



INTRODUCTION: Writing to Timothy, Paul said "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15).

The student of the "word of God" is here spoken of as a "workman." A workman cannot intelligently do his work without a plan. He must have drawings and specifications. God said to Moses as to the Tabernacle, "See that thou make all things according to the 'pattern' showed to thee in the mount. " (Heb. 8:5).

The student of God's word must understand "God's Plan and Purpose in the Ages," or there will be confusion in his work of interpreting the scriptures. The word "dispensation" is used in the Bible four times. In every case, it is obvious from the context that God is referring to a period of time. In (Col. 1:25-27 and Eph. 3:2-5) the word ages is used, and in (I Cor. 9:17) Paul discusses a particular gospel that was committed to him. It is also interesting to note that the word "dispensation" does not appear until Paul writes his epistles. The reason is obvious - the mystery of the ages had not been revealed until then (Eph. 3:5-7). Without noting these dispensations, and the divisions that they create, a great deal of confusion can result.

We must also distinguish between the "TIMES" and "SEASONS" of the scriptures. Daniel said of God, "He changeth the "TIMES" and the "SEASONS", " (Dan. 2:21), and Jesus said to His disciples - "It is not for you to know the "TIMES" or the 'SEASONS'." (Acts 1:7) Job testified that the "TIMES are not hidden from the Almighty." (Job 24:1). And of the children of Issachar it was said that they had "understanding of the TIMES." (I Chron. 12:32) By the "SEASONS" we are to understand the climatic changes of the earth due to the movements and changing characteristics of the sun, moon and stars, which God ordained to regulate the "Seasons." (Gen. 1:14) As to the "TIMES", we have them

designated as the "TIMES OF IGNORANCE," (Acts 17:30); the "TIMES OF THE GENTILES," (Luke 21:24); the "TIMES OF RESTITUTION," (Acts 3:21) and the "Dispensation of the FULLNESS OF TIMES." (Eph. 1:10)

I. THE ORIGINAL PLAN

To understand properly what fits between the sides of eternity it is essential to have some kind of a grasp for God's original plan. (Isa. 45:18) states that the earth was created to be inhabited. (2 Peter 3:13) alludes to this plan being fulfilled not only in the present, but also in the future eternity.

II. THE ORIGINAL CREATION - (Gen 1:1)

This creation was in the dateless past. It was undoubtedly a perfect creation, for there has never been a record of God ever creating anything that was not perfect. Even Satan was perfect in the day of his creation (Eze. 28:15). There is very little information in the Bible about the original creation for what we read about in (Gen. 1:3-31) is a re-creation or a restoration of the earth to its original condition before it was made "formless and void" and submerged in water and darkness.

III. THE KING OVER THE ORIGINAL CREATION

Satan is referred to as the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) in this present age, but it appears that he had also occupied that position in eternity past (Eze. 28:11-19). It is important to grasp that Satan was king over a physical creation and a spiritual one. (Job 1).

IV. THE FALL OF THE KING

The chaotic condition of the earth in (Gen. 1:2) is generally associated with the fall of Satan. The text most used to support this is (Isa. 14:12-16). In reality, this may be a prophetic passage, but it certainly pictures Satan's past fall in type.

The fall of Satan in eternity past is supported by a recreation. Only something of that magnitude would have caused the earth to be without form and void.

Re-creation is supported by:

A. The expression "And God said that it was good" is not found on the second day of creation. The reason for the omission is apparent only if the reader grasps the truth of (Eph. 6:10-13; Isa. 24:21; and Job 41:31- 32). The second heaven, in which we find the solar systems, galaxies, nebula, star clusters, and constellations, also contains the demoniac posers, fallen angels, and Satan himself.

B. Instructions are given to man to replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28). The dictionary definition of replenish is "to recover former fullness".

Mystery of The Ages

PART 2 - THE EDENIC DISPENSATION

INTRODUCTION: The re-creation of the earth is followed by the creation of inhabitants on the earth (sixth day of creation). Man was created in God's own image, which explains why man has two faculties no animal has ever had, or ever will have: the ability to speak, "In the beginning was the word" (John 1:1), and the ability to write, "Thy word is true from the beginning" (Ps. 119:160). Why would any true revelation of a true God come to man in any other way than in the form of words in a Book? (See Ps. 119:89, 105, 130). The image is further defined in (Heb. 1:1-3 and Col. 2, and 2 Cor. 4:4) as being the Lord Jesus Christ. The image is a person, and Adam is so "Christ like" that Jesus Christ is called "the second Adam" (I Cor. 15). Furthermore, the image proves that Adam was a trichotomy (Body, Soul, and Spirit) even as God is three parts. The three parts of man can be seen in (Gen. 2:7).

1. The Body - is the dust (Ps. 119:25). The body goes back to the dust because "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). The body of God is Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-3).
2. The Soul or "I am" - corresponds to God the Father in type, and it constitutes that part of the image which "No man hath seen, nor can see" (John 1:18; I Tim. 6:16). After the fall of man, this soul is stuck to a "body of death" (Ps. 119:25), and consequently, the Old Testament writers used the word "soul" as synonymous with the body (see Gen. 19:20; 17:14; Rev. 20:4; Num. 31:28). The soul leaves the body at death and departs long before any dirt is shoveled over anyone (see Gen. 50:3; 49:33, 35:18).
3. The Spirit, as wind or air, is common to all men (I Cor. 2:11) and common to all animals (Ecc. 3:21). After the fall this is a dead spirit, and it must be "born again" before the soul of its possessor can enter the presence of God permanently. It is the spirit in a man that is "born again" when he is born again, not his "soul" (cf. John 3:6). The unconverted man in this age then, is like a flat tire. He is a live body with a dead spirit (Eph. 2:1-6), whereas, the child of God is a live spirit within a dead body (see Rom. 6:2- 10).

I. INNOCENCE

A. The State of Man - In this garden of matchless delights, and amid scenes of indescribable loveliness, with God for his counselor, and angelic beings as visitors, with a

sinless nature and environment most favorable to a pure and holy life, the progenitors of the human race were placed. The conditions were ideal.

B. The Crowns - God made a king and of his kingship there can be no doubt, for in the day of his creation he was said to be one who was, "Crowned with glory and honour," and "set over the works of thy hands," and God put "all things in subjection under his feet" (Heb. 2:6-8).

This is "His Majesty, Adam the First" - like Satan, in that he was "a son of God" (See Luke 3:38, Job 38:1-7, and Job 1:6).

This new king is provided with a helpmeet (mate) who can match (meet) his needs; he is given a commission and an authority over two kingdoms, which were left to him by a fallen cherub. As king over the KINGDOM OF GOD, Adam is a "Son of God," made in God's image. As King over the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, he is given a commission to replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over everything on it (Gen. 1:26-28).

C. Salvation - Salvation will be defined as "the gift of eternal life" (Rom. 6:23). Adam was required to do two things to have assurance of eternal life:

[1]. Obedience - abstain from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17).

[2]. Accept the gift, eat of the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24). The Bible seems to make a complete circle (Rev. 22:14). Will God complete His plan? (Isa 45:18). You can't help but wonder if the tree of life is somehow synonymous with a person (John 15:1) even as the Word of God is (John 1:1).

II. THE FALL

The critics of the Bible always try to blame God for Adam's fall. Let's back up and work through some sound reasoning.

[1]. Why did God make the heaven and the earth? (Gen. 1:1)

Answer: He made them to be INHABITED! (Isa. 45:18; 2 Pet. 3:13) This is a nasty turn of events! Can it be that the Bible and the unregenerate scholars, scientists, philosophers, and historians have the same plan?

[2]. If God made them (and God is perfect), Why did He not make them perfect?

Answer: He DID make them perfect; go back and notice that verses 3-28 are dealing with a re-creation of a former creation, which was finished in (verse 1). (Even Satan was created perfect in (Ezek 28:15); not as a "serpent" or as a "devil" but as a "Cherubim."

[3]. If God made them perfect, why are they not perfect now?

Answer: Because something happened between (Gen. 1:1 and Gen. 1:3) to the physical creation, and something happened between (Gen. 2:7 and Gen. 3:13) to the spiritual creation - the first man and woman.

[4]. If God is perfect and loves "perfection," why did He not prevent this "something" from happening?

Answer: Because although the material creation was perfect, the MAN that God created was not perfect; he was only sinless, but not perfect!

[5]. Didn't God know the result of the test before it occurred? (If He is perfect, He must have known)

Answer: Good thinking - He did (Acts 15:18). He knew Adam would fall and knowing this He gave him a freedom of will and of choice, so he could (or could NOT) fall.

[6]. Then is not God indirectly (or directly) to blame for what took place in His creation at the start?

Answer: Yes, the Lord could have prevented sin from entering, and DID NOT (Lam. 3:38; Job 2:10).

[7]. Then is not God responsible for Adam's sin and the mess man now finds himself in?

Answer: NO, God does not tempt any man, neither can He be tempted, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and is enticed (James 1:13-15).

[8]. Then who tempted Adam?

Answer: Eve (Gen. 3:4-6; I Tim. 2:12-14).

[9]. Who Tempted Eve?

Answer: A "serpent" (2 Cor. 11:1-3).

[10]. Who tempted the serpent, if it wasn't God Himself?

Answer: Before the serpent was a "serpent," he was not a serpent, but a Cherubim, and he was drawn away of his own lust and enticed to put his own will above the will of God (See Eze. 28:10- 17; Isa. 14:12-15).

[11]. Get off that! If God is eternal and knew the end from the beginning, He would have prevented the "Lucifer" of (Isaiah 14) from falling to the level of a serpent!

Answer: True. God lets a lot of things "fall" in order to work out His original plan (Rom. 11: 11-32).

[12]. Then God is not only responsible for MAN'S sin, but the serpent's also, since He allowed BOTH to take place - isn't that right?

Answer: If I say "Yes," what then?

[13]. Then Darwin and Marx are right. "There is no God" (Ps. 14:1), because a God that is so imperfect that He is responsible for imperfection, is NOT perfect!

Answer: Let me ask you a question: "Suppose God remedied the entire thing and made right what was made wrong; has He not then cleared Himself of ALL guilt and responsibility in the matter?" (Rom. 3:4-6).

If God is perfect, then LOVE is one of His qualities (I John 4:8), and this LOVE has to be perfect LOVE. For love to really be perfect LOVE, there has to be two parties. (One party loving the same party is not LOVE, for self-love is not real "LOVE",) God, therefore, creates a second party - MAN (Heb. 2:6) - on which to manifest this attribute. If the man does not have a free will and a free choice, then he cannot return God's love. An automaton cannot "love". The man must have a choice (Josh. 24:15), and to have a choice there must be a third party. The "eternal triangle," in this case, is a cherub who becomes a serpent. You can choose him (2 Cor. 4:4) or God (I Ki. 18:21). God allows this being (the cherub) to appear and tempt mankind so that man can freely choose GOD as an object of love. Adam chooses his wife as an object, and his wife chooses knowledge - as do all good "intellectuals"! The man falls and God redeems the man, by bearing the entire blame (Rom. 5:6-19) for both the man and the cherub; he does this sin-bearing by coming down and dying, as a man! (Phil. 2; Isa.53; Rom. 10; 2 Cor. 3). Having absolved Himself of ALL guilt, it is now possible for the man to be confirmed sinless forever by receiving a sinless Saviour as his own (John 1:10-12). "Your move." - Dr. Peter S. Ruckman

III. THE JUDGMENT

Adam died spiritually immediately (exactly as God had said) and physically in due time (Heb. 9:27). His death was passed on (Rom. 5:12-14) in that his children were born in his image and not God's (Gen. 5:3). He lost his spiritual crown (Kingdom of God) in that he lost God's image and his physical crown (Kingdom of Heaven) in that his dominion was cursed (Gen. 3:17-19).

Mystery of The Ages

PART 3 - THE DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE

INTRODUCTION: This dispensation extends from the "Fall" to the "Flood." It lasted for 1656 years, and was the Dispensation of "Conscience." It shows what man will do when guided only by his conscience. Adam and Eve had no conscience before the "Fall". Conscience is a knowledge of good and evil, which Adam and Eve did not have until they ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree. Conscience may produce fear and remorse, but it will not keep men from doing wrong, for conscience imparts no "power".

I. SALVATION

In the Antediluvian Dispensation mankind was treated as a whole. There were no nations. That dispensation is called in (Acts 17:30) the "TIMES OF IGNORANCE," and is contrasted with the "Times that are NOW." We are told that in that dispensation God "WINKED AT" what He could not "OVERLOOK" in the Legal Dispensation. Conscience was then the standard of human conduct. It was the standard by which men accused or excused themselves (Rom. 2:15). The Sinaitic law was not given until after the Exodus. Being without law there was no legal standard for sin, for "by the law is the "KNOWLEDGE OF SIN" (Rom. 3:20). But, they were without "excuse" for God was very near to mankind in those days, and His voice was heard in rebuke, as to Cain (Gen. 4:14), in communion with Enoch (Gen. 5:22-24), or in counsel as with Noah (Gen. 6:3). They were, therefore, not without a knowledge of God, but they glorified Him not, and God "gave them over to VILE AFFECTIONS" including giving their daughters to cohabit with "Fallen Angels". The character of that dispensation is vividly disclosed in (Rom. 1:20-32).

The principles which governed God's administration of those "TIMES OF IGNORANCE" would not be appropriate then in the days of Moses, when God revealed His will in "The Law". We must then distinguish these two dispensations as being one "WITHOUT LAW", and the other "UNDER LAW". This therefore would affect the "Basis of Judgment" in these dispensations. This distinction is brought out clearly in (Rom. 2:12). "For as many as have sinned "WITHOUT LAW" shall also "PERISH WITHOUT LAW", and as many as have sinned "IN THE LAW" shall be "JUDGED BY THE LAW".

This clearly shows us the "ignorance of the law" is no excuse and will not save us from punishment. This "Principle of Judgment" will prevail at the "Great White Throne Judgment," when the inhabitants of both the Antediluvian and Legal Dispensations will be judged.

While there was no "WRITTEN LAW" in the dispensation before the Flood, there was an "UNWRITTEN LAW", and when the Gentiles who have not the law, do "BY NATURE" the things contained in the law, they show that they have the law "WRITTEN IN THEIR HEARTS", for not the HEARERS of the law are just (justified) before God, but the "DOERS," or those who keep it (Rom. 2:11-16).

It should be noted that a blood sacrifice became evident early in this dispensation. God clothed Adam and Eve in "coats of skins" (Gen. 3:21) which necessitated the "shedding of blood" (Heb. 9:22). The context of Hebrews 9 is not all inclusive of every dispensation, therefore it is impossible to say whether a blood sacrifice was an absolute necessity or not. However, there are some obvious facts that need to be studied:

[1]. Abel knew about blood sacrifice (Gen. 4:4) as did Noah (Gen. 8:20).

[2]. God communicated with men and made the message of obedience clear.

[3]. God appointed a preacher of righteousness in the person of Noah. Undoubtedly others (such as Enoch) also preached.

II. IMITATION

One of the most significant events of this dispensation was the great Satanic effort to imitate God's original plan. To expedite this plan the fallen angels, called the "sons of God", were employed.

The title "sons of God" has not the same meaning in the Old Testament that it has in the New. In the New Testament it applies to those who have become the "sons of God" by the new birth. (Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6; I Jn. 3:1-2) In the Old Testament it applies to the angels, and is so used five times: twice in Genesis (Gen. 6:2- 4) and three times in Job (Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7). A "son of God": denotes a being brought into existence by a creative act of God. Such were the angels, and such was Adam, and he is so called in (Lk. 3:38). But Adam's natural descendants are not the special creation of God. Adam was created in the "likeness of God" (Gen. 5:1), but his descendants were born in his likeness, for we read in (Gen. 5:3), that Adam "BEGAT a son in his own likeness, after his image." Therefore, all men born of Adam and his descendants by natural generation are the "SONS OF MEN," and it is only by being "BORN AGAIN" (John 3:3-7), which is a "NEW CREATION," that they can become the "SONS OF GOD" in the New Testament sense.

These "gods" came from outer space (Acts 14:11-14) and brought the idea to populate the heavens. That their off spring were different is obvious from the fact that they were giants (Gen. 6:4). It stands to reason that God would not allow this wickedness to infiltrate the heavens, hence the judgment of the flood.

III. JUDGMENT

The characteristics of the "Antediluvian Dispensation," as outlined by the late Dr. A. T. Pierson, were, "First, an advance in fullness and clearness of revelation; then gradual spirit declension; then conformity to the world, ending with amalgamation with the world; then a gigantic civilization, brilliant but godless; then parallel development of evil and good; then an "Apostasy," and finally a "CATASTROPHE."

These we shall find are the characteristics of every dispensation that follows, except the last.

It is interesting to notice that just prior to judgment God called Enoch, who is a type of the church age saint, home. When Jesus was preparing the Jews for the Tribulation He compared the events to the days of Noah (Matt. 24:36-41).

There will be a great deal of emphasis upon space travel, immorality and divorce during the days prior to and following the Rapture. The day is near when there will be millions of Enochs disappearing - Praise the Lord!

Mystery of The Ages

PART 4 - HUMAN GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION: If ever the human race had an opportunity to work out the theory of "Human Government" it was right after the flood. Noah was an old man over 600 years of age, full of wisdom and experience. His family, all of whom had reached manhood and womanhood, (the youngest, Shem was 98 years old), were qualified for self- government. Behind them was the flood with all its warnings, and in addition the accumulated knowledge from Adam down to their day. They had the advantage of a new covenant, called the "Noahic Covenant" (Gen. 8:20-22). Noah also reestablished the true mode of worship by erecting an altar and sacrificing thereon, but the dispensation was a failure like its predecessors.

God commanded Noah and his sons to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, but instead of scattering, their posterity kept together, and sought to build a capital city and "make themselves a name" by building a "tower" to heaven. This was disobedience, and God came down and confused their speech, and scattered them abroad over the face of the earth. (Gen. 11:1-9) Even the names of the builders, except Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10) are unknown. Here we have the origin of the different languages of the earth. The miracle was reversed at Pentecost (Acts 2:4). Because of the relative shortness of this dispensation (approx. 427 yrs.), we shall study the major events in a chronological order.

I. NOAH REESTABLISHES PROPER WORSHIP

(Gen. 8:20) Noah was held accountable to the revelations of faith. In that he found forgiveness. Those revelations included the preparation of the ark (obedience) and the offering of a sacrifice (Heb. 11:7).

II. A CROWN IS GIVEN

(Gen. 9:1) "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish..." This is the original commission given to Adam (see Gen. 1:28).

Noah is a type of Adam in that:

- A. They both were sole possessors of the earth.
- B. They both had a direct commission from God.
- C. They both replaced races which God did not want controlling the earth.
- D. They both had three sons by name.
- E. One of their sons was a type of Christ.
- F. One was a type of Antichrist.

- G. Shem and Abel are connected with Christ.
- H. Cain and Canaan are both cursed.
- I. Adam is naked when he sins, exactly as Noah.
- J. Adam and Noah partake of "forbidden fruit."
- K. Adam's prohibition is a vine, and Noah's prohibition is blood (Gen. 9:4).

Keep in mind that a vine is called a tree (Eze. 15:2,6) and the fruit of the vine is compared to blood (Deut. 32:14). The drinking of blood had been forbidden before the law (Gen. 9:1-5), during the law (Lev. 17), and in this present age (Acts 15:20,29). New wine (grape juice) is the scriptural type of blood (Gen. 40:10,11; Isa. 65:8). Fermented liquor is forbidden (Prov. 23:31; 20:1). Noah obviously didn't get drunk on grape juice.

III. A CROWN IS LOST (Gen. 9:20-24)

Noah partook of a forbidden fruit, exactly as Adam, and lost the crown to the Kingdom of Heaven, just like Adam. Once again, by default, the crown reverts back to the "god of this world". As soon as he is in charge an effort is made to imitate God's original plan (Isa. 45:18). This is an exact repeat of the previous effort in (Gen. 6). Reach heaven with the sons of God.

IV. GOD'S BASIS OF SOCIOLOGY (Gen 9:25-27)

It is during this dispensation that God scatters mankind around the earth and shows where they would all eventually find their place of inhabitation.

A. Ham- A curse of servitude is placed upon Canaan (Gen. 9:25). It was necessary for Canaan (Noah's grandson) to receive the curse because God had already blessed Noah and his sons (Gen. 9:1) As the posterity of Ham is followed through out the Bible they are seen to occupy Africa.

B. Shem- "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem" (Gen. 9:26). Shem plainly receives something spiritual in Noah's prophecy. When it comes to spiritual perception, you can't beat Shem. Shem is the author of every major religion on earth. Shem is an introvert; he is a "meditator" and a fatalist - he is a thinker. Every author of the Bible can trace his descent to Shem; the Saviour of the world confessed He was "of the Jews". Shem spreads out across Asia and Asia Minor. (At 100 yards a day, American Indians could have traveled 61,307 miles before the 1st Crusade in 1000 A.D.)

C. Japheth- "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem;" (Gen. 9:27). Although Shem lives in India, Japheth (Sir Hillary) has to climb his mountains. Although Shem lives in Japan, he must pattern his railways, planes, motorcycles, and ships after Japheth. Although Shem lives in China, he cannot develop his resources until Japheth (Russia) fires the primer for the "Reds." It is Japheth, not Shem, who discovers

both Poles, the passage to India, the way to the Moon, electricity, the steam engine, the wireless telegraph, the telephone, radio, airplane, tank, and submarine. Shem plainly does not major in geographical conquests, scientific inventions, and "higher standards of living."

"And he shall dwell in the tents of Shem". "Tents," here, refers to tents. The "tents" are Shem's tents, and a blind man would bump into them traveling across America in 1500, if he couldn't have seen them two feet away. Shem crosses the Bering Straits and sets up "Tents" from British Columbia to Cape Horn. Japheth crosses the Atlantic and takes them from him - more discrimination! And the ground you are sitting on right now is not yours at all. You are not American; you are European or African (unless, of course, you are a full-blooded Indian!). The ground your "tent" is on was Shem's hunting ground, where he pitched his tents from 1000 B.C. to 1800 A.D. "And he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Noah's racial prophecies are to be believed literally, as they stand. They are total prophecies, involving the three major branches of mankind. History confirms them, common sense confirms them, and the Bible confirms them. Japheth has the tents, a plain case of discrimination. Shem has the Saviour and the Bible, another plain case of discrimination; Ham serves, a really plain case of discrimination; and all subsequent "exceptions" prove the rule.

V. THE TOWER OF BABEL (Gen. 11:1-9)

It should be noted that these characteristics existed just before God wrought the judgment of confusion (2 Thess. 2:11):

- A. Total integration
- B. One universal language
- C. Babylonian worship
- D. Attempts to get into outer space
- E. Artificial, manmade materials being used for God-made materials (Heb. 11:10)
- F. An emphasis on "cities" and "towers"
- G. The calling out of the Hebrews to Palestine (Gen. 10:30)
- H. The exaltation of a Hamite ruler - Nimrod

POPE PIUS IX DECREE

The Encyclical Letter & Syllabus of the Eighty Errors - 1864

Article 15: "Anathema to whoever shall say: Every man is free to embrace and to profess religion which he believes to be true.

Article 24: Anathema to whoever will say: The church does not have the right to use force."

Mystery of The Ages

PART 5 - THE PATRIARCHAL DISPENSATION

INTRODUCTION: This dispensation extended from the "call of Abraham" to the "Exodus," a period of 430 years, and is known as the dispensation of "the Family."

After the dispersion from Babel, the descendants of Noah and his sons became idolaters. No doubt God had His witnesses, but there is no record of any. Even Abraham's father was an idolater. So God decided to single out one family and start afresh. Abraham was chosen and he proved a mighty man of faith, but his righteousness waned in his descendants. Isaac was a good man, but not so good as his father, and Jacob, Isaac's son, who succeeded to the birthright, was still less so, and the twelve sons of Jacob, with the exception of Joseph, greatly degenerated from the parent stock. This short dispensation of only 430 years ended with all of Abraham's descendants working as abject slaves in the brickyards of Egypt. There are three things that need to be pointed out about Abraham.

I. HIS CROWN

This man, Abraham, is called "The Friend of God" in (Ja. 2:23 and Isa. 41:8), and there is no doubt about his "kingship" whatsoever, for in the context of (Isa. 41) we read, "Who raised up the righteous man from the East, called him to His foot, gave the nations before him, and MADE HIM RULE OVER KINGS!?" (Isa. 41:2).

So Abraham ascends the throne much to the chagrin of the prince of the power of the air. While time passes, ways and means are devised to overthrow this new king, but an unconditional covenant of grace has been given this king (in view of Noah's failure - Gen. 8:21), and this new king is going to be a hard one to overthrow (see Rom. 4:1-13). A king installed by grace is going to be hard to remove, for his Kingship is not dependent on his conduct!!

II. HIS PROPERTY

Abraham is promised a literal, physical, visible, earthly domain given to him by God (Gen. 15:13- 21). This promise is also given to Abraham's SEED! The importance of this fact cannot be over- emphasized when studying the "Kingdom" for now Satan's hold is getting drastically reduced in regard to the Kingdom of Heaven. This time, the "King" has been installed by grace, with an unconditional promise and divine protection attending the promise; the promise is passed on automatically to Abraham's seed, because "he will command his children and his household after him!" (Gen. 18:19).

The spot picked for Abraham's earthly, literal, physical kingdom will then turn out to be the major battleground on this planet. The piece of land is picked (deliberately) to stand right smack in the middle of the three Continents given to Shem, Ham, and Japheth - Asia, Africa, and Europe. It is so picked and located that any man who sides with the Roman Catholic theory of the "Kingdom," will have to take a stand AGAINST the descendants of Abraham, to whom was given the Kingdom! The Roman Catholic Pope himself can state this fact better than anyone else, so let these words from the Catholic publication "The Tablet," do their own preaching:

"His Holiness (the speaker is Melchite Archbishop Gregorius Hakin of St. John of Akka, on his return from Rome after talking with Pope Pius XII) asked me to convey his great satisfaction and joy of the unity and the full collaboration shown by the Arabs of Palestine in protecting the Holy Land (!). The Pope has studied a protest against the Balfour Declaration made by his predecessor, Pope Pius XI... The policy of the Holy See toward this declaration has not changed. His Holiness, the Pope, cannot afford to help Zionism against the Arabs of Palestine... the Pope told me that he would not fail to support the Arabs - because THEY are the OWNERS of the Holy Land!!"

Again, the Bible can save the day (although no one will pay any attention to it) for here is found the Owner of the land, the Giver of the land, the Receiver of the land, and the Title deed to the land! (Study it in I Cor. 10:26,28; Isa. 45:18,19; 40:15-17; Ps. 8:3,4; 24:1; Gen. 15:18; Psalms 105:6-12; 2 Chr. 6:25,31,38). This land is not given to Ishmael - the Arabian (Gal. 4:25-28). God Himself takes sides against "Geshem the Arabian" in Neh. 6:1; 4:7, when he appears professing to be the "chosen seed," to whom the promises were made. If the Bible is true, then every Turk, Moslem, Arabian, and European Crusader who ever died in the Crusades died NEEDLESSLY to preserve a CATHOLIC fable, which God would not even bother to spit on. Can you see now why men hated the old Bible? It runs contrary to their political operations, as they "bring in the Kingdom".

III. HIS SALVATION

Abraham's salvation came in two parts. He received imputed righteousness when he believed God (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3,20-22) but he was justified when he offered Isaac (Gen. 22; James 2:21-23). A church age saint realizes both of these transactions at the same time (Rom. 4:24,25).

Notice these truths concerning sacrifice:

- A. Until God becomes the sacrifice Himself, the atonement is incomplete (Heb. 10:4).
- B. Until God voluntarily offers Himself, He (God) cannot accept the sacrifice (Heb. 10:5-7; Lev. 1:3).

- C. All sacrifices between (Gen. 3 and Matt. 27) are temporary expedients, which do not fully solve the problem of atonement (Heb. 10:11).
- D. God provides a "Priest Class" for the nation of Israel, to offer sacrifices (I Chr. 15:14-16; Ex. 28:40-43; Lev. 9).
- E. But there is no Priest Class before Num. 1-13, or after Acts 2 (see Matt. 27:51; Heb. 8:1; 9:24; I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 7:7!!).
- F. Melchizedek does not offer a literal sacrifice of blood, but only a "memorial" (Gen. 14:18; I Cor. 10:16,17; 11:25).
- G. The entire body of born-again believers are "priests" in the New Testament, and never offer literal sacrifices of blood. (I Peter 2:5; Heb. 13:15,16; I Cor. 10:16,17.)
- H. God's provision will be accepted by the faithful man (Rom. 10:4).
- I. Therefore, the faithful man, after Acts 2, will trust God's provision at Calvary, done once and forever (Heb. 10:8-12; 9:24-26).
- J. The faithful man, between Exodus 20 and Matthew 27, will be trusting the provision which God made at the Temple in Jerusalem.
- K. The unfaithful man will make provision for himself by inventing and installing a priesthood, AFTER MATTHEW 27, thereby actually rejecting God's provision (Gal. 5:4; Rom. 10:1-3).

Mystery of The Ages

PART 6 - THE DISPENSATION OF THE LAW

INTRODUCTION: This dispensation extended from the "Exodus" to the "Birth of Christ", a period of 1491 (?) years, and is known as the Dispensation of the "Law."

At the close of the preceding dispensation the children of Israel cried unto God in their bondage and He sent them a "deliverer" in Moses. Heretofore God had allowed man to govern himself. He now purposed to organize a Commonwealth with laws and regulations and a "visible" system of worship with a local habitation or place of worship.

This government was to be "Theocratic". That is, it was God's intention to Himself rule on earth through a representative that He Himself would appoint. The person chosen was Moses. When Moses died he was succeeded by Joshua. After his death the children of Israel had no ruler, except as by reason of bondage they cried unto the Lord, and He, as circumstances required, raised up "Judges" who governed them for about 450 years. (Acts 13:20) Then they provoked God to give them a king, and Saul was selected, who reigned for 40 years. He was followed by David, who was succeeded by his son, Solomon, each of whom reigned 40 years.

At the death of Solomon, B.C. 975, the kingdom was divided, Solomon's son Rehoboam getting two tribes, spoken of as Judah, and Jeroboam, a usurper, ten tribes, called Israel. Israel lasted for 254 years longer and was carried away captive to Assyria in B.C. 721. 115 years later Judah went into exile to Babylon.

In B.C. 536, after 70 years captivity, the Jews returned from Babylon, and from B.C. 166-40 strove under the Asmoneans to regain supremacy over Palestine. But in B.C. 40, Herod the Great, an Idumean, was made king by the Romans, and in A.D. 70 Jerusalem was sacked and burned by Titus, and the Jews driven out of Palestine.

In the "Legal Dispensation" God dealt with a chosen nation, Israel. His dealings with them were based on a "WRITTEN LAW" given at Mt. Sinai. This "Ceremonial Law" was given to Israel only, and not to any other nation. Israel then is to be judged according to their observance of it. The "Ceremonial Law," as far as its outward observance, ceased at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Because of the great number of significant events during this dispensation we shall take several lessons to cover this time period. This outline shall deal with the Passover and events that led up to it.

I. THE TYPES

A. Egypt - The children of Israel were not made for Egypt, nor Egypt for them, they were made for Canaan. Egypt is a type of this present "Evil World." In Moses' day it presented the best specimen of worldly glory and magnificence that the world had ever seen. It had everything to gratify the "Lust of the Flesh," the "Lust of the Eyes," and the "Pride of Life".

B. Pharaoh - Pharaoh was a type of Satan. Egypt was full of idolatry, the very stronghold of Satan, and a hotbed of every species of sin. Having Israel in his power, Pharaoh tried to make it permanent. That is what Satan tries to do with the sinner.

C. Moses - Moses was a type of Christ. Moses was prepared and sent by God for the work of deliverance from bondage.

D. The Plagues - The "Ten Plagues" were judgments against the "gods" of Egypt:

[1]. "Water into blood," against the Nile, the "Idol River."

[2]. "Frogs," against the worship of frogs.

[3]. "Lice," against the earth god "Seb" and the priests, who could not officiate when vermin were upon them.

[4]. "Flies," against the atmosphere "Shu, "son of "Ra," the Sun-God.

[5]. "Murrain," against the "Sacred Bull" - APIS.

[6]. "Boils," against "Sutech" or "Typhon," to whom victims were offered, their ashes being flung to the winds.

[7]. "Locusts," against the "Sacred Beetle".

[8]. "Hail," against "Shu".

[9]. "Darkness," against the "Sun-God" - Ra, of whom Pharaoh was believed to be the child.

[10]. "Death of the First Born," against the nation guilty of wholesale infanticide in ordering that all male Hebrew children should be cast into the river Nile. (Ex. 1:22)

II. THE COMPROMISES

When Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh they said - "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." And Pharaoh replied "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." (Ex. 5:1-2) Then Moses and Aaron demanded that Pharaoh let Israel go a three days' journey into the wilderness. Pharaoh again refused,

and practically said, the service of God is a WASTE OF TIME. He then increased the children of Israel's burdens. But when after the first three Plagues there came the "Plague of Flies" upon the Egyptians only, Pharaoh thought it was time to "compromise," so he sent for Moses and said - "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." (Ex. 8:25)

A. The First Compromise - (Ex. 8:25,26) Pharaoh would not object to an occasional sacrifice "in the land" if that would make Israel satisfied to remain in Egypt where he could retain power over them. Satan does not object to an occasional "spasm" of religion as long as you stay in the world. Moses responded by reminding Pharaoh that "Apis the sacred bull" was one of the gods of Egypt and if Israel offered sacrifices of "bullocks" to "Jehovah" "in the land" that would be an "abomination" to the Egyptians, and they would stone them for sacrificing the "gods of Egypt". This compromise means that a man cannot be a Christian and worship God in the land without offending the world.

B. The Second Compromise - (Ex 8:27,28) "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away." Pharaoh knew it would be easy to get Israel back if they did not go very far away. So Satan says - "Yes, become a professing Christian, join the church, but do not go very far away. Observe Christmas, Easter and a few other special occasions, but the rest of the year enjoy the pleasures of Egypt. Israel could never reach Canaan if they remained close to Egypt. When Christians are heard constantly saying, "Is it right or wrong to do this?" You know they have been caught in the "not very far away" compromise.

C. The Third Compromise - (Ex. 10:7-11) Between the second and third compromise there were the plagues of murrain, boils and hail. Pharaoh once again decided to compromise and agree to allow the men only to go to the wilderness to sacrifice. He knew that if the men left their loved ones in Egypt it would not be long before they would be back. This compromise means let the older people become Christians if they want to, but do not force "religion" on the young. After all religion is a "personal matter," let them enjoy the Egyptian pleasures.

D. The Fourth Compromise - (Ex. 10:24-26) This compromise found Pharaoh allowing Israel to go but insisting their possessions (flocks & herds) stay behind. This compromise means to be a Christian, give your soul to God, but keep your possessions for yourself. People that succumb to this compromise invest their money to increase their own wealth but invest nothing in the Bank of Heaven (Matt. 6:20).

III. THE PASSOVER

God's standard of "Power" in the Old Testament is the EXODUS, but before He could deliver Israel by His "Power", they must be redeemed by BLOOD. "The Passover" is a beautiful illustration of the "Plan of Salvation" through Christ. "For even Christ our

'Passover' is sacrificed for us." (I Cor. 5:7) As the blood of the "Passover Lamb" saved Israel, so the BLOOD of the "Lamb of God" saves us. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,...but with the precious BLOOD OF CHRIST, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Pet. 1:18- 19)

As the children of Israel dwelt in the "Land of Goshen," and it was a part of Egypt, they came under the "Doom of Egypt, " which was that all the "First Born" should die. To offset this, the children of Israel were commanded to take a lamb, without blemish, of the first year, and kill it, and take of the blood and sprinkle it on the two side posts and lintel of the door of their dwelling, and when the Lord saw the blood He would pass over that house on that fateful night, and not destroy the "First Born" sheltered behind that blood marked door. (Ex. 12:1-28)

The Passover was to be to Israel the "BEGINNING OF MONTHS." (Ex. 12:2) It was to be the first month of the year to them. A man does not begin to live until he is saved by the "BLOOD OF CHRIST." Until then he is spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. (Eph. 2:1-3) The time spent in the "brick-kilns" of sin, and amid the "flesh-pots" of pleasure, do not count, and must be omitted from the life of the believer. The Passover as a means of salvation was a plan of God's own devising. No man had a hand in it, except to do as God commanded. It was all of GRACE.

A. The Sacrifice - The "Sacrifice" was to be a LAMB. (Ex. 12:5) An emblem of meekness and purity, such was Jesus. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter," (Isa. 53:7). The lamb was to be young, a male of the first year. It was to be without blemish. If a spot had been found upon it, it would have been unfit for sacrifice. Jesus was without blemish. He was absolutely sinless. (II Cor. 5:21, I John 3:5)

Many have the idea that Christ's death automatically saves them. But the lamb was not simply to be killed, something had to be done with the BLOOD, and with the FLESH. They were to take the BLOOD and sprinkle it on the two side posts and on the upper door post (lintel) of their dwellings, and they were to EAT the flesh. (Ex. 12:7) The "First Born" was not safe when the blood was simply shed, or even when caught in the basin. It was not enough to "analyze" the blood, the blood had to be used, and they were not left in doubt as to how it was to be used, it was to be sprinkled on the door of their dwellings with a bunch of "Hyssop." Hyssop is a common plant that grew everywhere in Egypt. It was not a rare plant that they had to send to some foreign country to get. Hyssop stands for "Faith".

B. The Feast - "Ye shall eat of the FLESH in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs ye shall eat it." (Ex. 12:8-10) They were SAVED by the blood, but it was not enough to kill the lamb and use its blood, they were to FEED ON THE

LAMB. Some Christians stop short at being saved by the Blood and fail to FEED ON THE LAMB. That is why they are not nourished and sustained in their Christian life. There can be no true fellowship until we eat of the Lamb. The lamb was not to be eaten raw, or sodden with water (boiled), but roasted with fire. To roast it they had to use a "SPIT". That is, they had to support it over the fire by a rod run lengthwise through it, and another rod at right angles through the shoulders to turn it, thus symbolizing the CROSS. It was on the CROSS that Jesus' body was subject to the "Fire of God's Righteous Wrath" against sin.

The Passover Lamb was to be eaten with UNLEAVENED bread. (Ex. 12:8) Leaven is a symbol of evil and therefore could not be used at such a feast as that of the Passover, and the Apostle Paul calls on us to purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness. (1 Cor. 5:7-8)

They were also to eat the feast with "Bitter Herbs," symbolical of their previous bondage, and they were to let nothing remain until the morning. They were to forsake sleep to feed on the lamb, and if any were left over they were to burn it lest it fall into unfit hands or be left behind in their hasty departure. What a beautiful picture we have here. While a terrible hurricane of Divine Judgment was sweeping at midnight over Egypt, destroying the "First Born" in every home unsheltered by the blood, the children of Israel were FEASTING PEACEFULLY AND JOYFULLY ON ROASTED LAMB.

Mystery of The Ages

PART 7 - THE TABERNACLE

INTRODUCTION: The study of the Tabernacle is a thrilling story: God's desire to dwell with man, and to bring redemption to man.

The Tabernacle was:

[1]. The dwelling place of God in Israel (in the Wilderness and Canaan)

[2]. A picture of the Lord Jesus Christ and God's salvation in Him.

Why study the Tabernacle?

[1]. The Tabernacle and the Tabernacle form of worship are figures of that which was to come (Heb. 9:8,9,24; 10:1); God's future plans.

[2]. The Tabernacle and experiences of the Israelites were examples and patterns established by God for us (I Cor. 10:11; Heb. 8:5). 3) The Tabernacle pictures the Lord Jesus Christ in such perfect detail that it thrills the believer as the study unfolds (Lk. 24:27). Every detail of the Tabernacle points to some aspect of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14).

I. THE TABERNACLE

The Dwelling Place of God. The word 'tabernacle' means "temporary dwelling place".

A. The Tabernacle of the Old Testament was temporary.

B. The Temple (2 Chr. 5:14) was for a time the dwelling place of God here on earth (will be restored for the Millennium).

C. While Jesus was on the earth during His ministry, He was the dwelling place of God, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily (Col. 2:9).

D. After which Christ took up abode in the heart of the believer (I Cor. 3:16). The word church means "that which is called out", and does not apply to the building, but the believers. Therefore, the Tabernacle is also a picture of the believer, the place where Christ dwells.

[1]. The believer ("in Christ") is the dwelling place, the temple of God (Holy Spirit); the body is the outer court, the soul is the holy place, and the spirit is the holy of holies.

E. The true tabernacle is in Heaven (Heb. 8:1,2; 9:23,24; Rev. 11:19; 21:3)

II. THE TABERNACLE TELLS THE COMPLETE PICTURE OF SALVATION

The tabernacle is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a picture of the believer "in Christ", a complete picture of the Plan of Salvation.

In God's redemption there are seven steps:

- A. As sinners on the outside, we must first enter and stop at the altar (the cross).
- B. Next comes separation and daily cleansing at the Laver.
- C. We enter into fellowship of the Word at the Table.
- D. We learn to walk in the light of the Golden Candlestick.
- E. Then, and only then, comes power in prayer at the Table of Incense.
- F. We are then ready to enter the Holy of Holies of Highest Service (the personal power and communion of the Holy Spirit).
- G. Thus, we reach perfect rest and peace at the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat under the shadow of the cherubim.

The subject of the Tabernacle is inexhaustible, and as we permit the Holy Spirit to help us to understand these truths, we are drawn closer to the Lord Jesus. By knowing more about Him from this study we will love Him more, and in loving Him more we will serve Him more. Study, then, should result in loving service.

III. THE TABERNACLE PATTERN

Threefold Division - the number of divine completeness and perfection (John 14:6)

- A. The Outer Court - the fence, the brazen altar, the laver.
- B. The Holy Place - the table of shewbread, the candlestick, the altar of incense.
- C. The Holy of Holies - the ark and the mercy seat.

IV. THE FOURTEEN MATERIALS

Fourteen is the number of Testimony. The Tabernacle is a place of fellowship, communion, and Testimony. Each material has a specific meaning and the meanings are the same wherever they are found used in the Tabernacle.

Christ is seen in them all:

- A. Gold - deity (Ex. 25:3)
- B. Silver - redemption (Ex. 25:3)
- C. Brass - judgment (Ex. 25:3; Num. 21:6-9)
- D. Blue - heavenly nature and origin (Ex. 25:4)
- E. Purple - royalty (Ex. 25:4)
- F. Scarlet - sacrificed blood (Ex. 25:4)

- G. Fine Linen - spotless righteousness (Ex. 25:4; Rev. 19:8)
- H. Goat's Hair - the sinbearer (Ex. 25:4; Lev. 16:20-22)
- I. Ram's Skins Dyed Red - the suffering of Christ, the depth and devotion of Christ (Ex. 25:5; Lk. 22:44)
- J. Badger's Skins - humility of Christ (Ex. 25:5; Isa. 53:2), a common, ordinary- looking skin
- K. Shittim Wood (Acacia) - humanity of Christ (Ex. 25:5)
- L. Oil for the Light - the Holy Spirit (Ex. 25:6)
- M. Spices for Anointing Oil - sweetness and preciousness of Christ (Ex. 25:6)
- N. Onyx Stones - speaks of the Glory of Christ (Ex. 25:7; John 17:5)

V. SEVEN ARTICLES OF FURNITURE

Seven is the number of perfection. The furniture consists of the Ark, Mercy Seat, Altar of Incense, Table of Shewbread, Candlestick, Laver, and Brazen Altar.

VI. THE TABERNACLE HAS BEEN CALLED THE HOUSE OF BLOOD because of the blood of the sacrifices required by God. But all of this blood was merely prophetic, typical, and a shadow of the blood of the coming Lamb of God, His Son:

- A. We have redemption through the blood (Eph. 1:7)
- B. We have forgiveness through the blood (Eph. 1:7)
- C. We have justification through the blood (Rom. 5:9)
- D. We have sanctification through the blood (Heb. 10:10)
- E. We have cleansing through the blood (I John 1:7)
- F. We have peace through the blood (Col. 1:20)
- G. We have victory through the blood (Rev. 12:11)

The Old Testament purifying rites (Heb. 9:18,23) could not "take away sins" (Heb. 10:4) even when they were performed daily (Heb. 10:11). Sins are not "taken away" unless Christ dies for them with sin ON Him. He is buried with the sins ON Him (Heb. 9:28); He takes them down into the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40) and leaves them there (Heb. 9:28). When He comes up (Acts 2:27,31), He comes up sinless bearing no sins on Him.

They were to have continual burnt offerings (Ex. 29:38-46)

This was the evening sacrifice spoken of in (I Kings 18:29).

Old Testament saints had sacrifices daily - we had ours once - (Heb. 10:11,12).

This practice will continue in the Millennium. (Ez. 46:12-15, 40-48)

There is even a priesthood in eternity (Isa. 66:20-22).

Mystery of The Ages

PART 8 - THE JUDGES

I. BACKGROUND

The Hebrew Nation, after the death of Joshua, had no strong central government. They were a confederacy of twelve independent tribes with no unifying force except their god. The form of government in the days of the Judges is spoken of as the "Theocracy", that is, God himself was supposed to be the direct ruler of the nation. But the people did not take their God very seriously and were continually falling away into idolatry. Being in a state of anarchy, (more or less), harassed at times by civil war among themselves and surrounded by enemies who made attempt after attempt to exterminate them, the Hebrew Nation was very slow in its national development. It did not become a great nation till it was organized into a kingdom in the days of Samuel and David.

II. 40 YEARS

Othniel, Deborah and Barak, and Gideon are each said to have judged Israel 40 years; and Ehud, twice 40. Later, Eli judged 40 years. Saul, David and Solomon each reigned 40 years. "Forty years" seems to have been a round number denoting a generation. Note how often 40 is used throughout the Bible: at the Flood it rained 40 days; Moses fled at 40; was in Midian 40 years; was on the mount 40 days. Israel wandered 40 years. The spies were 40 days in Canaan. Elijah fasted 40 days. Forty days' respite was given to Nineveh. Jesus fasted 40 days, and sojourned 40 days after the resurrection.

III. THE COMMAND

(Deut. 7:2-4) "And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly."

This was the original command with which the Israelites entered the land of Canaan. Although the Book of Judges records some victories for the Lord, it also accurately depicts the disheartening and disappointing failures of God's people. The Israelites conquest was only partial (Jud. 1:9,21,27,28,29-35; 3:1-4).

IV. THE COMPROMISE

As the hardy, wilderness-bred generation who, under the powerful leadership of Joshua, had conquered the land died off, the new generation settled in a land of plenty and soon lapsed into the easy going ways of their idolatrous neighbors. We might visualize this phenomena as a wonderful illustrative example of what we sometimes call the "2nd generation Christian."

(Jud. 21:25) "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

This verse may be the sum and total of all that we find in Judges. The confusion, seeming lack of organization and leadership, and the hideous crimes and incidents recorded in the book again show us that man left to himself will destroy himself.

The compromise of the Israelites went as follows:

- [1]. The original command of God
- [2]. Incomplete mastery
- [3]. Military leagues
- [4]. Intermarriages
- [5]. Idolatry
- [6]. Complete Apostasy
- [7]. Captivity

V. THE CAPTIVITIES

Apostasy

3:5-8

3:12-14

4:1-3

6:1-10

10:6-18

13:1

Servitude

To Kings of Mesopotamia, 8 yrs.

To King of Moab, 18 years

To King of Canaan, 20 years

To Midianites, 7 years

To Philistines, etc., 18 years

To Philistines, 40 years

*(*from J. Sidlow Baxter's "Explore the Book.")*

Deliverer

Othniel (3:9-11)

Ehud (3:15-30) (also Shamgar, 31)

Deborah (4:4-31) (and Barak)

Gideon (6:1, 8:35)

Jephthah (11:1, 7:7)

Samson (13:2; 16:31)

VI. THE JUDGES

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Othniel (3:9-11) | 8. Jair (10:3-5) |
| 2. Ehud (3:15-30) | 9. Jephthah (11:1-12-7)* |
| 3. Shamgar (3:31) | 10. Ibzan (12:8-10) |
| 4. Deborah & Barak (4:4; 5:31)* | 11. Elon (12:11,12) |
| 5. Gideon (6:11; 8:32) | 12. Abdon (12:13-15) |
| 6. Abimelech (9:1-57)* | 13. Samson (13:24; 16:31)* |
| 7. Tola (10:1,2) | <i>(*mentioned Hebrews 11:32)</i> |

VII. SIN SUFFERING, SUPPLICATION, SALVATION

The children of Israel followed an old familiar pattern of life, something we might term the normal Christian life. If we were to draw it out on graph paper, charting our spiritual victories and defeats it would look like a roller coaster.

For example: The Sin (3:7), The Suffering (3:8), The Supplication (3:9), The Salvation (3:11). And again: The Sin (3:12), The Suffering (3:12), The Supplication (3:15), The Salvation (3:15).

VIII. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FROM THE JUDGES

- A. Initially it is easier to tolerate and coexist with sin than root it out and eliminate it completely. (Jud. 2:2)
- B. Many of the hardships we encounter in the Christian life are given to us to bring us to a point of supplication. (Jud. 6:13)
- C. The Lord will do everything he can do to fulfill his promises and covenants, yet he is holy, righteous and jealous. He will not tolerate idolatry in any form.
- D. God is determined to bring to pass all of his kingdom promises. (Jud. 2:16-19)
- E. Even political issues have a spiritual root. (Jud. 11:24)
- F. The Devil will make his best effort to thwart the fulfillment of the kingdom through religion. (Jud. 17:7-13)

Mystery of The Ages

PART 9 - THE DAYS OF THE KINGS

INTRODUCTION: The craving of the Jews for a visible, literal head was a revolt against divine sovereignty. Enamored of the pomp and glory of surrounding kings and nations, Israel wanted royalty of its own. God, however, never intended His people to be the subjects of an earthly ruler, but "a kingdom of priests" and "a holy nation" with Himself as their King (Ex. 19:6; I Pet. 2:9). Thus the nation's rejection of Jehovah as their King evidenced a total absence of confidence in God. Was not His presence in their midst a sufficient guarantee that their safety and provision would be amply secured?

But the demand of the people, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (I Sam. 8), was a distinct and positive rejection of God and His reign, and a step fraught with serious consequences for them. In His grace and mercy, God turned their sin into an occasion to further His purpose in royalty to be realized in Christ - God's ultimate resource in blessings for all men and creation - "Thus the reign of Saul was no part of Jehovah's purpose, although an integral part of His plan."

It was God's purpose to give His people a visible kingdom as predicted by Moses (Deut. 17:14,15). When Israel requested a king, Samuel alluded to Moses' direction (I Sam. 10:24).

God's explicit promise was ever before the people, "Kings...shall be of Sarah" (Gen. 17:16). Other allusions to kings can be found in (Gen. 36:31; Num. 24:17; Deut. 28:36).

It was not the nation's desire for a king, but the spirit of their request that was wrong. Samuel, God's appointed leader, was set aside under the pretext, "thou art old," after having directed the affairs of the people for 35 years. Such rejection coupled with impatience added to the sin of their request. They lost sight of the fact that God was their King, so in anger He gave them one after their own heart (Hos. 13:10,11). Voltaire once said, "Heaven often gives kings in its vengeance".

I. THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE (I Sam. 9; 11:13-21; 2 Sam. 1; 21:1:1-9)

Saul, the son of Kish, represented the insignificant tribe of Benjamin, as did his name sake of the New Testament (Acts 7:58; Phil. 3:5). Thus, Saul is the most distinguished name in the genealogies of the tribe of Benjamin. The Old Testament Saul became a king after man's heart, as David became a king after God's heart (I Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22), and his history is typical of the sin and

rejection of the Jews, and of God raising up sons unto Abraham from among the Gentiles (Matt. 3:8-10).

Saul's life was characterized by self-pride (I Chronicles 10:13), self-will (I Chron. 10:13; Prov. 10:8, 13:1) and self-aid (I Chron. 10:13).

II. ISH-BOSHETH (I Chron. 8:33, 9:39; 2 Sam. 2:8-12; 3:7-15; 4)

Although a usurper, Ish-bosheth nevertheless reigned over Israel for two years, and therefore deserves a place in our study of Bible royalty. His name, occurring some 13 times in (2 Sam.) was originally Esh-baal (I Chron. 8:33; 9:39), in contempt of Baal, from some connection of the family with whom he had been named. He was the youngest of Saul's four sons.

III. DAVID – a type of Christ (I Sam. 16-31; 2 Sam. 1-25; I Kings 1-11; I Chron. 2,3,10-29)

The book of Ruth contains the origin of David's family and his descent from Judah (4:18; with Gen. 38:29; Matt. 1:3-6; Lk. 1:32). His name occurs some 1120 times in scripture, and because he is the greatest personal type of Christ, his name is given to Him (Isa. 55:3; Jer.. 30:9; Eze. 34:23; Hos. 3:5). Under the title of David, the Messiah is spoken of as the person in whom all the promises made to David are fulfilled (Eze. 34:23; 37:24; I Kings 11:36).

David is the only king to be born in Bethlehem, the Saviour's birthplace.

David is called "the Lord's anointed" (2 Sam. 19:21; 23:1) and a threefold anointing to kingship was his:

1. By Samuel privately (I Sam. 16:13).
2. By his own tribe, Judah (2 Sam. 2:4).
3. By all of Israel (2 Sam. 5:2-3).

He was thirty years old when he began to reign and he reigned 40 years, over Judah for 7 years, over all Israel for 33 years. He had to wait for the fulfillment of God's promise to be king over all Israel for seven and one-half years. When ultimately all the tribes recognized David as their king they made a "league" with him and at Hebron he received his official coronation. God is not so slow in fulfilling His promises as men are apt to think.

IV. SOLOMON (2 Sam. 12:24,25; I Kings 1-11; I Chron. 22-23:1; 28-29; 2 Chron. 1-9)

Solomon - a type of the Millennial kingdom. Solomon, "the king and the king's son" (Ps. 72:1), was David's second child by Bathsheba. He was one upon whom God bestowed such royal majesty as had not been on any king before or after him in Israel (I Chron. 29:20-25). When he succeeded his father he was "young and tender," perhaps about 20 years of age, and reigned for 40 years.

Dr. Wm. Graham Scroggie speaks of Solomon as "a strange character that may be regarded in a threefold way, personally, officially and typically. Viewed personally, he was characterized by wisdom and wickedness: greatly gifted intellectually, he was very weak ethically. His mind and his morals were not on the same level. Viewed officially, his great work was twofold: the material development of the kingdom, and the erection of the Temple. Viewed typically, it is not difficult to see an anticipation of Christ's Millennial Kingdom, when, after the extirpation of all His foes, there will be peace".

V. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM (975-586 B.C.)

With the death of King Solomon the kingdom of Israel was torn in two parts, and the division was principally due to the idolatrous disloyalty of the nation. For this sin both sections of the kingdom were plagued and ultimately swept into captivity, Israel to Assyria in 721 B.C. and Judah to Babylon in 586 B.C. So long as the strong, autocratic and wise Solomon and his advisors were at the helm, various rebellious tendencies dared not assert themselves, but after the king's decease, catastrophe came.

The division of the kingdom into two unequal parts also had its rise in Solomon's adultery and idolatry. Because of his departure from the worship of the true God, the judgment went forth: "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant... Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." (I Kings 11:11-13) Thus, the division was appointed by God as chastisement upon the house of David for the idolatries imported by Solomon's wives and for the way such a contagion had spread to the whole mass of people.

When the kingdom was rent in twain the tribes of Judah and Benjamin formed the kingdom of Judah under Rehoboam and his successors. The Ten Tribes became the Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. His successors were predicted by the Prophet Ahijah (I Kings 12:15. See I Kings 12; I Kings 18; 2 Chron. 10-28). The history of the thirty-nine kings is so given as to show mankind the certainty of the fulfillment of God's promises and threatenings, and especially that righteousness exalts a nation, and sin ruins it (Lev. 26:31 with 2 Kings 25:9).

A glance at the separated kingdom shows how the two kingdoms differed materially. The Northern Kingdom, with its Ten Tribes, was more powerful than the Southern Kingdom. The latter, however, was more firm spiritually than the former. The dynasties of the north were only of short duration, being plagued by revolutionary forces. On the other hand, the small and often over-powered kingdom of Judah faithfully adhered to the royal line of David, and, although characterized by dangerous crises and several unworthy rulers, had a spiritual bond which kept the people united. Isaiah's forceful ministry can be studied in this light.

VI. THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH (975-586 B.C.)

The Kingdom of Judah continued for almost 400 years under 20 kings from Rehoboam to Zedekiah, many of whom were pious. For comparison and contrasts between the two kingdoms and their kings, the reader is referred to our introductory and concluding remarks under The Kingdom of Israel. Jerusalem was the center of the Southern Kingdom and was destroyed by the Chaldees under Nebuchadnezzar when the bulk of the people were taken into captivity.

Prophets associated with the long period of this kingdom were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Zephaniah, Micah, Nahum and Habakkuk. The prophecies of these men of God, which were literally fulfilled, form a pledge to us that those further prophecies referring to the dead, small and great, standing before God, and being judged, every man according to his works, will be realized (2 Pet. 3:11-14; Rev. 20:12).

- A. Rehoboam - (I Kings 12:20-24; 14:21-31; 2 Chron. 11-12)
- B. Abijah - (I Kings 15; 2 Chron. 13)
- C. Asa - (I Kings 15:9-15; 2 Chron. 14-16)
- D. Jehoshaphat - (I Kings 22:2-33; 41-50; 2 Chron. 17-21:3)
- E. Jehoram - (2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chron. 21)
- F. Ahaziah - (2 Kings 8:25-29; 2 Chron. 22:1-9)
- G. Jehoash - (2 Kings 11,12; 2 Chron. 22:10; 24:27)
- H. Amaziah - (2 Kings 14; 2 Chron. 25)
- I. Uzziah - (2 Kings 15; 2 Chron. 26; Isa. 6)
- J. Jotham - (2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chron. 27)
- K. Ahaz - (2 Kings 16; 2 Chron. 28; Isa. 7-12)
- L. Hezekiah - (2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chron. 29-31; Isa. 26-39)
- M. Manasseh - (2 Kings 21: 1-9; 2 Chron. 33:1-9)
- N. Amon - (2 Kings 21:18-26; 2 Chron. 33:21-25)
- O. Josiah - (2 Kings 22-23:30; 2 Chron. 34,35)
- P. Jehoahaz - (2 Kings 23; 2 Chron. 36)

Q. Jehoiakim - (2 Kings 23:35-24:7; 2 Chron. 36:5-8; Jer. 22:18-21; 25)

R. Jehoiachin - (2 Kings 24:8-16; 2 Chron. 36:9,10; Jer. 22:24-30; Est. 2:6)

S. Zedekiah - (2 Kings 24,25; Jer. 52:9-11)

Summarizing the period covered by the kings of Judah we note these facts:

About half of the Judean sovereigns were good; hence the long continuance of the kingdom over that of Israel.

It is also worthy of careful observation that according to the personal piety and faithfulness of the monarch, Judah was blessed, and the country enjoyed peace and prosperity.

The longest reign was that of Manasseh, 65 years, while the shortest was that of Jehoahaz which lasted only 3 months.

The books of 1-2 Chronicles detail the doings of the kings of Judah.

Judah was carried to Babylon some 468 years after David began to reign over it, 388 years after the falling off of the Ten Tribes, and 134 years after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel. As with individuals so with nations, iniquity is their ruin (Ps. 9:17).

The preservation and continued preeminence of Judah and of the Davidic line remarkably shows the finger of providence preparing for the coming of the Messiah, as foretold by prophecy (Gen. 49:10; Isa. 11:10). The preservation of the House of David is also remarkable when we remember the great wickedness of many of the family - Jehoram, Ahaziah, Ahaz and Amon.

VII. THE NORTHERN KINGDOM (975-721 B.C.)

The Kingdom of Israel, consisting of the Ten Tribes who revolted over Rehoboam's despotism, existed for nearly 260 years under 19 kings, Jeroboam to Hoshea, all of whom were idolaters. The kingdom was ultimately overthrown by the Assyrians under Shalmaneser and terminated with the Babylonian exile. The term "Israel" is sometimes used of the Jews as a whole, but in the records of the kings it is usually confined to the Ten Tribes.

The capital of the Northern Kingdom was first at Shechem, then at Samaria.

Summarizing the histories of both the Southern and Northern Kingdoms, Dr. W. Graham Scroggie notes these facts:

1. In the Southern Kingdom there was but one dynasty, the Davidic, but in the Northern Kingdom there were nine dynasties. In the South were nineteen kings and one queen; in the North were nineteen kings. In the South some

of the rulers were good, some unstable and some bad; but in the North, all were bad.

2. In the South were three religious revivals during the reigns of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah, but in the North there were no revivals.
3. The tribes in the South were taken into Babylonian captivity by Nebuchadnezzar; the tribes in the North were taken into Assyrian captivity by Shalmaneser.
4. •The foreign powers that come into touch with the South or the North in this period were Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and Syria. The prophets to Israel were Jonah, Amos, Hosea and Micah.

A. Jeroboam I - (I Ki. 11:26-40; 12-14; 20; 2 Chron. 10-11:16; 12:15; 13:3-20)

B. Nadab - (I Kings 14:20; 15:25-31)

C. Baasha - (I Kings 15:27; 16:7)

D. Elah - (I Kings 16:5-14)

E. Zimri - (I Kings 16:9-10)

F. Omri - (I Kings 16:16-28; Mic. 6:16)

G. Ahab - (I Kings 16:29; 22:40; 2 Chron. 18)

H. Ahaziah - (I Kings 22:51; 2 Kings 1:18)

I. Joram - (2 Kings 1:17; 6; 9)

J. Jehu - (2 Kings 9-10:36; Hos. 1:4)

K. Jehoahaz - (2 Kings 13)

L. Jehoash - (2 Kings 13:10-25)

M. Jeroboam II - (2 Ki. 14:23-29; Amos)

N. Zachariah - (2 Kings 14:29; 15:8-12)

O. Shallum - (2 Kings 15:13-15)

P. Menahem - (2 Kings 15:16-22)

Q. Pekahiah - (2 Kings 15:23-26)

R. Pekah - (2 Kings 15:25,27-38)

S. Hoshea - (2 Kings 15:30;17)

CONCLUSION: The majority of the Bible is given over to the subject of the kings and kingdoms. To observe the degeneration of the kingdoms, even the one with the correct lineage, is to be reminded that there is only one who is eminently qualified to be the King - and that is the LORD JESUS CHRIST (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 19:16).

Mystery of The Ages

PART 10 - THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION: *"It has been demonstrated that the Kingdom of GOD is totally absent from the scene from Adam to Christ; and that the Kingdom of HEAVEN went from an individual (Adam) to an individual and his seed (Abraham), and from there to a nation (Israel), and from it the crown was snatched, under the leadership of Jeconiah, (Jer. 22) to appear no more. When John the Baptist trudges out of the wilderness, kicking the dirt and sand off his sandals, there is NO KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (literal) on earth - and there is NO KINGDOM OF GOD (spiritual) either! All there is, is a bunch of religious perverts, dyed in Babylonian mythology, clothed in long robes, enjoying titles of "Father," leading Israel to believe that the ONLY Kingdom which will come (if it does come) is the literal, visible, Messianic, Davidic, Jewish Kingdom of HEAVEN! Not one out of ten of these tradition loving, long-robed, tithing, fasting, bead-twiddling priests and Pharisees remembered (or cared to remember) that they had come from ADAM, as well as "father Abraham!" Adam was a man who had died spiritually and forfeited the Image of God, thereby producing a race of Bible rejecting, truth hating, religious KILLERS! (see Eph. 2:1; Matt. 23:9-36; Jn. 9)." - Dr. Peter S. Ruckman*

The Jew had every right to expect the Davidic kingdom to be restored. He had over 1500 verses in the Old Testament promising it but he had forgotten the preaching of the prophets which deals with moral righteousness as it accompanies the successful kingdom (see Zech. 6:13; 8:16,17; Mal. 3:5; Hag. 1:6-9). Hence, the first thing Jesus does upon the official opening of His ministry is to sit down (Matt. 5-7) and emphasize the principles of moral righteousness to which a Jew must attain before there can be any "kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven".

I. CHRIST'S QUALIFICATIONS TO GOVERN - (Isa. 9:6,7)

A. His Image - The king who shows up is the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Gen. 49). He has every qualification to occupy the throne of David. He is born in the "city of David." His mother is one of David's descendants; His foster-father is in Jeconiah's line. Yet He was born of a virgin and was therefore not included in the curse upon Jeconiah's seed (Jer. 22).

B. His Victory Over Satan - Not only does Satan have power over the kingdoms of the world by virtue of the ruin of Israel (Jer. 22), but he has also the power of death (Heb. 2:14), by virtue of his victory over Adam. When Satan faced Christ on the Mt. of Temptation he faced an impossible opponent. His blood is not a man's blood! Since the "life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:14), and the life in this Man is eternal life (I Jn. 5:20), then His "blood

is "God's blood" (Acts 20:28). If this Man dies it will have to be a voluntary "giving up" of His life (Jn. 10:18). This Man was different than Abraham, David, Uzziah, or Jehoiakim.

As an anointed Cherub over the throne (Eze. 28:9-16), Lucifer desires worship. His sphere is preeminently religious, not atheistic. As a "god" (2 Cor. 4:4) he desires to be worshipped "If thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:9). However, this Man has no desire to do anything except the "Father's will" (Jn. 6:38; 5:19,30; Heb. 10:5-8).

When the testing is all over, Jesus comes down from the mount with two glittering crowns intact - the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. As King over the Kingdom of Heaven, He will be in charge of leading Israel to a successful fulfillment of the original commission given to Adam, "to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." As King over the Kingdom of God, He will be able to restore the image which Adam lost, and thereby enable the race to fulfill God's requirement for entrance out into that vast, universal, "heavenly" kingdom which was destined to fill outer space.

C. His Works - Jesus works not only included a variety of unprecedented miracles that should have convinced the Jews (I Cor. 1:22) but His teaching was exactly in the mold of the prophets before him. Instead of mustering the troops, arming the militia, calling down fire on Rome and parting the Jordan so they can all "flee to the wilderness" while 12 legions of angels come from Sinai to help (Jud. 5; Deut. 33:2; Hab. 3; Ps. 68), the popular Messiah goes about in the ordinary dress of His day and time, criticizing the "covenant children" and berating the religious councils! (Matt. 23; Jn. 9; Mk. 13:9).

II. ISRAEL'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE KING

From (Matt. 5 to Matt. 13) will be found warning after warning after warning, inserted into the discourses of the Lord Jesus; all of it falls on deaf ears. Here and there one or two people (amounting to less than 600 three years later) believe and receive His mission and message; but for the most part, the following truths of His First Coming are overlooked by the Jewish leaders, who were only waiting for ONE Crown to appear.

- A. Four Gentile women in the Kingly line! (Matt. 1:3-7).
- B. Three Gentile Kings come to see Him (Matt. 2:2).
- C. Abrahamic ancestry is worthless! (Matt. 3:9).
- D. Legal righteousness unable to count (Matt. 5:20).
- E. God's righteousness mentioned in connection with the Kingdom of GOD - not the Kingdom of HEAVEN! (Matt. 6:33).
- F. The Kingdom of HEAVEN to include Gentiles also, and not Jews only (Matt. 8:11-12).
- G. Demonstrations of grace now take the place of legal restrictions (Matt. 9:10-13).
- H. Rebuke of Jewish cities, comparing them unfavorably with Gentile cities (Matt. 11:20-24).

I. Warnings that the ceremonial observances of the Old Testament law have more than a LEGAL meaning connected with them (Matt. 12:4-9).

J. Warnings that not only will Gentiles obey the message of the Kingdom better than a Jew (Matt. 12:40-42), but that they will also trust a personal Saviour (sent to Israel) to save them from their sins! (Matt. 12:21).

III. THE "MYSTERY FORM" OF THE KINGDOM

In Matt. 13 Jesus warns his audience that the Kingdom of Heaven is going to assume a "mystery" form. What follows is a series of teachings on moral relationships as they will affect the coming literal, visible, earthly kingdom. Notice that in these seven parables, the outstanding consideration is not the political line of power which was given to an earthly king over David's kingdom, but rather the moral responsibilities and moral requirements of the people who think they are going to get into the kingdom! (See Matt. 13:15,19,22,37-41,49; 18:23,28,30,33,34; 20:13,15; 22:6,8,13; 25:12,23,26,30,40,41,46).

This mystery teaching came on the heels of Christ's official rejection (Matt. 12) after which Jesus promptly went "out of the house" (Matt. 13:1). Keep in mind the Jews were never rebuked for not expecting the kingdom. (See Acts 1). Those who crucified Christ were even given a chance to accept a different kingdom after they crucified Him, in lieu of the indefinite time which would precede the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven for which they had been looking (Acts 3:19-26; 3:17; Lk. 23:24; I Cor. 2:7-8).

"You see, the leaders of Israel had made a mistake in 33 A.D. as great as their Roman Catholic successors did in 325 A.D. and 1963 A.D. They made the mistake of thinking that all they needed was a leader "like all the nations round about them." This is the same mistake they had made 1000 years earlier, in (I Sam. 8:5,20). It is the mistake that Germany made in 1930-1945. It is the same mistake that any and every individual and nation makes when they think that any kingdom on earth can be BROUGHT IN without the restoration of the original image of God. This image was God's own Son (2 Cor. 4:4), and the only way on earth that men can receive this image is to be "born again" as Jesus Christ was born by the Holy Spirit (see Jn. 1:11,12). Christ could produce His image in no one without dying first (Jn. 12:24), for how could a sinless, Holy Spirit enter into fallen, sinful Man on even speaking terms till at least ONE man had lived a sinless, Holy life? (Rom. 3:24-26). The sinless, Man is present in (Matt. 13). The Holy life is there. The King is there; both Kingdoms are at hand, and just when it looks like things are going to come to a happy ending, Jesus warns that the physical, literal, earthly, visible Kingdom of Heaven is going into a stage where it will not be discernible to the Jew, and that until it becomes discernible (Lk. 19:11) the Jew will have only the Kingdom of GOD with which to deal (Lk. 17:20).

There are two responses to this warning; the Nation of Israel stumbles at the parables, thinking that no holy, moral Kingdom has to accompany the expected Kingdom of Heaven; the Gentiles (in the church-age which follows) go back to these parables to prove that the Kingdom of Heaven came automatically with the Kingdom of GOD, and that it is not "spreading" without the restoration and preeminence of the nation to whom it was given!! Matthew 13 is the place for all Bible-rejecting Jews and Gentiles - who profess to believe the Bible - to develop a theological psychosis; they all do!" -Dr. Peter S. Ruckman

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PART 11 - THE DAYS OF THE PROPHETS

INTRODUCTION: The Prophets are the Rangers, Green Berets, Sea Bees, Marines, Paratroops, SS troops, and demolition experts of the Old Testament theocracy. They stormed through shot and shell and strafed the enemy till he either had to kill them (Matt. 23:35) or ran for his life (I Kings 22:25). We must believe God's prophets to prosper (2 Chron. 20:20), and certainly we should know a prophet of God (Deut. 18:22) from a prophet of the Devil (Jer. 23:9,14,15,16,21,25,26,28).

The Majority of the prophets were contemporaries of the kings that were studied in Lesson 9. Hosea, Micah, Amos, Elijah, and Elisha prophesied to the northern tribes of Israel. Although Jonah was evidently from the north he preached to the Gentiles. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Obadiah, Nahum, Zephaniah and Habakkuk cried out the messages of God to Judah. Ezekiel and Daniel were prophets during the days of Babylonian Captivity. Haggai and Zechariah proclaimed the truth during the days of Ezra-Nehemiah when the remnant was allowed to return to Jerusalem. Malachi stands alone probably written sometime after the return.

Along with a variety of contemporary messages written to Israel and Judah, one will find by studying the prophets that:

- [1]. Isaiah points to the same personality that will suffer and die for sins and yet rule the earth.
- [2]. Jeremiah is a classic of a tribulation Saint who will suffer prior to the Second Advent.
- [3]. Ezekiel prophesies against the Gentile nations of past, present and future.
- [4]. Daniel gives a prophetic outline for the next 2500 years that has been absolutely correct without the slightest discrepancy.
- [5]. Hosea lays an emphasis on Israel's repentance and restoration at the Second Advent.
- [6]. Joel lays the emphasis on the battle of Armageddon at the Second Advent.
- [7]. Amos gives the route of the Second Advent and the nature of judgments as they fall on other cities besides Jerusalem.
- [8]. Obadiah points out that Edom will be the location for the lake of fire in the Millennium.
- [9]. Jonah stands as one of the greatest types in the Bible of a Tribulation Jew called to witness to the Gentiles (see Rev. 7).

[10]. Micah compares the first Advent with the Second Advent.

[11]. Nahum deals with Nineveh as a type of Babylon and shows the conditions that will prevail at the Second Advent.

[12]. Habakkuk lays the emphasis on the route of the Second Advent.

[13]. Zephaniah lays the emphasis on the negative nature of the Second Advent.

[14]. Haggai typifies the building of the temple that will take place in the near future.

[15]. Zechariah compares the two Advents and gives the details of events after Armageddon.

[16]. Malachi gives the final warnings that precede the advent.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPHETS

A. To Preach Repentance - It is no coincidence that we read about the majority of the prophets during a time when God's people were steeped in sin. Historically one of the first duties of God's preachers is to identify and cry out against sin.

B. To Utter Messages of Prophecy - Through such books as Daniel, nations were named, categorized, and identified years before they existed. Kings were named before they were born. However, by far the greatest prophetic thrust was aimed at the coming of Christ and His Kingdom. The Tribulation, the Second Advent and the Millennium occupy a great deal of space in the prophets.

C. To Remind of Restoration - There are over 1500 verses in the Old Testament that point to the kingdom and its restoration. The majority of these appear in the prophets.

II. THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS

The standard format for the Old Testament prophet was:

A. He never preached revolution as a means of overthrowing the "established" social order.

B. He was a strong segregationist who opposed every form of religious integration.

C. He pointed to the sinful heart of man as the source of mankind's' woes-not the economic system.

D. He was never Utopian and never wasted five minutes preaching permanent "peace on earth" apart from the Millennial Reign of a Jewish Messiah in Palestine.

E. All of his messages were based on a Biblical concept of God and God's Holiness; he knew nothing about "relative values" or "situational ethics" or "cultural exchanges".

F. He emphasized God's WRATH and God's JUDGMENT on individuals and nations who thought that God would put up with anything.

G. He was quite able to predict events accurately that would take place 2000 years after he was dead.

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PART 12 - THE APOSTOLIC AGE IN LIGHT OF AN IMPENDING KINGDOM

I. THE KINGDOM MESSAGE AND ACCOMPANYING SIGNS

When Nathanael exclaimed - "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel" (Jn. 1:49), Jesus did not disclaim the title. When Jesus entered on His own ministry His message was the same as John the Baptist's - "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17). The repentance called for was a "National Repentance." The Old Testament scriptures clearly teach that the Messianic Kingdom cannot be set up until Israel as a nation repents. In (Matt. 4:23) we read - "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the 'Gospel of the Kingdom'". While this was attended with "signs of bodily healing" we are nowhere told that the "Gospel of the Kingdom" has anything to do with the salvation of the soul. It is to be preached again after the Rapture of the Church for a "witness" unto all nations that the time has come for the setting up of the Kingdom. The inference is that the "Gospel of the Kingdom" has nothing to do with "Salvation," but is simply an announcement that the "Messianic Kingdom" is at hand.

When Jesus sent forth the twelve disciples He commanded them, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the "lost sheep" of the house of Israel, and as ye go, preach, saying - "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils (demons).. " (Matt. 10:5-8). Note again that the works they were to perform were "Kingdom signs," and had no reference to the salvation of the soul. They did not preach the "Gospel of Salvation," but the "Gospel of the Kingdom." The "Gospel of Salvation" is for the whole world, but the disciples were forbidden to go to any but the "House of Israel," thus showing that what they preached was exclusively for Israel. That the disciples were expecting the setting up of a visible earthly kingdom is evidenced by the request of James and John that they might sit, one on the right hand, and the other on the left hand of Jesus in His Kingdom (Mark 10:35-41). If there was to be no earthly Kingdom Jesus would have disabused their minds of that idea, but He confirmed it by saying that the place of honor was not for Him to give, but would be bestowed by His Father (Matt. 20:23).

II. OTHER POSSIBILITIES

A. The Jews - But someone may ask, "What would have happened if the Jews, as a nation, had repented, and accepted Jesus as King. Would the earthly Messianic Kingdom have been set up?" Certainly, but not necessarily immediately, for certain Old Testament prophecies as to Jesus' death and resurrection had to be fulfilled, for He had to die for

the redemption of the race before He could assume His office as King. But this could and would have been fulfilled by the Roman Government seizing Jesus and crucifying Him as a usurper, and with Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension, Daniel's 69th week would have terminated, and the 70th week begun without a break, At its close Jesus would have descended and set up His earthly Kingdom.

B. The Church - But you ask, "What about the Church? If it was God's eternal purpose to form the church (Eph. 1:4), how could it have been formed if there was no break or gap between Daniel's 69th and 70th week, and how therefore could there have been a 'bona fide' offer of an earthly Kingdom to Israel?" The question is hypothetical and based on the supposition that something might have happened that God foresaw would not happen. God's foreknowledge that the Jewish nation would not at that time heed the announcement that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and repent does not mitigate against the sincerity of the announcement any more than the offer of spiritual salvation by a preacher of the Gospel to an audience of sinners who he has every reason to believe will refuse his offer, is not a sincere and "bona fide" offer.

III. THE RECONCILIATION

God's plan and purpose in the Ages is based upon His foreknowledge. If God had not foreseen that the Jews would reject the King and therefore the Kingdom. He would have planned for the formation of the Church at some other time than this present Dispensation. As the Church was to be purchased by the precious blood of Christ (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 1:18-21), it was necessary that Jesus should be rejected and crucified, and that by His own nation, for the Prophet Zechariah (Zech. 12:10) foretold that the Jews should look upon Him whom they had pierced. But God's foreknowledge did not require or compel the Jewish nation to reject Jesus any more than Jesus' foreknowledge that Judas would betray Him compelled Judas to so do. The possibility of the Church being crowded out by the repentance of the Jewish nation did not enter into the "Plan of God," who foresaw the refusal of Israel to accept Jesus as King, and that Israel would not nationally repent until after the Church had been formed and taken out of the world.

In expounding the Scriptures we are not to take something that belongs to a "PAST" and a "FUTURE" Dispensation and put it in the "PRESENT" Dispensation. For instance, "THE KINGDOM." The "PAST" and "COMING" Dispensations have to do with "THE KINGDOM," but the "Present" has to do with the CHURCH. The "Kingdom" is an outward, visible and earthly "POLITICAL ORGANIZATION," and is to be "set up" on the earth (Dan. 2:44) while the "Church" is an invisible and heavenly "SPIRITUAL ORGANISM" that is to be "caught out" (1 Thess. 4:16-17.) The "Kingdom" was prepared FROM the "Foundation of the World." (Matt. 25:34) The "Church" was chosen in Him "BEFORE the Foundation of the World." (Eph. 1:4) The "Church" then is not the "Kingdom."

IV. THE CONCLUSION OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE

The Apostolic age came to a conclusion in harmony with the conclusion of the Apostolic signs. As the book of Acts is studied it is discovered that God slowly shuts down the signs in one place after another where the Jews reject the message. (Jerusalem - Acts 7: Asia Minor - Acts 13:45,46; European mainland - Acts 18:6; Rome - Acts 28:28). In (1 Cor. 1:22) the Jews require a sign, but by the time Paul comes to the end of his ministry he states "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (Rom. 10:12). As a matter of fact, Paul was not even able to heal his faithful friend Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20) by the conclusion of his ministry.

Mystery of The Ages

PART 13 - THE CHURCH AGE

INTRODUCTION: It is not until Acts 8 that any man hears of Christ's death as a blood atonement for Sin. It is not until Acts 9 that a man realizes that Christ indwells the bodies of Christians, and it is not until Acts 10 that Peter wakes up to the fact that WATER BAPTISM is NOT essential to salvation! The tentative commission is, "Never mind worrying about the literal, physical, visible Kingdom, which someday I will restore to Israel - (I will restore it, but not right now). Now, you get busy and get out there and tell them about ME, and I will bear witness to your testimony by giving you power to do signs and wonders in My name" (Acts 1,2,4,15).

They go. They perform the Apostolic "signs and wonders". Sidestepping the doctrinal and historical involvements of the Book of the Acts, as it is related to the Pauline ministry and epistles, one thing becomes very clear; a spiritual Kingdom is being preached to Jews and Gentiles, and the Gentiles are taking to it better than the Jews! (see Acts 13, 16,18,28). The last verse in the Book of Acts is a clear, didactic, dogmatic statement that until the Kingdom of God appears visibly on earth with its supernatural beings (Lk. 19:11), there is NO KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Paul was "preaching the Kingdom of GOD, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:31). This Kingdom is said to be "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17) It does not become synonymous with the Kingdom of HEAVEN until the One who rules both of them returns (see Rev. 11:15; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17-25). In this age, the two Kingdoms are different, and one of them is not even here; this "absent one" (the Kingdom of HEAVEN) is the one that Rome and the National Council profess to control, guide, and spread. Without making them the same, there would be no authority to "establish a Kingdom". With the postponement of the Kingdom till the seventh millennium, in steps a Harlot Woman (Matt. 13:33, Rev. 17:4) with a fist full of leavened doctrine (Matt. 13:33). This woman usurps the position of the "Virgin daughter of Israel" (Zeph. 3:14; Jer. 14:17), taking for granted that her cast off mother (Hos. 1) can no longer "bring forth children" (Isa. 54:1-9; 66:5-10). Thus, with the postponement of the Kingdom, there comes the inevitable counterfeit.

For the sake of clarity we shall consider what the church is not and then what it really is in the light of the word.

I. WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT

A. It is not a continuation of the "Jewish Dispensation" under another name - The Jews have been shunted to a sidetrack that the "Main Line" may be clear for the

passage of the church. Jesus said - "The Law and the Prophets are until John." If the Scriptures put Moses and Law in one Dispensation and Christ and Grace in another let us respect the Divine order and not join together what God has put asunder.

It is because some religious bodies believe that the Christian Church is but another phase of what they call the "Jewish Church," that they insist on a "ceremonial ritual" and retain the Priesthood with its altar, vestments, etc., and Temple-like buildings; and call the ordinances of the Christian Church "Sacrifices" and Sacraments." They also go further and advocate a "State Church," with the Church as the head, and claim that all the Old Testament promises of riches and glory have been transferred from the Jew to the Church. This we shall see is unscriptural.

B. It is not "The Kingdom" - John the Baptist came preaching that the "Kingdom of Heaven" was "at hand" and Jesus sent out the Twelve and the Seventy to do the same, but the Jewish people rejected their King, and the setting up of the Kingdom was postponed. There cannot be any Kingdom until the "Nobleman Farmer" who has gone into a "far country" to receive the Kingdom returns (Lk. 19:11-27).

The Church is never compared with the Kingdom in the Scriptures. The Church is compared to a "House" (1 Tim. 3:15) to a "Temple" (1 Cor. 3:16,17), to a "Body" (1 Cor. 12:27-31), but never to a Kingdom. Christ is the "HEAD" of His Church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18), but He is never spoken of as its King. The Church's relation to Christ is to be that of a "Bride." (Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 21:2,9,10)

II. WHAT THE CHURCH IS

A. It is a "mystery" - The Kingdom was no mystery. The Old Testament prophets describe it in glowing terms. But something was a "Mystery" to them, and that was what was to come between the "Sufferings" and "Glory" of Christ. (1 Pet. 1:9-12) That is, between the Cross and the Crown. Jesus intimated that there was to be something that He called the "Church," but He did not say when it should appear, or what it would be like. (Matt. 16:13-20)

The "Mystery of the Church" was first revealed to Paul:

"For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of 'the dispensation of the grace of God' which is given me to you ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me "THE MYSTERY"...which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that THE GENTILES should be fellow heirs and of THE SAME BODY, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel ...according to the "Eternal Purpose" which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:1-11).

From this we see that the Church was unknown to the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets. That the Gentiles were to be saved was no mystery. (Rom 9:24-30) The "Mystery" was that God was going to form an entirely "NEW THING," composed of both Jew and Gentile, to be called "THE CHURCH."

B. It is a "called out" Body - While Israel is a "called out body" it is a "National Body", composed exclusively of the descendants of Abraham, but the Church is not a national body for it is composed of people from every kindred and kind.

That Israel and the Church are distinct and separate and cannot be blended is clear from the fact that their "election" was made at different dates, and that the "election" of the Church antedates the "election" of Israel. Israel was chosen in Abraham from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34), while the Church was chosen in HIM (Jesus) BEFORE the Foundation of the World, (Eph. 1:4-6). Israel was elected to bring forth a physical seed while the church was elected to bring forth a spiritual seed.

C. It is the "Body of Christ" - The fact that the Church is a "Body made up of "living members" shows that it is not an "Organization," but an ORGANISM." An "Organization" is made up of distinct units like the doors, windows, roof, floors, etc., of a building, that may be removed and replaced by new parts without destroying the integrity of the building; but a human body is an organism. You cannot remove an eye, or ear, or arm, or foot, or even a finger nail or tooth, without destroying the integrity of the body and causing a mutilation. So, we see from this for Christ to lose One Member of His Body (the Church) is to MUTILATE it.

Neither can the Church, as the "Body of Christ" die, for who ever saw a dead body attached to a living head? Christ the Head is ALIVE and can NEVER DIE AGAIN, for He tells us in (Rev. 1:18), "I am He that liveth and was dead (on the Cross), and behold, I am ALIVE FOREVERMORE." It follows therefore that "when Christ, who is our LIFE, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col. 3:4) Jesus Christ not only gave His life for the Church, but to the Church.

But why call the Church the "Body of Christ?" What is a body for? It is for the Manifestation of a Personality.

A person can exist without a physical body, as the soul exists without a physical body between death and the resurrection of the body, but that existence cannot be made manifest. So the only way Christ, who is now in glory, can manifest Himself to the world is through His Body - THE CHURCH. The only way the world can see Christ today is in Christian believers. This is probably what Paul meant when he wrote to the Philippians, "For to me to live is Christ." (Phil. 1:21). That is, so that the world might see Christ manifested in Paul.

Mystery of The Ages

PART 14 - THE TRIBULATION

INTRODUCTION: The emphasis of the Bible during the Church Age is on a man, a God man, God made manifest in the flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ. The emphasis of the Tribulation is also upon a man, but this man will be Satan made manifest in the flesh or Satan incarnate, the Antichrist.

In (1 Tim. 3:16) Christ is spoken of as the "Mystery of Godliness". That is, He was God manifest in the flesh. How did He become "manifest in the flesh"? By being born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. Thus it was that Jesus was the "Son of God" (Lk. 1:35).

In (2 Thess. 2:7), the Antichrist is referred to as "the mystery of iniquity." As Christ was born of a virgin by the Holy Spirit, so Antichrist must be born of a woman by Satan. Hence, Gen. 3:15 comes into full light, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between "thy seed" and "her seed". If the woman's seed was Christ then the Serpent's seed must be Antichrist.

By closely comparing scripture with scripture it can be readily seen that the Antichrist will be none other than Judas Iscariot.

Consider the following facts:

- [1]. Jesus called Judas a devil - (Jn. 6:70,71)
- [2]. Jesus called Judas the "Son of perdition" - (Jn. 17:12)
- [3]. Paul refers to the Antichrist as "the Son of perdition" - (2 Thess. 2:3)
- [4]. Perdition is a place - (Rev. 17:8,11)
- [5]. Judas went to his own place - (Acts 1:25)
- [6]. According to (Rev. 17:8) the beast or Antichrist is someone who:
 1. "was"
 2. "is not" (at the time John was writing)
 3. "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit"
 4. "go into perdition"

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE ANTICHRIST

He will be a "composite" man - one who embraces in his character the abilities and powers of Nebuchadnezzar, Xerxes, Alexander the Great and Caesar Augustus. He will

have the marvelous gift of attracting unregenerate men. The irresistible fascination of his personality, his versatile achievements, superhuman wisdom, great administrative and executive ability, along with his powers as a consummate flatterer, a brilliant diplomat, and a superb strategist will make him the most conspicuous and prominent of men. All these gifts will be conferred on him by Satan, whose tool he will be, and who will thus make him the Superman.

He will pose as a great humanitarian, the friend of men, and the special friend of the Jewish race, whom he will persuade that he has come to usher in the "Golden age" as pictured by the prophets, and who will receive him as their Messiah.

He will intoxicate men with a strong delusion and his never varying success. And when he shall be slain and rise again he will have lost none of these powers, but will be in addition the embodiment of all kinds of wickedness and blasphemy (See Dan. 7:25; 8:25; 11:36; 2 Thess. 2:3-9). Because he will come in peace, he is pictured on the white horse in (Rev. 6). Of course this is an imitation of Christ in (Rev. 19).

II. THE REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

He shall reign for seven years, or during the whole of Daniel's "Seventieth Week."

"And he shall confirm the Covenant with many for ONE WEEK (Daniel's Seventieth week) and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." (Dan. 9:27)

After the Church has been caught out the Jews will be gathered back to their own land unconverted. About this time ten of the Nations occupying the territory of the old Roman Empire will enter into a Federation. Among the Ten Kings of those nations will arise the Antichrist. He will soon prove himself to be a Great Ruler and will be made PRESIDENT. The Government will be a Democratic Monarchy.

The President will make a "Covenant" with the Jewish people. It may be a Covenant restoring to them their own land. Whatever its character, the Prophet Isaiah speaks of it as a "Covenant with Death and Hell." (Isa. 28:15)

For 3 1/2 years the President of the Federation will keep the Covenant and then he will break it. For the balance of his reign, 3 1/2 years, he will cause an awful persecution of the Jews, called "The Great Tribulation."

We are told in (Rev. 13:3), that one of the "SEVEN HEADS," or "KINGS," receives a deadly wound. Which one is not stated. The inference is that it is the last, for the Beast has all of his "HEADS" before one of them is wounded. In (Rev. 17:11) he is called the Beast that WAS, and IS NOT even he is the "EIGHTH," and is of the "SEVEN," and goeth into PERDITION. The only clear explanation of this passage is that the "SEVENTH HEAD" - THE

ANTICHRIST, is the one who receives the "deadly wound," probably at the hand of an assassin. As his body is lying in state prepared for burial, he rises from the dead (Rev. 13:14) and thus becomes the "EIGHTH" though he is of the "SEVEN." By this resurrection of the Antichrist, Satan imitates the Resurrection of Christ and makes the world "wonder after the Beast" (Rev. 13:3), and this adds to his prestige and power. If this happens at the "Middle of the Week," at the time the Dragon is cast out of Heaven, it will account for the great change that takes place in the Antichrist. Before receiving his "deadly wound" he will be sweet and lovable, but after his resurrection or recovery he becomes Devilish, the result of the Dragon incarnating himself in him. It is at this time that he breaks the Covenant with the Jews and desecrates the Temple by setting up the "Abomination of Desolation" which is an "Idol Image" of himself - the "DESOLATOR."

III. THE ANTICHRIST'S PROPHET

Satan is the "God of this World." (Age). (2 Cor. 4:4)

As the God of this world (Age), he aims to "ape" or imitate God. As God sent His Son (Jesus) into the world, so Satan shall send Antichrist into the world. As God was in Christ, so Satan will incarnate himself in Antichrist.

- A. Christ has a Church - the "Ecclesia," Antichrist will have a church, the "Synagogue of Satan." (Rev. 2:9; 3:9)
- B. Christ will have a Bride, the "Church," (Eph. 5:25-27); Antichrist will have a bride, the "Mystic Harlot Church." (Rev. 17:1-16)
- C. Christ has a Cup, "The Communion Cup," (1 Cor. 10:16; 11:25); Antichrist has a cup, the "Cup of Devils." (1 Cor. 10:21)
- D. Christ's earthly ministry lasted for three and a half years and Satan shall reign in Antichrist for the same length of time.
- E. Christ died at the age of thirty-three years, and for all we know Antichrist shall be smitten at the same age; the age at which Alexander the Great, the "Great Horn" of the He-Goat, died.
- F. The Godhead is a Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Satan proposes, as the "God of this Age," to manifest himself as a Trinity. In contradistinction to the Divine Trinity we call this manifestation a SATANIC TRINITY.

The members of it are -

- [1]. "The Dragon" - the Anti-GOD"
- [2]. "The Beast" - the "Anti-CHRIST.
- [3]. "The False Prophet" - the "Anti-Spirit."

Again, the "Antichrist" is to be a KING and rule over a KINGDOM. He will accept the "Kingdom of this world" that Satan offered Christ, and that Christ refused. (Matt. 4:8-10) He will also EXALT himself and claim to be God (2 Thess. 2:4). But the "False Prophet" is not a King. He does not exalt himself but exalts the "First Beast" (Antichrist). His relation to the "First Beast" is the same as the Holy Spirit's relation to Christ. He causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the "First Beast." He also has power to give life, and in this he imitates the Holy Spirit. And as the followers of Christ are sealed by the Holy Spirit until the "Day of Redemption" (Eph. 4:30); so the followers of Antichrist shall be sealed by the False Prophet until the "Day of Perdition." (Rev. 13:16-17)

The False Prophet will be a "Miracle Worker". While Jesus was a "miracle worker," He did all His mighty works in the "power" of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 10:38) Among the miracles that the False Prophet will perform will be to bring down FIRE FROM HEAVEN. As we have seen under the work of the "Two Witnesses," (Rev. 11:1-14) there will probably be a "FIRE-TEST" between Elijah and the False Prophet, and the test as to who is God of Mount Carmel will be repeated. That Satan, who will then energize the False Prophet, can do this is clear from Job 1:16, where Satan, having secured permission from God to touch all that Job had, brought down "fire from heaven" and burned up Job's sheep and servants.

The False Prophet then commands the people to make an "IMAGE OF THE BEAST."

Mystery of The Ages

PART 15 - THE GREAT TRIBULATION OR THE 42 WEEKS

INTRODUCTION: During the first half of the Tribulation the first four seals (Rev. 6:1-8) are opened. During this time there will be a false peace instituted by the rider on the white horse (Rev. 6:2). The next three seals indicate that in spite of this peace the economic and political conditions of the world will rapidly disintegrate.

The last half of the Tribulation is often called "The Great Tribulation". In this study we shall try to outline the major events in the best chronological order possible.

I. The "Sun-Clothed Woman"

In the "middle of the week" two "wonders" shall appear in heaven. The first wonder is a woman described in Rev. 12:1. This "Woman" is neither the Virgin Mary, nor the Church, but Israel. We have only to be reminded of Joseph's dream of the "sun" and "moon," and the "eleven stars" (Gen. 37:9) to see that this "Sun-Clothed Woman," with the "moon" under her feet and a crown of "Twelve Stars" upon her head is Jewish in character. Joseph was the twelfth star. Israel is again and again compared to a "married" woman in the Old Testament, but the Church is a "virgin," and an "espoused virgin" at that (2 Cor. 11:2). This "Woman" is described as being "with child" and "travailing to be delivered." When was the Church in such a condition? Paul says of Israel "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. 9:4,5). Israel looked forward to the time when she could say "Unto us a Child is Born, unto us a Son is given." (Isa. 9:6,7) But before that could happen Israel had to pass through many sore afflictions and judgments. These were her "Travail Time."

As the result of her "travail" the Woman brought forth a "Man-Child" who was to rule the nations with a "Rod of Iron." There can be no question as to who is meant by the "Man-Child". The second Psalm settles that. He is Christ, who at His ascension was caught up and seated on His Father's throne.

After her child is delivered, the Woman "flees into the wilderness" where she has a place prepared of God and where she is fed for 1260 days. Here is where many interpreters make a mistake. They overlook the fact that between the "fifth" and "sixth" verses of this chapter the present "Church Period" comes in. Here is the "gap" between the "Sixty-ninth" and "Seventieth" Weeks of Daniel's "Seventy Weeks." John jumps over this "gap," from the ascension of Christ to the casting out of Satan because he is not dealing in these Tribulation chapters with the Church but with Israel and wishes to continue her history without a break. Here is further evidence that the "Woman" is not the Virgin Mary, for she does not flee into Egypt, but into the Wilderness, neither does she flee "with" her

child, for the child was caught up to the throne of God; neither does she flee for her child's "protection," but for her own.

II. The "Great Red Dragon"

(Rev. 12:9) removes all doubt as to who the great red dragon is - It is none other than Satan, who is the second wonder of (Rev. 12).

When the "Dragon" is cast out, knowing that his defeat has been brought about by the elevation of the "Man-Child" to the place of power, he will concentrate his hatred and malice on the "woman" (Israel) who gave Him birth. To the "Woman" will be given the "wings of a great eagle," that she may fly into the "Wilderness," into "her place," where she shall be nourished for a "Time, Times, and Half a Time," or 3 1/2 years. This takes us back to the flight of Israel from Egypt, of which God said - "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on 'Eagle's Wings,' and brought you unto myself." (Ex. 19:4) As the "Woman" and the "Dragon" are symbols, so are the "Eagle's Wings" (B-52s). They speak of the rapid and safe flight of the "Woman" (Israel) into the "Wilderness," where she shall be safely kept and nourished for 3 1/2 years until the "Dragon" is bound.

III. The Fifth Seal - (Rev. 6:9-11)

When the Fifth Seal was broken John saw the "souls of martyrs" under the altar. These martyrs that John saw are not the martyrs of "past ages" that were taken up with the Church, but the martyrs who will be killed for the "Word of their Testimony, and who love not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11) during the Tribulation. After the Church is caught out, the preaching of the "Gospel of the Kingdom" will be resumed (Matt. 24:14). As it is a proclamation that Christ is about to set up an "earthly kingdom," it will be exceedingly distasteful to Antichrist and his followers, and a "Great Persecution" will follow (Matt. 24:9-13). It is the "souls" of the martyrs of this persecution that John saw under the altar.

They asked that their death should be avenged but were told to rest for a "little season" until they were joined by their fellow servants and brethren who should die as they did. The promise is fulfilled in (Rev. 20:4).

IV. The Sixth Seal - (Rev. 6:12-17)

When the Sixth Seal is broken great "physical changes" will occur on the earth (Joel 2:30,31; Matt. 24:29; Isa. 13:9-11). So terrible will these changes be that men will call upon the mountains and rocks to fall and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. The twenty fourth chapter of Matthew should be compared with (Rev. 6:1-17).

Between the breaking of the "Sixth" and "Seventh" Seals there will be a pause or interval, during which 144,000 of the Children of Israel, 12,000 from each of the Twelve Tribes, will be "sealed." As there were 7000 in Ahab's time who would not bow the knee to Baal (1

Kings 19:18), so in the Tribulation there shall be 144,000 of Israel who will not bow the knee to Antichrist. They are "sealed" by an angel, and the "Seal" is the imprint of the "Father's Name" on their foreheads (Rev. 14:1; 22:4).

V. The Seventh Seal - (Rev. 8:1)

At the breaking of the "Seventh Seal" there will be "silence in heaven" for a limited period. This will be a period of preparation for the greater conflict to follow. Following the "Silence," seven angels in succession sound upon seven trumpets.

VI. The First Trumpet - (Rev. 8:7)

When the "First Trumpet" sounds "hail" and "fire mingled with blood" will be cast upon the earth and a "third part of the trees" and "all green grass" will be burnt up. This will be a fulfillment of (Joel 2:30,31). This is also a repetition of the "Seventh Egyptian Plague." (Ex. 9:22-26) That was "literal." Why should not this be?

VII. The Second Trumpet - (Rev. 8:8,9)

When the "Second Trumpet" sounds a "burning mountain," probably a meteor, will fall into the sea (Mediterranean) and will destroy a "third part of the creatures of the sea" and a "third part of the ships," probably some fleets assembled for a naval battle. A third part of the sea turns to blood.

VIII. The Third Trumpet - (Rev. 8:10,11)

When the "Third Trumpet" sounds a "great burning star," called "Wormwood," will fall from the heavens and poison the streams of fresh water. (See Jer. 9:13-15)

IX. The Fourth Trumpet - (Rev. 8:12)

When the "Fourth Trumpet" sounds the "third part" of the sun, moon and stars will be smitten and their light diminished a "third." This is one of the "signs" spoken of by Christ. (Lk. 21:25,26)

An angel will then fly through the midst of heaven announcing "Three Woes" that are to follow the sounding of the three trumpets yet to sound. (Rev. 8:13)

X. The Fifth Trumpet "First Woe": "The Plague of Locusts" - (Rev 9:1-3)

When the "Fifth Trumpet" sounds a "Star" will fall from heaven to the earth with the "key" of the "Bottomless Pit."

This is not a real star, but an angel who will look like a star, for "to him" was given the key. When the "Bottomless Pit" is opened a cloud, like smoke, of "locusts" will emerge and cover the earth. They will be a combination of horse, man, woman, lion and scorpion. These "Scorpion Locusts" have a king, which ordinary locusts have not (Prov. 30:27). This

king's name in the Hebrew is "Abaddon," but in the Greek is "Apollyon." The word means "destroyer."

XI. The Sixth Trumpet "Second Woe": "The Plague of Horsemen"- (Rev. 9:13-21)

When the "Sixth Trumpet" shall sound a voice from the "Golden Altar" will command the Trumpeter to loose "four angels" which are bound in the great river Euphrates. That they are "Bad Angels" is seen from the fact that they are "bound" and that they are the leaders of an army of 200,000,000 "Infernal Cavalry."

This Cavalry will not be composed of ordinary men and horses. The horses will have the "body" of a Horse, the "head" of a Lion, a "tail" like a serpent, with the "head of a serpent" at its end. Out of their mouths will issue "fire," "smoke" and "brimstone" and by these three the "third part of men will be killed" and the sting of their "serpent tails" will cause great pain. The riders upon these horses will have "breastplates of fire and brimstone" to match the breast of the horses.

XII. The Appearance - (Rev. 10)

Between the sounding of the Sixth and Seventh trumpets there will be an interval. During this interval a mighty angel will come down from heaven having a "little book" in his hand. This mighty angel will be Christ Himself for the description of Him corresponds with (Rev. 1:12-15), and as His voice is like that of a lion, this identifies Him as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (see Rev. 5:5; 10:3). This appearance will cause Israel to be converted by seeing Him, exactly as Paul was converted by seeing Him. There will be a brilliant light, brighter than the sun (exactly as the Transfiguration) when Jesus appears sometime in the Tribulation. (Ex. 43:2; Ps. 50:2) We do not know when in Daniel's 70th week this will take place. But a good guess would be about four months before the second Advent based on the book of Job which has forty-two chapters; the Lord appears to Job in the thirty-eighth chapter (Rapture of Tribulation Saints Matt. 24:36-44).

XIII. The Two Witnesses

In chapter (11:1-14) we are given a description of "Two Witnesses" who are to prophesy during the greater part of the last half of the week. Who they will be is very clear. One has "power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy." This can be no other than Elijah who was translated that he might come again before the "Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord" (Malachi 4:5,6) and who will shut up the heavens for 42 months, or 3 1/2 years, which is exactly the length of time he did it in the days of Ahab. The other Witness will "have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as he will." This identifies him as Moses, for he is the only person mentioned in the Scriptures who had such power, and it was for this purpose that he was raised from the dead (Jude 9). As Moses and Elijah appeared together on the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ and as they probably were the two "men" in "white apparel"

(angel-like) that testified at the Ascension to Christ's coming again (Acts 1:10,11), it is also probable than that they are the "Two Witnesses" who will return to the earth to announce that Coming. During their "witnessing" they will have power to destroy their enemies with "fire that shall issue from their mouths", but at the end of 1260 days they will be slain and their bodies lay exposed in the streets of the city of Jerusalem for 3 1/2 days. They then shall rise and ascend to heaven, to the amazement of those who see them go. Their ascent will be followed by a destructive earthquake, which completes the Second Woe.

XIV. The Seventh Trumpet "Third Woe" - (Rev. 11:15-19)

The "Seventh Trumpet" includes all that follows down to the end of chapter nineteen. We must not forget in our study of the Book of Revelation that the "Seventh Seal" includes the "Seven Trumpets" and the "Seven Vials," and that the "Seventh Trumpet" includes the "Seven Vials," for the "Seventh Seal", and the "Seventh Trumpet," and the "Seventh Vial" all end alike with "voices," "thunderings," "lightnings" and an "earthquake" (Rev. 8:5, 11:19; 16:18).

XV. The Vials - (Rev. 16)

The first five vials find great similarity either in the seals and the trumpets or the Egyptian plagues. The sixth vial (Rev. 16:12-14) is poured out upon the river Euphrates so that its waters dry up and the armies of the east are allowed to come westward to prepare for the battle of Armageddon (Isa. 11:15,16).

When the Seventh Vial is poured out, a great voice, probably the voice of the One who cried on the Cross - "It is Finished," will cry - "It is Done," and there will be a "Great Earthquake" that will divide into three parts the "Great City" and the cities of the Nations (the ten Federated Nations). London, Rome, Paris, etc., and "Great Babylon", that shall be rebuilt by that time, and whose destruction by an earthquake is foretold in chapter eighteen, will fall. This earthquake is foretold by the Prophet Zechariah (Zech. 14:4,5).

In the "Great Hail" that will fall on men, every stone of which shall weigh 100 pounds, we have a repetition of the "Seventh Egyptian Plague" (Ex. 9:13-35). Hail has been one of God's engines of war. He used it to discomfit the enemies of Israel at Beth-horon in the days of Joshua (Josh. 10:11). The law required that the "blasphemer" should be "stoned" (Lev. 24:16), and the "Blasphemers" of the "End Time" shall be stoned from heaven.

In the Book of Revelation in chapters seventeen and eighteen, between the pouring out of the Vials and the "Battle of Armageddon" which ends the "Tribulation Period," there is an account of the destruction of a "religious system" called "Mystery, Babylon the Great," and a city called Babylon.

XVI. The Great Harlot

The woman of (Rev. 17) can be none other than the Roman Catholic Church. She is a religious system riding upon a political vehicle. The revived Roman Empire of Daniel 2 will provide the necessary tool for the confederation of church and state which the Antichrist will rule. It's interesting that the old Roman Empire is essentially the same as today's European Common Market which includes ten nations that are all predominately Catholic. Just a coincidence - eh? The woman will find her destruction within the very political machine she chooses to ride - (Rev. 17:16-18).

XVII. The Battle of Armageddon - (Rev. 19:11-21)

The "Tribulation Period" will close with the great "Battle of Armageddon." As we have seen the armies of the East and the West will be assembled in the Holy Land by the "Demon Spirits" that shall be sent forth from the mouths of the "Satanic Trinity." The field of battle will be the "Valley of Megiddo," located in the heart of Palestine, the battlefield of the great battles of the Old Testament. The forces engaged will be the "Allied Armies" of Antichrist on the one side, and the "Heavenly Army" of Christ on the other. The "time" will be when the "Harvest of the Earth" IS RIPE (Rev. 14:15), and at the "Psychological Moment" when the "Allied Armies" of Antichrist are about to take the city of Jerusalem.

The Prophet Zechariah says - "Behold the 'Day of the Lord' cometh." When - "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle... then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations" (Zech. 14:1-3).

This "going forth" is graphically described in (Rev. 19:11-21). When He came the first time to Jerusalem as King, He rode on a "colt," the foal of an ass, (Matt. 21:1-11), this time He shall come on a "White Horse." His eyes will be as a "flame of fire" and on His head shall be "many crowns," and He shall be clothed in a vesture "dipped in blood." Not His own blood, but the blood of His enemies. The Prophet Isaiah foresaw that day:

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?" And the answer comes back - "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Then the Prophet asks, "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?" And the response is - "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." (Isa. 63:1-6)

Mystery of The Ages

PART 16 - THE MILLENNIUM

INTRODUCTION: This earth is going to be here (before the new earth) 7000 years, and the seventh period of 1000 years is a time of rest (Isa. 14:7). God made this earth in six days and rested the seventh (Gen. 2:1). So, this earth will have 6000 years of war and bloodshed, and the last 1000 years will be a 1000-year period of rest - "a Sabbath of rest". Just to make sure that the literal meaning is not missed, the Holy Spirit has written "thousand years" six times in (Rev. 20) so you wouldn't miss it.

Eight is the number of new beginning in the Bible. It follows that the eighth day (II Peter 3:8) will be a new beginning - the new heavens and earth. Noah was the eighth person (2 Peter 2:5) and his family consisted of eight persons (1 Peter 3:20), and they populated the new earth after the flood. David was the eighth son of Jesse, and he introduced a new order in Israel (1 Sam. 16:10,11). The leper was cleansed on the eighth day from his leprosy, thus proclaiming a new man (Lev. 14:11).

I. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM

A. The King - Jesus Christ will rule the entire earth from Jerusalem with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27; Isa. 11:1; Ps. 110). That is to say, it will be a peaceful (Micah 4:1-4) military dictatorship.

B. The Judges of Israel - These will be the faithful original disciples of Jesus (Matt. 19:27-30).

C. The Rulers of the Cities of the World - These will be church age saints who have been judged to be faithful during this present age (Lk. 19:12-27). Their right to rule will be judged upon the basis of their willingness to suffer (Rom. 8:17,18; 2 Tim. 2:12; 2 Cor. 1:5-14).

D. The Results of This Government -

[1]. Peace - (Isa. 2:4; 9:4-7; 11:6-9; 33:5,6)

[2]. Justice - (Isa. 9:7; 32:16; 42:1-4)

[3]. Protection - (Isa. 41:8-14; 62:8,9; Amos 9:15)

[4]. Freedom from oppression - (Isa. 14:3-6; 42:6,7)

[5]. Labor - (Isa 62:8,9; 65:21-23; Jer. 31:5)

[6]. Economic Prosperity - (Isa. 4:1; 35:1,2,7; Amos 9:14,15)

[7]. Unified Language - (Zeph. 3:9)

II. THE INHABITANTS OF THE KINGDOM

A. Church Age Saints - These saints will of course have new bodies, and they will walk about as 33 year old reproductions of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Jn. 3:2).

B. Converted Israel - The Jew will be back in the land of Palestine. The type of the reign of Jesus Christ in the Millennium is found in (1 Kings 2-10). Solomon, the son of David, is the anti-type of Jesus, the Son of David (Matt. 1), reigning over the piece of land the Lord Jesus Christ will have access to in the Millennium (Deut. 4:31; Rom. 11:25,26; Rev. 12:14).

C. Tribulation Remnant -

[1]. Those who don't take the mark and escape the Antichrist (Dan. 11:41,42)

[2]. Those who come through the Tribulation and help the Jews (Matt. 25:31-46).

D. Those Born in the Millennium - People will reproduce during the Millennium (Jer. 30:20; Eze. 47:22). (Isa 65:20) indicates there will be a return to the pre-flood aging process (see also Zech. 8:4,5).

III. WORSHIP IN THE MILLENNIUM

A. Temple Worship will be restored in the Millennium - Israel will have the entire plot of land that was originally promised to Abraham (Ps. 105:9-12) and Solomon reigned over (1 Kings 4:21). It will be divided up into strips, for the 12 tribes of Israel (Eze. 48). It will have a "holy portion" in the middle of it where the temple will be built, where Jesus Christ will reign.

B. Bloody Sacrifices re-instituted - (Eze. 43:18-46; Zech. 14:16; Isa. 56:6-8; 66:21; Jer. 33:15-18; Eze. 20:40-41). All teach the restoration of a priesthood and the reinstatement of a bloody sacrificial system during that age. The sacrifices during this time will be for national atonement (Eze 45:17) looking back to the cross. The new moons and the sabbaths are observed exactly as we are told they would be (Isa. 66:22-24) and as Paul warned in the New Testament (Col. 2:16,17).

C. The Worship of the Nations - One unique thing about the Millennium is that the nations are told to come up to Jerusalem every year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts (Isa. 2:2,3). So in the future, the "law of the Lord" - sabbaths, new moons, etc. - will go out from Jerusalem and from Mt. Zion (Isa. 11:10- 13; Zech. 8:21-23; Mic. 4:1,2).

Zechariah 14 is about the Millennium. The Lord comes back (Zech. 14:9), and the nations are told to go up to Jerusalem to worship the King "year to year" and to keep the "feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16) showing that the "feast of tabernacles" (in September or October) is connected with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. If the nations do not honor

the King at Jerusalem, they are plagued (Zech. 14:17-19). (Compare this with Isa. 26:10; 60:12; Ps. 68:6; 72:9).

D. Individual Salvation - There is no faith in the Millennium! The plan of salvation for the Millennium is (Matt. 5,6,7).

In the Millennium, if a man calls another man a fool, he is in danger of going to hell right on the spot. In the Millennium, if a man is angry with his brother without a cause, he is dragged before a "council." In the Millennium, if a man takes you to court, you are to give him everything you have. Salvation by works! (Matt. 5:24-26). In this dispensation, you are saved by grace through faith plus nothing, and you couldn't get to heaven with the Sermon on the Mount if you stayed up all night and prayed over it.

The man in the Millennium is saved by works without faith. Consequently, he has an unregenerate nature that is left unchanged, and if he does not follow the works, he is lost. At the end of the Millennium, when Satan comes up, he finds a mass of unregenerate people who are tired of a military dictatorship, and who are griping under the authority of Jesus Christ. They do not like His harshness, discipline, or power, and therefore, they follow Satan (See Rev. 20:7-9; Ps. 72:8,9; Isa. 26:9-11; Ps. 66:7).

IV. CHANGES IN NATURE DURING THE MILLENNIUM

Even as man needs to be regenerated (Titus 3:5) so does the earth (Matt. 19:28; Rom. 8:22). Today it still feels the effects of a curse that has been in place since (Gen. 3).

When the earth is born again some of the results will be:

- [1]. Wild beasts will be tame - (Isa 11:5-8)
- [2]. The sun and moon will be seven times brighter - (Isa. 30:26)
- [3]. The Dead Sea will be healed - (Eze. 47:8)
- [4]. The desert will bloom - (Isa. 35:1-2)
- [5]. Four crops a year - (Amos 9:11-15; Lev. 26:2-6)
- [6]. Thorns and briers eliminated - (Isa 55:12,13)
- [7]. Fruit bearing will multiply - (Eze. 36:3)

Mystery of The Ages

PART 17 - ETERNITY

INTRODUCTION: The last dispensation in the Bible is Eternity, which is given the greatest amount of attention in the last two chapters of the book of Revelation. The Bible is a circle, an infinite Book. Revelation leads us right back into the Book of Genesis. In Genesis there was "a tree of life" and it shows up again in (Rev. 22:2). Abel's lamb is slain as a sacrifice in Genesis and "the Lamb" is in (Rev. 21:23). In Genesis it is "paradise lost" and in Revelation it is "paradise restored". In (Gen. 1:1) you read "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" and in (Rev. 21:1) you read, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." God begins with man in Genesis 1 and ends with man in Revelation 22. The Bible is a circle so infinite in scope that no finite mind can totally comprehend the completeness of it. There are three distinct dwelling places in eternity that need to be discussed according to (1 Cor. 10:32).

I. THE NEW JERUSALEM - (Rev. 21:9,10)

The New Jerusalem is said to be the "mother" of every born-again believer in the Church Age (Gal. 4:26).

This city is pure gold (Rev. 21:18; 21:21), and it is shaped like a double pyramid. It is "squared" four times. In plainer words, it is not just a cube, but a double cube, each cube having five sides.

The city is so set up that when you put it together, it has eight sides, with the two bases together (which makes ten sides in all). It makes a "city" with a foundation that points down underneath it, and it balances like a gyroscope on whatever it sits on. The foundation underneath is as big as the city, and the city above is "twelve thousand furlongs." The walls are about 264 feet high. (This is a tremendous city. When John said that he saw that "great city," he meant "great city"!) This gold crystal is a double pyramid, containing jasper (carbon), which is the chief constituent of all living things, and it is transparent. This city stretches from Boston, Massachusetts, to Miami, Florida; from Miami, Florida, to Denver, Colorado; and from Denver, Colorado, to Buffalo, New York. So, this city is 1200 miles long, 1200 miles wide, and 1200 miles high. Think of a city whose top is 1200 miles in the air, each mile being 5,280 feet!

This city has 5,000,000 apartments every cubic mile; there are 41 trillion rooms, 15 feet square, or 207 trillion rooms, 10 feet square.

There are more than ten rooms for every saved person who dies between Pentecost and the Second Coming of Christ, if 100 million Christians died every year. In plainer words, when you get to heaven, you will settle down in a house that has at least 10 rooms, 10 feet square, out of solid gold.

The streets are to be lined with trees, as are the banks of a wonderful river. These trees are not mere shade trees, but beautiful fruit trees, called the "TREE OF LIFE," that bear twelve kinds of fruit, a different kind each month. The fruit of these trees is for overcomers only: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7)

The leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations that shall occupy the New Earth. Not that there will be any sickness, but to preserve them in health, as Adam would have been preserved in health if he had eaten of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24).

The wonderful river is called the river of the "Water of Life," because of its "life giving" properties. Earthly streams have their source in the Throne of God. (Rev. 22:1)

Whoever heard of an earthly city without some place of worship, be it heathen or Christian? But the wonderful thing about the New Jerusalem is that it has no temple. We will not need a temple when the object of worship is present, for "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it." In fact the whole city itself will be a temple.

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their GOD. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:3,4)

II. THE NEW EARTH

By studying (Isa. 66:22) it appears that the new earth will principally be for Israel. Notice the context of (Isa. 66:22-24), the "new moon" and the "sabbath," and all "flesh" coming into New Jerusalem to worship the Lord on the "new moon" and the "sabbath" in the new heavens and the new earth. The Jew is still on the earth (Eph. 1:10; Isa. 65:17; Jer. 33:21, 17,18; Eze. 46:3; 44:24; 37:25-27). In connection with these nations on the earth in eternity (the ones that were saved in the Tribulation and the Millennium), you need to study (Isa. 66:2; Ps. 68:29; and 2 Chron. 23:19). In connection with the Jew ruling the earth in eternity you should study (Gen. 17:8; 17:20-21 Ps. 24:7; Isa. 66:22,23; 9:6,7).

There will be 12 nations on the earth in eternity (Deut. 32:7-9; Rev. 21:24,26). The Bible plainly teaches that there are twelve boundaries on this earth, matching twelve months. These twelve "boundaries" have twelve nations in them, and these nations match the

twelve tribes of the children of Israel. (If you could find out which tribe matched the United States, you would have more information available about the future of the United States than any history book that has ever been published!)

According to (Rev. 22:14), the tree of life enters into the picture of individual salvation for earth bound people in eternity. We might assume that if the people who are born do not partake of the "tree of life," they die. But in Revelation 20, we read that "death and hell were cast into the lake of fire," so this conclusion may not be correct. Therefore, we will alter it just a little and say this: for 33,000 years (This is the period that Larkin calls the "Age of Ages" before eternity begins (See Deut. 7:9 and 1 Chron. 16:15-19), or a period that only God knows, people will have to take of the "tree of life." There is a possibility that once a man partakes of the "tree of life," and reproduces seed, his seed receives eternal life and the offspring does not have to take of the "tree of life." This means that people in the Tribulation and the Millennium who "keep His commandments" will be able to partake of the "tree of life" in their month - the month of their birth - and from then on their offspring are born with eternal life. However, at best, it is impossible to figure for certain. But somebody is going to partake of that "tree of life." We are left with two alternatives.

[1]. The flesh-and-blood nations on the earth all have to take of the "tree of life" sometime after they are born, or in eternity they die.

[2.] The generations that came through the Tribulation and the Millennium must take of the "tree of life," and from then on their progeny is secure, for they are born with eternal life.

III. THE NEW HEAVENS

An examination of (Isa 9:7; Lk. 1:30-33) reveals that not only is Christ coming back to rule over a political, visible, Davidic, earthly, kingdom, but this kingdom is going to branch out - with its branches named after the sons of Jacob - and go out into the solar system and galaxies, infinitely, and go out to the stars forever (Heb. 11:14-16).

(2 Peter 3:12,13) indicates that righteousness is not just going to dwell on a new earth, but in the new heavens also. The implications are staggering. It means God is going to spread mankind out and fill out the whole universe indefinitely.

When (Isa. 45:11-18; Rev. 22:3-5; and Dan. 7:14,18) are put together, it becomes clear that the saved nations that can go into the city to partake of the "tree of life" to get eternal life spend eternity reproducing and multiplying and going out into outer space, and populating first the 12 constellations that make up the Zodiac (12 signs-12 nations), and then from there they move on out into outer space.