

Seeing that one can be thrown out of the Gentile gathering at His Wedding should be a warning to all races and classes of people who come to God. "How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3) Can one make it all the way in and get thrown out? Jesus said, "Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you." (Matthew 7:22,23)

Another important issue here is that the Feast was NOW. Even though the Jews were involved in their own works and didn't want to come, the invitation remained. When Christ was here, He could have said "The kingdom is here, you can eat now." It wasn't an "end-time only" banquet that Jesus was talking about. Kingdom invitations were sent, the Jews weren't coming but the Gentiles were already responding. Jesus said "up until now the kingdom has suffered violence and those with vehement desire press into it." (Matthew 11:12)

Pearl of Great Price—Hidden Treasure

(Matthew 13:44-46)

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

These parables complement the former parables of the Sower and Wheat and Tares by expressing Jesus' intended teaching that many good things (wheat and fish) are harvested for the Owner which are precious commodities to Him that He would give His own life for. They show that Christ's Kingdom is purchased and available. If one will heed God's invitation and respond by seeking His kingdom, they will find a great, unexpected treasure that very few can find.

The incomparable worth of the Kingdom isn't noticed or appreciated by everyone. One says "It's boring" and another says "It's not worth giving up everything for." But those who touch it will say with Peter, "To whom shall we go? YOU have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68) The Jews had lost God's touch and took everything for granted. They failed to pay attention to something of great value, (vineyard, field, etc.) lost consciousness of its worth and traded it, like Esau or Judas, for something else.

He wants us to know that the Kingdom is to be cherished above all other things and can only be had by those willing to "sell All" to buy it. In the parable...

A MAN CAME LOOKING—and found something worth far more than the seller (Israel) realized. He knew He had to SELL ALL to get it and then would possess great wealth. Jesus said, "Whoever finds HIS life will lose it but whoever LOSES his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 10:39) If one is searching for NATURAL life (career, wealth or prominence) they will lose their SPIRITUAL life but if one "trades" their selfish, worldly life for the Life of Christ, they find true spiritual life in the Kingdom of God.

Christ told us to take the Kingdom "as a child" (Mark 10:15, Luke 18:17) which means making the kingdom our sole object of interest. A child has one interest at a time, one special toy or forbidden object that captivates them so much you can't tear it from them or change their mind. They are very single-minded and trust their Father to provide every need. Children are simple, loving, unprejudiced and have no thought for the future, much less world economic conditions or political correctness. Let's begin with

TREASURE WAS HID IN THE FIELD—Jesus saw his peculiar treasure hidden, unnoticed by others in the world. He left the place where He was to seek and save that which was lost. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Mankind finds many good pearls like career, money, family and religion, but unfulfilled, they continue to search. The merchant could portray Christ, who sought good "pearls" like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets. He then found one of GREAT VALUE in the Church which would shine and bring glory to His Name.

The pearl is precious to the Father for it's something that was worthless in its beginning (man) but then made priceless through change. A lowly oyster (like Christ) bears the pain and injury of a foreign object inserted into its environment which it slowly **COVERS WITH ITS OWN SELF** until it's a thing of beauty. That's why each gate of the New Jerusalem is made of One Pearl, because it's only by the effort and worth of **ONE** that we can enter into the City of God. Jesus is the Door and the Way into fellowship with God. Each **GATE** of the City is of **ONE PEARL**, large enough for all nations to enter through. Not individual pearls, but **ONE-seamless** like the High Priest's Robe. Stones are mined, dug or quarried by man but the Pearl is made in quiet darkness, by **ANOTHER LIFE**. The Church is a pearl that has been made by the Life of another. We have been inserted (like sand into the oyster shell) into His Death to be transformed into the likeness of His Resurrection. (Romans 6:4,5)

Christ Jesus found His Pearl of Great Price, worthy of **INVESTING** His all. "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." (Ephesians 5:25) He came in our likeness, in our time to purchase a pearl of great price.

The Treasure and the Pearl are secured only by going **DOWN**, in secret, unknown to man to an unseen Work. The pearl is brought up from an unseen realm just as Christ brought the power of Resurrection Life "out of the bowels of the earth" that He had been in for three days and nights. Jesus went down into hell, took the Keys, unlocked the prison doors and **SET THE CAPTIVES FREE!** When we go down into the waters of baptism, we enter His death and we arise in the power of His resurrection.

The oyster must be opened for the pearl to be taken out of its side. Christ had a spear thrust in **HIS SIDE** on the cross and "there came out blood and water" -birthing the Church. Just as the family of Noah came forth from the side of the Ark so the New Creation Family comes out of **THE SIDE** of our Lord Jesus to rule and reign in the earth.

KINGDOM IS HIDDEN IN A FIELD—He found His kingdom covered over by man, unseen, unnoticed in the world. He could see a whole world of souls waiting for **ONE** to purchase their salvation and bring them to God. He didn't just take out the treasure for himself and go away. "For God so loved the world" (John 3:16) He **BOUGHT THE WHOLE FIELD!** He loves the Field and His treasure for **WE** are His peculiar Treasure. (1 Peter 2:9) Then, after He found it

HE HID IT—from the unworthy. Jesus said "I thank you Father that you have **HID** these things from the wise." (Matthew 11:25) He **HID** the treasure in **HIMSELF!** He said "I am **THE WAY, THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE.**" (John 14:6) We have to **SEEK** to find it! We have to dig and quarry, by the Spirit, way down inside the Ways of God to find His treasures! Israel knew the acts of God but not His **WAYS**. We have to **ASK** and **KNOCK** to find the Hidden Things!

Jesus was HIDDEN from the Jews. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11) The Jews said "He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him." (Isaiah 53:2) They said "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46) "Their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts." (2 Corinthians 3:14,15) Christ HID himself from the crowds and "went apart from them to pray" and seek His Father. When various ones were healed, he commanded them to tell no one. His own brothers said, "No one who wants to become a public figure acts in SECRET-SHOW YOURSELF TO THE WORLD!" (John 7:4) Once when "Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, WITHDREW again into the hill by himself. (John 6:15)

After the Mount of Transfiguration, when they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen." (Matthew 17:9) The Pharisees demanded "Who are you?" and "By what authority do you do these things?" Pilate asked "Are you a King?" He HID himself from the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) And THEN...at the very hour and time He could have convinced the WORLD by appearing risen from the grave...HE WENT AWAY!

HE HID IT!—Jesus said "I pray NOT that you take them OUT of the world but that you protect them from the evil one." (John 17:15) Christ didn't take the Church with Him when He left! He sends the Church INTO the world. "For God so LOVED the World" that He wants the world reconciled to Himself by Christ Jesus. This is done through the gospel which can only be preached to reach others through us! It doesn't say he took the treasure OUT—it says He HID it! Praise God! In Christ "ye are dead and your life is HID with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:3) We are hidden! We walk "in the secret place of the Most High"...and His "wings cover us." (Psalms 91) We've come to the six cities of refuge, (Joshua 20) eternally beyond the reach of the accuser and manslayer because OUR High Priest NEVER DIES. In Kedesh we're "consecrated, dedicated and kept". In Shechem we have Christ "to shoulder the burden," and in Bezer we're " fenced in a sheepfold enclosure, inaccessible by height." In Hebron, Christ is "the seat of our association and friendship," and in Ramoth we are "lifted up and of high value." At Golan, Christ "our passage, has carried us away captive."

HE HID IT!—in the earth three days and nights! He said he would "give them the sign of Jonah" (Matthew 12:39) and He did! To get Jonah to Nineveh, God provided a whale, but to bring Christ to us "a body was prepared" for Him (Hebrews 10:5).

HE HID IT—kept others from seeing its value and place. Jews didn't "see" their Messiah in Christ Jesus nor the wrath to come prophesied by John the Baptist. God HID these things from them by "blinding" them. (Romans 11:25) What does God do with this treasure that's been HID

but now "PURCHASED by His own blood?" (Revelations 5:9) He unveils His "masterpiece" (Ephesians 2:10) so "that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 3:10) Then He

BOUGHT THAT FIELD—Amen, "we're not our own," (1Corinthians 6:19) we've been "bought with a price." Christ atoned "for the sins of the whole world," (1 John 2:2) when He "redeemed us...with the precious blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:19)

The TREASURE is Christ in us, in the world, as Paul said " we have this TREASURE in earthen vessels." (2 Corinthians 4:7)

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

(Matthew 13:24-30)...(37-43)

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

As with all the parables, you need to pay close attention to the first words...

THE KINGDOM IS LIKE—which means that what is stated or written afterward describes the kingdom. He said it was like

A MAN—this man is the central point of emphasis here and well it should be for Christ Jesus is the central point of the Kingdom of God. In verse 37, Jesus says the sower is the Son of Man which is a name for the Christ while He was in the flesh, "made of a woman, made under the law." (Galatians 4:4)

THAT SOWED GOOD SEED—the sower is Jesus Christ from His time in the flesh until now. The good seed is the children of the Kingdom which was possible only after Jesus came. His sowed good seed

IN HIS FIELD—the world, is shown in Luke 10:1-9 where he "sent out the seventy...preaching the kingdom" and through us when He said, "Go and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19) But...

WHILE MEN SLEPT THE ENEMY SOWED TARES—Jesus used "the night" or people sleeping to describe a passive condition of man. Notice the devil had to sow his tares while men slept. He wouldn't have been able to if those with oversight of the field had been alert. Another point is that it was done AFTER the wheat seed was sown which means it was after the Church was established when he planted the religious tares in the same field.

WHEN THE WHEAT SPROUTED AND FORMED HEADS—Before the world could hardly recognize a true Christian, he sowed Counterfeit, "look alike" into the SOFT, PLOWED, CLEAN FIELD of the early Church. The devil puts worldly, deceptive and religious seed into prime, safe growing conditions to diffuse, deceive and pollute the Lord's Field.

The Wheat are true Christians and Tares are COUNTERFEIT Christians. Both seeds are persons, in the Kingdom together at the same time. They look alike, they're planted in the same field and they're discernible only when Mature Fruit is evident. More proof comes from verse 41, saying

THEY WILL WEED OUT OF HIS KINGDOM ALL WHO DO EVIL—in the Church? Sure! Did one get to the Wedding Banquet without a garment? Do many cry out in Matthew 25:41-46 because the Lord sends them into everlasting fire and punishment? Jesus said "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not PROPHESED in thy name: and in thy name have CAST OUT DEVILS: and in thy name done many WONDERFUL WORKS? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7: 19-23) Will the lukewarm Church in Laodicea (Revelations 3:16) get spewed out of His mouth? Does the unprofitable servant go into outer darkness? Didn't Jesus say "Many are called but FEW ARE CHOSEN?"

Keep in mind that the tares are in the same field that the wheat was sown in. It isn't in a wild, thorny, overgrown weed patch where the world "sows their oats."

The tares can't mean bad, evil or non-religious people for these wouldn't bear such close resemblance to the true. The tares were a plant like dandelion, wheat-grass or foxtail grass that closely resembled wheat in the EARLY stages of growth but was easily identified when MATURE. From this we see that true wheat (Christians) would mature with discernible fruit anyone could detect. Just like Jesus said "You shall know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:20)

The tares did come from separate seed (sowed by the devil) which meant they would produce "after their kind." If the two crops had looked different, the tares would have been spotted earlier and couldn't have blended in as well. Evil or bad men couldn't be the tares because they wouldn't be similar to Christians. Weeds and thorns were there already in unplowed wild areas, just as evil men have been around since the beginning of time. The devil doesn't use the outwardly wicked seed for this field. He picks nice, humanistic, religious seed for his diabolical scheme to destroy God's Cultivation. The devil cleverly sowed them in the same field to mix in with and ruin God's planted Church.

Balak was an evil king of the Moabites who tried unsuccessfully to get the prophet Balaam to curse Israel as they came into Canaan. (Numbers 22-25) He couldn't destroy it from WITHOUT so he tried to destroy it from WITHIN. He sowed "female" tares among Israelites to get men to marry them and bring forth unholy seed which defiled the kingdom. This action shows the devil's work to bring MIXTURE in to DILUTE and POLLUTE God's Field.

False doctrine, extremism and perverted character of the people changes the outlook and mission of the church. The devil knows who will "fall by the wayside" or get caught by thorns. He knows how to keep "fringe" Christians on their HARD EDGE of the field or stunt the growth of "little ones" by overpowering them with a doctrinally-obsessed TARE that SHADES the TRUE LIGHT of God's Grace.

Satan produces COUNTERFEIT Christians and churches so he can blaspheme and dilute the purity of the true Church. Look at "Christian" cults like the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Scientists which try to appear like the real church. They are just like their father, the devil, who "transforms himself into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14) and fathered the spiritual system of the anti-Christ "at work NOW in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2 and 1 John 2:18;4:3)

Jesus and the apostles warned the church that "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit." They called these people "false brethren," "the concision," and "lying apostles." Jude 4:19 reads, "For certain men have secretly slipped in among you... godless men who change the grace of God into a license for immorality...dreamers who pollute their own bodies, reject authority... speak against what they do not understand...without

fruit...twice dead...wandering stars...grumblers and faultfinders who follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage."

Tares are wicked, spiritual and religious men so intertwined in the true Church that if the tares were pulled up, "you may root up the wheat with them." Young wheat puts out a lot of fine hair-like roots which "stool out" to cover the ground. Pulling up anything around it would uproot it or severely stunt its growth.

Shallow people like to go around "pulling up tares" by gossiping about scandals or perversion in a church somewhere. Some force others about their particular Bible version, false "burden" or some petty "end-time" teaching which "uproots" or "offends little ones" enough to not mature right or cause them to "die on the vine" right there in the field. The servants in the parable say

SHALL WE GO AND GATHER THE TARES?—People like these servants and the Pharisees are always wanting to "clean house" to have an exclusive "card-holding members only" club. Jews ridiculed Jesus about befriending and ministering to lepers, Samaritans, publicans, and whores. They still do it today over skin color, ethnic background, income level, certain sins or certain doctrines.

What we must realize is that it's not as important to get rid of the tares as it is for the wheat to grow and mature right! We should want them to "grow together until harvest," "And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." (Jude 23) Paul said "I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:19-22) Real Christians have grace to mend and heal the sheep to KEEP them in the flock, like Jesus and not lose one of them. (see John 17:12) The Lord is "NOT willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

I started out young and hasty, preaching and bashing with the Apostles Doctrine. I became a spiritual Don Quixote attacking all heretical windmills. One evening at the college B.S.U. meeting, I shared about doing my "Christian duty" by turning in a drunk dope addict that vomited in the dormitory hall. A scathing correction came from an older Christian girl about my non-Christian behavior. She told me Christ would have picked up this boy, cleaned him up and then cleaned the mess on the floor so he wouldn't get in trouble. Like the Samaritan, he would have returned later to check on him and showed him the way to salvation. A few years later, the Lord delivered me from doctrinal obsession and rebuilt me in GRACE.

Christ knew these servants wouldn't be careful enough at this job and that it wasn't the right time for it. He said in the fullness of time, he would use the angels to harvest the field because they can probably spot a tare a mile off.

God is the husbandman who "waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. BE YE ALSO PATIENT!" (James 5:7,8) If the early rain was the first outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, A.D. 29, and the latter rain is another outpouring by which he matures His Seed at the end of this age, God has been patient over two-thousand years! He wants His Seed matured right.

Hard-nosed, hard-shelled conservative Fundamentalists are just like the Pharisees who had more "don'ts" than "do's." They run off people by preaching on "the clothesline" or cigarettes, not wearing ties or not using the right version of the Bible. These narrow-minded "don't" churches run off and kill (uproot) young tender people because they have no patience or grace. Pharisaism turns a church into cannibals, with wheat pulling up wheat. They move out of "slimy old downtown" to clean, new suburbs which leaves the inner-city void of a church and alienates races and classes of people. God doesn't want this He wants His wheat to Bear With, and Influence the tares. He tells the saved husband or wife to NOT put away their lost mate so they can SANCTIFY them long enough for God to reach them. (1 Corinthians 7:12-14) Yes, we are supposed to "come out from among them and be separate," (2 Corinthians 6:17) but not so exclusive that "we would have to leave this world." (1 Corinthians 5:10) We don't have to compromise with tares but God wants us to use more tolerance. Amen. I'm glad a brave and tolerant girl wheat plant witnessed to me in 1972. I could readily see the wages of being a hollow weed and how well the Father cared for His seed. I asked Jesus in and His Blood transfusion transformed me.

Nothing is scarier or more heart-breaking to a gardener than to send out an inexperienced worker to hoe the garden, then find out that they had hoed down costly, precious plants they thought looked like weeds! Selah...

Modernized, the Wheat and Tares would be: Jesus sent His disciples into the world to evangelize it and over the centuries many counterfeits were found in His Churches. Preachers said "I thought churches were for good Christians but we see a lot of hypocrites in there! Do you want us to throw them out? Jesus said "No! They are in the right place. Don't bother them so My Grace can touch as many of them as possible. When the end of the age comes, the angels will remove them anyway.

THE TEN VIRGINS

(Matthew 25:1-13)

"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' 'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."

I believe that the foolish virgins represent Israel and the wise ones are the Church. The bridegroom, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ. We must establish, from the outset, that He was the Bridegroom when He came the FIRST time and that there will be a long tarrying before the Marriage is consummated.

The disciples of John came and asked Him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the BRIDEGROOM mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the BRIDEGROOM will be taken from them: then they will fast." (Matthew 9:14,15) Jesus reveals here that He is the Bridegroom and that His disciples and followers were the guests. John the Baptist said "I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him. The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine and is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less." (John 3:28-30) John the Baptist reveals that he is the spiritual Groomsman (Best Man in our culture) to attend Christ the Bridegroom. When he said "the bride belongs to the bridegroom," John meant the Church to come would belong to Christ Jesus. Notice carefully we have the Bridegroom and Groomsman but no Bride at this point. His Bride is coming to Him in the espoused Church! Paul tells the church at Corinth "I have ESPOUSED you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:2) Amen! Who espouses a virgin and then gives her away? A father! John wrote in 1 John 2:13, "I write to you, FATHERS, because you have known him who is from the beginning." He tells the "children" that their sins are forgiven, commends the "young men" for strength and overcoming the devil, but salutes the FATHERS for KNOWING the Lord. This is the work and ministry of FATHERS; to lay down their lives "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry,

for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12) Fathers have grown past experiencing the Acts of God into walking in His Ways. They minister His Word to the Church so "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:26,27)

The Lord has purchased the Church out of all nations by His Blood and the Church is being espoused to Him through the ministry until the end of this age when a voice from the throne will say "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." (Revelations 19:7)

Israel had lost her place as a bride and wife due to unfaithfulness. Through Isaiah, God said "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Because of your sins you were sold; because of your transgressions your mother was sent away." (Isaiah 50:1) In Hosea, He says "Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery. Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace." (Hosea 2:2-5) Jeremiah said "If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him and marries another man, should he return to her again? Would not the land be completely defiled? But you have lived as a prostitute with many lovers-would you now return to me?" declares the LORD. You have defiled the land with your prostitution and wickedness...The LORD said to me, "Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. I thought that after she had done all this she would return to me but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery" (Jeremiah 3:1-8) Whenever someone says God doesn't understand or forgive divorce, just show them the above scriptures that prove God went through one, Himself.

Judgment came on Israel for not being good stewards of the spiritual resources God gave them and this theme runs throughout the parables. It's shown in the use of The Vineyard and use of The Talents or Pounds. Their resources are shown to be bankrupt in The Fig Tree (all leaves-no fruit), the Foolish Virgins and the Old and New Wineskin/Garment parables.

Israel abused its calling and the Law. When God sent His Son, they abused Him and refused every invitation (from prophets, John the Baptist and Jesus) to enter the Kingdom of God. Foolish is a mild word to describe the Jews' failure to recognize and embrace Jesus as their Messiah. As you'll see in this parable, the reason for excluding the five foolish virgins (Israel) wasn't for lack of oil but for being too LATE! When Christ the Bridegroom came, they were not PUNCTUAL, RESPONSIVE, or even ATTENTIVE! Just like in The Wedding Banquet, the

invited didn't respond or show up. The wise virgins went in because they were READY for the wedding. They RESPONDED when he was announced and were, therefore, ACCEPTED. Let's look at...

ALL THE VIRGINS WENT TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM—they knew God was up to something. David and the prophets had prophesied about it for hundreds of years. The captivity and hardship under Rome was heightening their desire for deliverance through a Messiah.

FIVE FOOLISH TOOK ONLY LAMPS—They didn't get their "vessels" filled also! What would oil in their vessel speak of? Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit and the vessel is man's heart or spirit. (See 2 Corinthians 4:7) The virgins having only lamps and without oil in their vessels describe the Jews who had "a form of godliness but denying its power." (2 Timothy 3:5) Not having any oil would point to those who have the letter of the Law but not the Spirit. It shows a people who have religion but not relationship. The lamp about out of oil is the Law which was "fading away." (2 Corinthians 3:11)

The Eastern custom of weddings calls for the bridesmaids (virgins-friends of the bride) to stand outside the bride's house, light their lamps (if at night) and when the Groom's procession (which has come FROM HIS PLACE) gets close, the Groomsman (John the Baptist) would cry out "The Bridegroom Approaches!" The bridesmaids then enter the Groom's procession, with their lamps burning for extra light at night, and escort the Bridegroom into the Bride's house. After the marriage in the Bride's house, the marriage party proceeds in the night to the Bridegroom's or Husband's House for the Wedding Feast.

Jesus left His former estate of glory which he had with the Father, (John 17:5 and 2 Corinthians 8:9) came down to us "in the form of a servant," (Philippians 2:7) as the Heavenly Bridegroom looking for a Bride. In His procession were angels and witnesses (Hebrews 12:1) and His Groomsman-"friend of the Bridegroom" (John 3:29) was John the Baptist who cried out "He's coming, He's Near!" Right now, through the Spirit, we are "being espoused as a chaste virgin unto Christ," (2 Corinthians 11:2) and being "washed by the water of His Word" (Ephesians 5:26) for the Bride must be "prepared." (Revelations 21:2) This washing forbids any "spot, wrinkle or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27) to be on the Body! The Church isn't some impure, defiled or wrinkled religion that has to be cleaned up before Jesus comes! The TRUE Church IS and has always been without spot, wrinkle or blemish! There's just a lot of counterfeit tares out there in the pews that make us look bad!

People who have observed Eastern weddings have written that whether the bridesmaids' lamps are burning or not, they still enter the groom's procession to enter the bride's home because the marriage starts immediately. Only a fool would run off for something trivial or for an accessory to ceremony! Only a fool wouldn't come prepared because the exact time of the Groom's coming is never exactly known in Eastern culture. The understood order is to come dressed for

the occasion, bring plenty of oil, (because you don't know the hour of His coming) stay alert and join the procession headed for the bride and the wedding.

The foolish virgins took only lamps without any extra oil to make it through a long night. They ran dangerously low and cried

OUR LAMPS ARE GOING OUT—The spiritual condition of Judaism was so "low" that it didn't know the Movement of the Bridegroom; that He was already in the midst of them. Instead of heeding the Call of the Hour to "enter in" they **SEPARATED THEMSELVES** from the other virgins (Gentile believers and disciples) and went

TO THEM THAT SELL— their own merchants (priesthood) for more oil. This is exactly what the Jews did when Jesus came. They separated themselves from the very people who were entering in and ran to the Pharisees and rabbis for direction concerning the person of Jesus. The length of time that the virgins were gone represents the years that John the Baptist and Jesus were announcing the coming Kingdom of God. But, they came back **TOO LATE** and

THE DOOR WAS SHUT— The "concision" party couldn't enter in with those who were **SEALED** to the Marriage! The reason he didn't open to them and said "I don't know you" is that the foolish **WERE GONE** to the merchants when He came! How could He see them in the night when they weren't there?

The most important thing the virgins were to do was to **WELCOME** the Bridegroom! Not only did they not **RESPOND** to His Call, they **DISHONORED** the Bridegroom when He came by leaving! It had already been announced that He was near but they **CHOSE** to run after something trivial for ceremony and missed Him! When they returned hoping for another chance before Him, they met a shut Door. They wanted Him to accept them just as they were, separated, unprepared and late. Wouldn't it be insulting if a person in a wedding ceremony left just before it was supposed to start, so they could go shopping? These would never come to His Wedding!

The actions of the foolish virgins is identical to the unresponsive guests in The Wedding Banquet, the sluggard who hid his talent and the resentful Elder Brother. Christ was exposing the Jews' passivity and false spiritual pride. The Jews were taught the Law, prompted and warned by prophets and by John the Baptist, and then when the Messiah appeared, they refused Him and sent Him to be crucified.

The five wise virgins are those who heard the message and "took plenty of oil" for their spiritual journey. They knew that the night could be longer than first anticipated since no one would know the hour in which He comes. We can see in this Church Age that some gather and store more oil for their calling and journey to the Wedding. Some are slothful or self-confident, thinking they have enough for anything He would demand of them. Others are deceived,

thinking the Lord will come at any second so they live irresponsibly in the world. The parables will teach the wise ones to be **READY, WATCHING, DRESSED and HAVE EXTRA OIL!**

THE LAMP ON A STAND

(Mark 4:21-24)

"He said to them, 'Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.' 'Consider carefully what you hear,' he continued. 'With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.'"

Once again, we must look at the context of the parable before attempting its interpretation. The parable comes in a series of sayings like "thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown" (vs. 20) and "whoever **HAS** will be given **MORE**; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." (vs. 25) There is **POWER** in the **RECEIVED WORD OF GOD!** You've probably seen powerful little plants pushing up through the highway, an ant carrying a hundred times its weight or a picture of the atomic bomb. That's nothing compared to the dynamic explosion that occurs when His Seed enters soft, prepared soil of the heart! With the creative Power of God and of His Resurrection, a lost soul gets a new, clean heart and becomes a New Creation that will live **ETERNALLY!** Amen!

DO YOU HIDE A LAMP?—No! The lamp is the Spirit of God, for "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4) Jesus was "the true Light, which lighteth every man that comes into the world." (John 1:9) "The spirit of man is the **LAMP** of the Lord!" (Proverbs 20:27) God does not want His Spirit that He has invested in man to be placed **UNDER** anything! The **LIGHT** and the **TRUTH** of God should be "put on a stand" or on T.V. for **VISIBILITY**, put into libraries and on the Net for **ACCESSIBILITY** and lived out in lives for **BELIEVABILITY!**

WHATEVER IS HIDDEN—what were the spiritual things that God had hidden until Christ? The **PARABLES, MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM** and the **MYSTERY OF CHRIST!** He said these were

MEANT TO BE DISCLOSED—MEANT to be! Amen! Jesus didn't want His teaching eulogized, stuck in some library to be fondled by robed, secretive, bald-headed gurus looking for a ticket out of society! He said "GO make disciples of **ALL** nations...teaching them to obey **EVERYTHING** I have commanded you.." (Matthew 28:19) He wants the parables disclosed!

That's why He's been after me for several years on this! He wants the mysteries of the Kingdom disclosed so people can trade their life of struggle, ruin and selfish mortality for His Life of peace and fulfillment, ETERNALLY. He wants the mystery of Christ disclosed so all believers will see that there's no more Jew or Gentile separation with God because in Christ the two are made one, the condemning law has been removed by His Offering and we can now come BOLDLY to the Throne of Grace.

WHATEVER IS CONCEALED— "It is the glory of God to CONCEAL a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." (Proverbs 25:2) "But if our gospel be HID, it is hid to them that are lost." (2 Corinthians 4:3) The truth about Jesus being born in Bethlehem to a virgin and fulfilling over thirty prophecies was CONCEALED from the Jews. The Spirit didn't reveal scriptures to the Jewish hierarchy about Jesus being their true Messiah but now, the truth about Jesus

IS MEANT TO BE BROUGHT OUT IN THE OPEN—In Acts 26:26, Paul said "this thing was not done in a corner!" We should obtain the whole truth about redemption and the Kingdom of God and PREACH IT! Truth is not for little "ditties" or devotionals taught by robed clerics behind ornate pulpits in huge cathedrals! Truth is for MAIN STREETS, MEAN STREETS and Third-World countries! Truth is for huge speakers and PA systems, movie projectors and packed football fields! Truth is for truckloads of cheap Bibles handed out worldwide to everybody, free of charge!

I want to DISCLOSE some truth by combining Thought from Matthew 6:6 and Luke 12:2-5. "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (Matthew 6) "When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might say. Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs." He begins by telling us how to pray. He says to go into a private place, shut out the world, and in your prayer and communion, God will see and reward you for the unselfish things that you have done. Next, He reveals that in the near future, the persecuted Church would meet in dark, secret chambers where the preaching would be at a "whisper" for fear of the Jews or of the Romans. But, God would not "let any of their words fall to the ground" and would honor them later by having their words shouted and magnified. He warns them of the hypocrisy and latent cruelty of the Pharisees now so that they might be encouraged later when they would be brought before

councils, beaten and suffer death for His Name. He tells them to not worry as much about those who could just kill their body as the One who could kill body and soul and throw both into Hell.

THE FARMER AND THE EARTH

(Mark 4:26-29)

"He also said, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces corn—first the stalk, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.'"

This parable comes in the context of thirty, sixty and hundredfold growth and sayings like "Whoever has will be given more." (vs.25) He's defining Kingdom principles in this chapter and in this parable says that man doesn't know what goes on within the powerful Kingdom of God which has spiritual laws and processes too deep for the natural mind. He showed me that this man was not the supernatural Sower in the parable of Mark 3:3-8 because this man would

SLEEP—and Christ doesn't! Psalms 121:4 says "he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." In other parables the main figure would "travel to a far country" or "tarry" longer than they expected but never slept. Another point is that this one rises night and day and when the seed sprouts

HE DOES NOT KNOW HOW—This is NOT the condition of the Lord who knows, as the Creator, about timing and the process of growth. The man in this parable is like any man who "puts his hand to the plow" (Luke 9:62) in service to God's Field. He must leave ALL the conditions of growth and timing up to the Lord. The word says "be not anxious for anything," but this one gets up day and night and goes out to stare at the ground to see if something has happened. Farmers do that. "The Husbandman is PATIENT for the precious fruit of the earth" (James 5:7) and is not losing sleep or biting His nails over it. He said

THE EARTH BRINGS FORTH FRUIT OF ITSELF—(KJV) To the earth, it's a natural, God-given power to bring forth life from whatever God plants within it. The earth has been given the ability to bring life. "And he said, 'So is the kingdom of God.'" He's trying to tell us that the Kingdom (earth) has Life in itself to MATURE, COMPLETE, and FINISH what God "plants" in it. The life of the kingdom is the Life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You haven't been in an orchard where the peach or apple trees are heard straining to produce fruit, have you? No! So it is with believers who bear the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. (Galatians 5:22,23) As we yield more and more of our life, we DECREASE that He might INCREASE and His Life shines through.

Most authors say this parable speaks of the slow, gradual and noticed growth of the Church in the kingdom of God. If you read the book of Acts, you'll find the opposite was true! Three thousand were saved the FIRST day! The Lord added daily to their number, many priests joined them and the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire in ONE GENERATION! That's not slow or gradual.

The emphasis of the parable is not the plant. It's the unseen, powerful Life in the earth. This Life is not only able to bring forth the plant stalk, (children, 30-fold) but also the ear (sons, servants, 60-fold) and the MATURE or Ripe SEED (fathers, 100-fold). Within the Kingdom of God are many different levels of life, all dependent upon how well they hear or believe God. He said in verse 25 "Whoever has will be given more," which means that those who are seeking and obtaining the Kingdom will gather more and more because they hunger and thirst for Life. Jesus said "I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) This is portrayed so well in the giving of Manna to Israel in Exodus 16. He said "Gather of it every man according to his eating...And the children of Israel did so, and gathered SOME MORE, SOME LESS... he that gathered much HAD NOTHING OVER, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man ACCORDING TO HIS EATING." Amen! Some of us had a dynamic rebirth experience and we're "sold out" to God. THE LORD IS OUR PORTION and His Grace is sufficient for all things. We're the ones that gather much because He has whet our appetite and we never have enough. The yearly touch at some revival or seminar is not enough, we must find Him "new every morning." We say, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God." (Psalms 42:1) We enjoy spirit-filled Churches more than the drunks do bars! Communion with God is as necessary to our spirit as water is to the natural body.

He also said "whoever does not have, even what he has will be TAKEN from him." This is the same message of the first Sower parable where "Satan comes and TAKES AWAY the word that was sown in them." Others hear the word, but "the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come and CHOKES the word, making it unfruitful." The ones with no root "last only a short time."

He relates everything in this chapter to the ability to hear and capacity to produce with the Word sown in our heart. Doesn't He say, (Mark 4:24) "Consider carefully what you hear, With the measure you use, it will be measured to you--AND EVEN MORE." Mark 4:20 holds a clue where it says some will hear, accept and PRODUCE A CROP. Those who produce 100-fold will have committed 100% of who they are into reproducing what they have heard.

THE BARREN FIG TREE

(Luke 13:6-9)

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig-tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' 'Sir,' the man replied, 'Leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig round it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

This parable is a warning of impending judgement on the Jews for not bearing fruit or responding to Christ's message. Israel forfeited its privileges as the elect people by failing to accomplish its Divine Purpose.

In several of the parables, Jesus uses the vineyard to describe people He is working with or "cultivating." Notice that the vineyard is never rebuked and was evidently serving God's purpose because it wasn't judged...It may get unkept and have lazy or greedy keepers (ministry) over it, but the vineyard never falls into wrath. It was also planted and remained after the fig tree was judged and removed. The vineyard didn't need a nature change—the fig tree did.

The puzzling thing to me was the fig tree. Did custom or practice have fig trees in vineyards and what was special about this one to bring such judgment against it? It WAS in the vineyard and it WAS planted so it was there by God's choice, but it wasn't the only important thing. The fig tree grew higher and more beautiful than the vines in the field, depicting greatness which God had destined for it in the world. The fig tree would represent something different or extra in God's dealings with mankind. This planting was to grow higher than the rest of the vineyard, bear a different kind of fruit as well as provide shade (covering or comfort), beauty and glory.

HE WENT TO LOOK FOR FRUIT— Israel should have born fruit long before Christ came. Judaism was one of the diseases which had afflicted the tree of Israel and it had to be removed from God's vineyard. Religion had crept in to rob the soil of its Power and this Pharisaical tree was shading out others' growth. This IMPOTENT fig tree was like tares using up the soil's fertility. He said,

I'VE COME THREE YEARS—The last season allowed for this tree to bear fruit began under John the Baptist and continued under the preaching of Jesus for THREE more YEARS. Christ "came unto His own but they received him not." (John 1:11) God's judgment upon Israel's unfaithfulness had been spoken years before but Christ intercedes for Israel, asking for more time by saying,

"I'LL DIG AROUND IT AND FERTILIZE IT"—Remember that John the Baptist had said "The ax is already at the root of the trees and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be

cut down and thrown into the fire." (Luke 3:9) Christ exposed every root of Judaism and in His last year, He "poured Himself out" with many mighty miracles and teaching but knew that final judgment was coming to this tree. The problem wasn't the soil or the efforts of the Keeper. I saw that the tree was STERILE.IMPOTENT! It had lost its ability to reproduce, had lost its SEED (1 John 3:9) and had become useless for fruit. The fig tree wasn't planted in the Master's Vineyard for shade or to be an ornament. In all the parables we see that God expects a return from His investments. He received 30, 60, and 100 fold from the Sower's seed. He gets 100% or better return in The Talents and The Net comes in bursting! He said, "My word that goes out from my mouth will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)

God had chosen Israel from "choice stock," invested thousands of years of care into it and came rightfully demanding fruit or complete expulsion from the vineyard.

IT USES UP THE SOIL/FERTILIZER—This proud but unfruitful tree had to go. It wasn't a blessing to the earth and used up nourishment intended for grapes. It bore no fruit and shaded the ground which hindered young growth needing Light necessary to grow. Jesus told the Pharisees, "You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to." (Matthew 23:13) It had the leaves to distinguish it by LOOKS but no FRUIT to prove its FUNCTION!

Judaism changed Israel into a field of tares that brought reproach to God. No nation on earth favored Israel and most despised it. Ending His Covenant with Israel was the inevitable choice for God. He looked for a people and nation through which His Glory could be channeled into the whole earth.

Since fertilizer comes from a source outside the soil or tree, I believe this would speak of the Holy Spirit which is necessary for spiritual growth. Israel had "grieved" the Holy Spirit for centuries and was so devoid of its life-giving power it had become blind and deaf to the movements of God. Just as various vitamins and minerals will enhance reproductive ability, the influx of the Holy Spirit could have corrected Israel's impotency before God. But, it didn't happen and Jesus rightfully wept over it because God brought judgment on unproductive Israel in A.D. 70. It was dug up and cast out of the vineyard by the Romans to be "trodden under foot." Christ said, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men." (Matthew. 5:13) God is patient and long-suffering but "will not always strive with man." (Genesis 6:3)

Another interesting thing to find is that a vineyard and fig tree are not used as spiritual types in scripture after the time of Christ. This would be so, because now, Christ is the Vine. He said "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no

fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." (John 15:1-8) The Kingdom of God would be in Him and would not have a set-apart ministry anymore like Judaism. His ministry would not be replaced generation after generation or with ceremonial sacrifices, for Christ Jesus fulfilled ALL their ministerial types in Himself. "No longer will a man teach his neighbor or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord, because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest,'" (Jeremiah 31:34) and " you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth... you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit-just as it has taught you, remain in him." (1 John 2:20,27)

There was no need for a Judaic type of ministry after Pentecost when the promised Holy Spirit came to dwell within our hearts, tell us of things to come and bring the things of Christ out of the heavenlies so that we can know them. (John 16:13,15) The Body of Christ is to minister one to another with no part having superiority over another.

As God was looking at the natural Israel then, He looks at the spiritual Israel (the Church) today. What would be His righteous judgment upon us? Has the ministry kept the vineyard wall in good shape? The vineyard wall is spiritually similar to the high linen fence around the Mosaic Tabernacle. It was built of fine linen "which is the righteousness of the saints." (Revelations 19:8) One couldn't jump over the fence because it was HIGHER THAN A MAN! You couldn't SEE or ENTER the offerings inside unless you came to the tabernacle DOOR. Jesus said you couldn't SEE or ENTER the Kingdom unless you entered at the DOOR (John 10:9) and were born again. (John 3)

When He mentioned repairing the vineyard wall and cleaning out the thorns (parable of Vineyard/Dressers), He was referring to the restoration of righteousness, purity and other-worldliness that His Kingdom must have. He rebuked Israel soundly for their "affairs" with other nations just as He warns us that "friendship with the world is hatred toward God." (James 4:4)

When any ministry fails to uphold the standards given in the Word of God, the wall and everything else becomes ruined, "overgrown" with worldliness and falls prey to merchandising

thieves. Ministerial thieves begin to think the vineyard belongs to them and begin lording over or beating the servants. This is the "ruling over" Nicolaitian spirit mentioned in Revelations 2:15 which manifests in a clergy ruling over laity. Much of the contemporary church has allowed this spirit to control the Body of Christ. This WILL bring His strong judgments against that part of the Body that entertains this teaching and practice. Those who magnify the "five-fold" ministry in Ephesians 4:11-13 are usually guilty of giving their ministers a higher place than other members. This is not Christ! His Body has no member worth more than any other. (See 1 Corinthians 12) His ministers are given to the Church to raise everyone else up for THEIR work of ministry until we're all built up in Christ! Ministers are not to "lord over God's heritage but be an example." (1 Peter 5:3) Jesus said, "The greatest among you will be your servant." (Matthew 23:11)

Jesus went to Jerusalem one morning and was hungry. "Seeing a FIG TREE by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, 'May you never bear fruit again!' Immediately the tree withered. (Matthew 21:19) Are these two accounts of fig trees related? Does this cursed fig tree portray natural Israel which hasn't bore fruit in the past two thousand years?

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

(Luke 18: 9-14)

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men [are], extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as [his] eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [rather] than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted".

SOME WHO TRUSTED IN THEMSELVES- the Jews must have "smarted" at this teaching since it was pointed right at their racial prejudice and self-righteous pride. Many in churches today should take warning from this and repent before God judges our church and nation for the same reasons. The contemporary church has lost much of the "fear of the Lord" and has become calloused to the move of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 10:31 says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

THE EXALTED SHALL BE ABASED- and the Jews have a LONG history of proving that. They have had many trials, captivities and worldwide dispersion. Millions of Jews were killed

by the Catholics in the Inquisition and over six million killed by the German Nazis in the Holocaust. If you carefully study what God said would happen to the Israelites, you'll see that His Word has come true.

THE HUMBLE SHALL BE EXALTED- Amen! This resounds throughout His teaching. The last shall be first; the poor, disabled and common shall sit at the Banquet table; the meek shall inherit the earth and the lame shall take the prey. The lame are those who have had their walk altered in life for Him and they rely entirely on Him for their strength. I Corinthians 12:33 says "those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor." Does this really happen in our contemporary church? Haven't we been warned about giving the seat of honor to the wealthy or educated while asking the common ones to take a lesser seat? The sure judgment of God awaits those who do this.

THE BIBLE IS A SPIRITUAL BOOK

Too many people fail to find the Kingdom of God because they try to understand the Bible with a natural mind. All they can see is a natural history of a natural Israel given Divine Principles to use in their natural lives awaiting a futuristic, natural kingdom. Paul said that, "The man without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are SPIRITUALLY discerned," and "we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing SPIRITUAL truths in SPIRITUAL words." (I Corinthians 2:13)

Consider the following pages about Bible topics being spiritual.

Spiritual

Romans 1:11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong-

Romans 7:14 We know that the law is spiritual: but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.

Romans 15:27 They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

1 Corinthians 1:7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

1 Corinthians 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

1 Corinthians 2:15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment.

1 Corinthians 3:1 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:11 If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?

1 Corinthians 10:3 They all ate the same spiritual food.

1 Corinthians 10:4 And drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

1 Corinthians 14:12 So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

1 Corinthians 15:44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.

Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Ephesians 5:19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Colossians 1:9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Shadow

Colossians 2:17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come: the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Hebrews 8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Hebrews 10:1 "The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming- not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship."

Stands for

Matthew. 13:38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one,

Luke 8:14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

Luke 8:15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

Galatians 4:25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.

Revelations 19:8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

Figure

Hebrews 9:9 Which [was] a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

Hebrews 11:19 Accounting that God [was] able to raise [him] up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

1Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Copy

Hebrews 8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one: he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

Pattern

Acts 7:44 "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Phillipians 3:17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.

Hebrews 8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Represent

Galatians 4:24 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.

The Jews could not understand anything outside of their nation of Israel, its capital of Jerusalem and their Law of Moses being in the plan of God. Neither could the woman at the well in John 4. "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father NEITHER on this mountain NOR IN JERUSALEM"

God's Kingdom now has a spiritual Jerusalem, a spiritual Israel, spiritual worship and a spiritual priesthood!

Consider the following pages of scripture that reveal the Bible points to a SPIRITUAL:

JERUSALEM

Galatians 4:25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the PRESENT city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.

Galatians 4:26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.

Revelations 3:12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

Revelations 21:21 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

ISRAEL

Romans 9:31 But Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.

Romans 10:19 Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation: I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding."

Hebrews 8:8 But God found fault with the people and said: "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."

Hebrews 8:10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Romans 11:7 What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened.

Ephesians 2:12 Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

Ephesians 3:6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household

****Romans 9:6-8 "Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children...it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring". ****

Romans 9:25-26 "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people: and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one and it will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,'they will be called 'sons of the living God.'

SEED

Galatians 3:16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed", meaning one person, who is Christ.

Galatians 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.

Galatians 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then YOU ARE ABRAHAM'S SEED, and heirs according to the promise.

Hebrews 11:18 Even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

1Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

John 3:9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

TEMPLE

John 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"

John 2:21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you know that YOU ARE GOD'S TEMPLE and that God's Spirit lives in you?

1 Corinthians 3:17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.

2 Corinthians 6:16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Ephesians 2:21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. (The Lord's Temple isn't in Palestine.)

Revelations 3:12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God.

Revelations 21:22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

FIELD

1 Corinthians 3:9 For we are God's fellow-workers; you are God's field. God's building.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

NATION

Acts 10:35 But accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

Romans 10:19 Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation: I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding."

1 Peter 2:9 But YOU ARE a chosen people, a royal priesthood, A HOLY NATION, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

PRIESTHOOD

1 Peter 2:5 You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (The Kingdom of Priests is in the Church.)

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Royal=line of David, Priesthood=line of Levi (made like our High Priest)

Revelations 1:6 Has made US to be a kingdom and priests

Revelations 5:10 You have made them to be A KINGDOM AND PRIESTS

STONES

Romans 9:32 Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling-stone".

2 Cor 3:3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

1 Peter 2:4 As you come to him, the living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him.

1 Peter 2:5 You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices

1 Peter 2:6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion. a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

1 Peter 2:8 And, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message-which is also what they were destined for.

Revelations 21:19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone.

HOUSE

Luke 1:33 And he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; his kingdom will never end.

Luke 1:69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.

Luke 2:4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

John 2:16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

John 2:17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

John 14:2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

Acts 7:46 Who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling-place for the God of Jacob...

Acts 7:49 "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me?" says the Lord. "Or where will my resting place be?"

2 Corinthians 5:1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Hebrews 3:2 He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house.

Hebrews 3:3 Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.

Hebrews 3:5 Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.

Hebrews 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And WE ARE HIS HOUSE if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Hebrews 8:10 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts."

Hebrews 10:21 And since we have a great priest over the house of God.

1 Peter 2:5 You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

KINGDOM NATURE

We must understand that the kingdom of God is an entirely spiritual kingdom. We enter it spiritually through receiving Christ into our spirit, whereby we're born again, and we remain in His Kingdom if we "walk according to the spirit." (Romans 8:1)

Luke 9:27 says, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God." Jesus is not speaking of His Second Coming here but is saying that before the apostles would die they would see His Kingdom, and they did! The Kingdom of God came on the Day of Pentecost when men received the Spirit of Christ and were empowered to minister the kingdom and bear its fruit. Before any of the apostles passed away they had all moved in the Kingdom. The thief on the cross said "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." (Luke 23:42) This man wasn't forgotten or on probation for thousands of years until Jesus returned! He was received into Christ and His Kingdom when Christ arose.

Jesus told his disciples "I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." (Luke 22:16,18) Concerning the bread, He said, "I will not eat it again until it finds FULFILLMENT in the kingdom of God." The elements of the Passover meal found their fulfillment in the spiritual Body of Christ when they received His Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Amen! The grapes have life in the VINE until they mature and then they're CRUSHED to flow together. Their observable outer nature is CHANGED from solid to liquid and their inner nature is CHANGED from grape juice to WINE! The tiny wheat SEED is PLANTED and DIES! Out of its old, hard nature bursts a powerful LIFE yielding 30, 60 or 100 fold! It willingly SUBMITS to GRINDING so that its whole nature can be CHANGED into FLOUR! IT LOSES ITS IDENTITY as it's MIXED with millions like it. POWERFUL HANDS KNEAD the dough and then SUBMIT IT TO FIRE, necessary to CHANGE IT INTO BREAD! Praise God! He says, "I'll commune with you again when your inner nature has been changed to BE LIKE MINE. When your life can truly flow with mine in Spirit (like wine) and your life is broken as bread to feed the nations then you will be worthy to sit with me in My Kingdom."

In John 6:53 He said "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink." Just as natural bodies hunger for bread and drink, millions of new converts in His Spiritual Body (the true Church) come hungering and thirsting for Eternal Life in Christ. Jesus told the woman at the well, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:13) He said, "If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By

this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified." (John 7:37-39) After Jesus was risen from the grave and ascended to His Father, He poured out the promised Holy Spirit upon the Church and those who would hunger and thirst could now be filled.

The religious then and now have looked for natural signs of a natural kingdom and devise natural programs to help the natural man enter it. Jesus doesn't oblige them. He has come as the spiritual second Adam (I Corinthians 15:45-48) with spiritual signs of a spiritual kingdom which only the spiritual (I Corinthians 15:50) can enter. This second Adam is the head of a new Creation.

Those who would enter His kingdom would be a spiritual people born from above, and be given power to become His children (John 1:12,13) He said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." (Luke 18:16) We must come like children, without shame or pride, to our Father. Children are HELPLESS, INNOCENT and PURE, so we must become Helpless, so we won't make our own way and depend entirely on Father for direction and provision. We must be Innocent from any sin, pride or desire. We must be Pure in heart, without any mixture of prejudice, religion or loyalties. We must depart from pushing politics and programs if we intend to approach Him in spirit. Jesus said, "true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23)

His kingdom was for those who would be POOR IN SPIRIT, MEEK, HUNGRY AND THIRSTY FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, MERCIFUL, PURE IN HEART and PEACEMAKERS. These people would be innocent "AS A LITTLE CHILD." They would LOVE THEIR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATED THEM, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSED THEM, PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MISTREATED THEM and they could "turn the other cheek" if offended. His children would give anything to someone who needed it or demanded it of them, love the unlovable, do good to those who weren't good to them and lend to those who couldn't repay (Luke 6:2,7-36).

Worship in His kingdom wouldn't be with symbolic animals but would be done by each one offering themselves as a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1) The sacrifice of praise now would be believers confessing His Name and other acceptable sacrifices would be doing good works and sharing with others (Hebrews 13:15,16).

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God DOES NOT COME VISIBLY nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There

it is,' because THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU." (Luke 17:20,21) He also said "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign!" (Matthew 12)

The contemporary Church has made the same mistake that Israelites made 2,000 years ago. If s so busy looking for natural signs and at natural Jerusalem that they can't see the TRUE Kingdom of God! God has already built an observable Israel, came in a natural body and tolerated the ministry of written law by natural priests! All of these were SIGNS of what was to come! (Colossians 2:17 and Hebrews 10:1) "The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual." (I Corinthians 15:46) His New Covenant is with a Spiritual Israel who have His Word written on their hearts and they enjoy Kingdom Life and Power because He gives them His Spirit!

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit (John 14:17) "The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be IN you" Vs. 26 says "My Father will love him, and WE WILL COME TO HIM AND MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM." His home is IN US!

The Father's Home would not be earthly buildings made with human hands but would be a SPIRITUAL house, the BODY OF CHRIST. This would be the house He spoke of (1 Chronicles 17:10-14) that He would build for himself and from which His Son would rule. This house would be in that city Abraham looked for "whose builder and maker was God." (Hebrews 11:10) This city would be the same as the Bride shown to John in Revelation 21: 2-10. This LIVING Temple, filled with His Spirit, would not be in one certain town or ministered to by one certain race or gender of people but would be built up of spiritual believers everywhere. Paul said in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." His grace and election is now to "whoever calls upon the Name of the Lord!"

God's Israel is believers everywhere. His Jerusalem is the righteous Church and His Zion is those who worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

Please respond by Email to: overcomer7@gmail.com or to William M. Wilson, P.O. Box 1143, Flippin, AR 72634