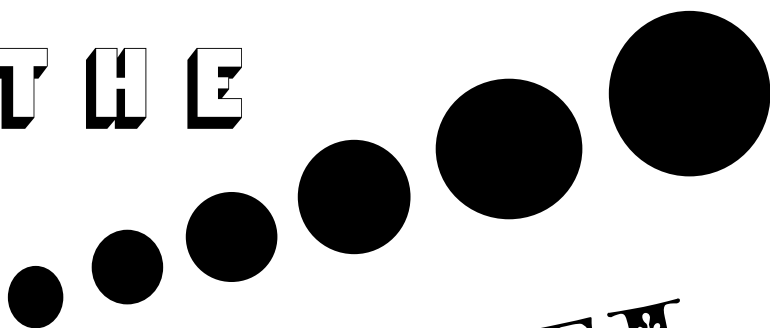


THE



GOSPEL

OF THE

Kingdom

farnsworth

Introduction...

Dedication:

To My Father, Barry Farnsworth, who taught me to love the Word of God, my mother, Patricia, who had her Bible opened at the dining table every day, my siblings who

have loved me and contributed to my life in so many ways, to my wife, Christine, who is my constant companion and heir of the grace of life together, my children,

Constance, Alegiance, Veracity, Adrielle, and Christine E. who are a tremendous source of encouragement in the

faith, and our church family at Victory Baptist Church in Kingfisher who have graciously supported me while serving them as Christ's under-shepherd. And to Bo Lockhart, the man who was used of Christ to provoke me to

study these things in a way that I might be able to teach and preach them to build the faith of those who are in hope of Jesus Christ.

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Isaac W. Farnsworth

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Table of Contents

Introduction...	4
Chapter 1 – Until John.....	12
Chapter 2 – Approaching the Study of the Kingdom	20
Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come	26
Chapter 4 - God’s Word to Man.....	38
Chapter 5 – Understanding All Parables	69
Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom.....	102
Chapter 7 – The Hope of the Saints	123
Chapter 8 – The World to Come	147
Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints	166
Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints.....	196
Chapter 11 – Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?...218	
Chapter 12 – Hidden in Plain Sight	238
Chapter 13 – The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom	258
Chapter 14 – A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?	269
Chapter 15 – Hear Ye, Hear Ye.....	290
In Closing.....	295

Introduction...

Introduction...

Dear Reader (probably my wife and five daughters...),

I have just recently finished recreating a digital version of my father's book, *The Faith That Justifies* (I used the design for his book cover to mimic and make this one. Thanks, Dad). He pastored at Victory Baptist Church, where I now pastor, for 32 years, and now serves as *Pastor Emeritus*. That feat of faithfulness is still a marvel to me and a testimony to the faithfulness of Christ who faithfully provides for His people. Now in my third year of pastoring, I have a MUCH deeper and fuller appreciation for what he did for his Lord and the folks he served, and I pray for the strength to serve in such a way as he has. My dad, Barry A. Farnsworth, wrote his book when he had been pastoring for four years or so back in 1990, so I figured I had better get on the ball.

The digital copy we just put together was to get his original work reprinted as we prepare to commemorate the 34th anniversary of the work in Kingfisher, Oklahoma being organized. As I put together the files needed to recreate the book, I was left with a deep sense of appreciation for what he had committed himself to do in that book. He had laid out very plainly the scriptural Faith that he has preached for many years, so that genuine, Biblical faith could be seen in its' proper light by the Word of God. I appreciate the care he put into that work and know that it continues to bless me each time I read it.

Like my dad, the content of this book was originally presented as a series of messages at Victory Baptist

Introduction...

Church. As I now set my hand to do a similar work, my hope is simply that my children will also be led to see the glory of the Word of God as they study His precepts. My aim is not to provide an exhaustive work on every scriptural mention of the kingdom of God, but to share some thoughts about this topic in a way that will provoke you to study and know these things for yourself. Ultimately, the Word of God always has the final and only true answer for every matter of life, faith, and doctrine, and any work of man such as this one will be found faulty.

1 Corinthians 4:6 - “...that ye might learn in us NOT TO THINK OF MEN ABOVE THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”

Romans 3:4 - “...yea, LET GOD BE TRUE, but EVERY MAN A LIAR; as it is written,...”

Well, there you have it... I will, however, show from scripture things that cannot be anything but helpful to you in your study of this important topic.

It was recently for me that I gained an extra appreciation for the importance of the doctrine we will cover in this book and the message that has been preached in the name of Jesus Christ these past 2,000 years regarding the Kingdom of God. I had long been taught, and believed the things concerning the Kingdom of God, but it was not until I was required to dig out these things for myself in God’s Word that a fuller richness and glory of them became apparent to me. It is evident to me (and others, I know certainly) that I am often one of dull hearing, and hear the words of Christ **“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:”** ring in my ears as I struggle in my feeble attempt to heed His holy call to **“Follow Me”**.

Introduction...

I am thankful for His gracious and long-suffering hand that has brought me to where I am and for the Spirit, He has given that I may grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is my desire in the writing of this book, not to appear to be a theologian (likely, no risk of that!) or to make out that I am sharing what others have missed, or any other pretense that speaks to man's proud tendencies. What I hope to set my hand to do is to record for myself and anyone else who may be interested, mostly for my five daughters, the joys and richness of the truths that I have found. The certainty of these things and our confidence in Christ our Savior to bring to pass what He has spoken is the sustaining hope of the faith we profess. I pray that each of my daughters, and anyone else who seeks to know the Truth of God in Christ, may be as fully persuaded of them as I have become, and walk in the faith of them according to His Word while we look for His glorious appearing!

I have wondered, how is it that the message of the kingdom of God, which was the gospel preached throughout the New Testament by Christ and His apostles as they went everywhere preaching the Word, has now become so purely theological in our day, that it is not more frequently taught as doctrine? No doubt, theologians probably had something to do with that... The fact remains though that the kingdom of God was certainly doctrine in Christ's day, and to the apostles as well, not just theology reserved for the seminaries, colleges, doctors, and professors of the time.

Luke 8:1 – “And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout EVERY CITY AND VILLAGE,

preaching and shewing the glad tidings OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD:"

It is interesting that this doctrine of the Kingdom of God, so central to everything Christ and His apostles preached, has seemingly gone underground in these last days, or has been so misapplied that it has led to grievous error. I have heard several different takes on why that should be, some scriptural perhaps and some clearly not, but I believe we will see from scripture that preaching of the Kingdom of God is not only a clearly scriptural truth & gospel to declare but is also necessary to our faith. Likely, a message that we do not preach or herald as often as we should. This absence of the Gospel of the Kingdom being spoken of in our time is not without an impact on our churches and their member's lives. Our young people need to understand it. Our old people need to be living it and teaching it. Our preachers need to be putting us in remembrance of it. Our evangelists need to plainly declare it.

It seems much of the material that excites folks these days is centered on life application. Finances, relationships, giving, charity, marriage, purpose, having peace, living a victorious life, being a confident woman, and many other fine topics are not in short supply on the list of modern Christian material. And those are, after all, fine topics, I suppose, and they need to be preached fervently and frequently. Well, the confident woman one I just threw in there for fun... These cannot, however, be CENTRAL to our doctrine of faith. They must be built UPON it. Many Christians today often hear sermons such as these of coming out of Egypt, being separate, laying aside sin, seeking God, facing giants, finding your calling, experiencing His presence, and so on. All good titles and topics, all will

Introduction...

agree, but is there an underlying body of doctrine that puts these in context so that people can know WHY these are relevant? Is it just to improve our own life experience? Is it so we can be “blessed” by obligating God to act on our behalf? Is it so I can go to heaven when I die (you know, years and years from now I hope because I want to live a full and joyful life now with all the world has to offer...)? Is God mostly interested in my work done in His name or is there another work He requires?

It seems in churches today, with the lack of doctrine concerning the kingdom of God being taught in a practical way, many are falling away from the faith, simply viewing their Christian faith as a moral lifestyle choice of “doing what the Bible teaches”

It seems in churches today, with the lack of doctrine concerning the kingdom of God being taught in a practical way, many are falling away from the faith, simply viewing their Christian faith as a moral lifestyle choice of “doing what the Bible teaches”, or they are attempting feats of “unity” or “love” in His name. Further of concern, biblical faith is being replaced with superstitions under the guise of faith. Yes, there are many reasons today that faith has been made shipwreck.

John 5:39 – “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”

Remember, when Christ came the first time, there wasn't a shortage of people zealous about “doing what the

Introduction...

Bible says”. The problem was, they were children in whom is no FAITH.

The advice from some may be, “stick to application. Application, application, application.” Makes good sense. We should apply the knowledge, information, belief, and confidence in the things we have learned from Scripture. But there is great danger in viewing the Bible simply as an instruction book for how to live this natural life. The Pharisees had that down pat. Indeed, there wasn’t a single area of their life where they didn’t have absolute confidence in what the Bible “said to do”, but they lacked an understanding that faith gives to be led of the Spirit in the way of the Lord. Their confidence in what the scriptures “said to do”, resulted in a self-confidence and pride that is to be of concern among God-fearing Saints. No, there must first be faith, for without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Hebrews 11:6 - “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

But faith in what? What does that mean? That is precisely what we hope to set forth clearly in the coming pages of this book. I’ve heard people say “nothing we can do pleases God. Only faith pleases Him.” Close... Nothing we do pleases Him IF it is not done IN FAITH would be more accurate. There is a great cloud of witnesses that have the testimony that they pleased God with what they did, because their action was rooted in faith in what He had spoken to them. The question for us today is, “what is it that God has spoken of to us?” Let us, by God’s grace, be counted among those who live such lives. Understanding

Introduction...

what God's Word is, having faith in Him to fulfill it, and living lives adorned by the doctrine we profess.

As you read the coming chapters, I pray that there will be helpful and clarifying thoughts shared that will provoke you to study and grow in the knowledge of God. I know, for me, this journey of faith that God started in me when I was a child being taken to church services week-in and week-out and was brought to fruition at the age of 18 when He opened my understanding to His glorious gospel, has been deeply enriched by the study you are about to undertake through this book.

I pray that each of you will enjoy the fellowship of Christ by His Spirit in these things with me as we wait for His glorious appearing. Strengthened in hope, patient in our calling, fervent in spirit, preserved by the power of God through faith in these things.

1 Peter 1:3 - 5 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath BEGOTTEN US AGAIN unto a lively HOPE by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an INHERITANCE incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH unto salvation ready TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME."

Lastly, I would ask that once you start the book, you finish reading it through. Now, I am sure that any person who has ever written anything would say the same. I have endeavored to organize my thoughts in this book to properly relate the truth of this doctrine in a way that builds as you progress through the reading of this book. However, it would serve you best to read it through once

Introduction...

BEFORE developing hard and fast opinions in any matter and, of course, to search the scriptures yourself. By His grace, may we all continue to learn and grow in Him.

Isaac W. Farnsworth

Chapter 1 – Until John

Matthew 11:13 – “The law and the prophets were **UNTIL JOHN**: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”

Luke 8:1 – “And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, **PREACHING AND SHEWING THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**: and the twelve were with him,”

Before we launch out into the proverbial “deep” where all good theology lies, let us first set in order a few aides that will help serve as guidelines in our study. We will endeavor in these next couple of chapters and pages to share some things that may be helpful before we turn right to Matthew 13 and pull out all our favorite commentaries.

There is an interesting work done by God and revealed to us in the scriptures of truth that occurred at the time of John the Baptist’s ministry. We will not hope to exhaust all the facts concerning John the Baptist in this little book, but only share what may be helpful and necessary for our purposes in discussing the gospel of the kingdom. This is made evident when Christ speaks in Luke concerning this man:

Luke 7:28 – “For I say unto you, Among those that are **BORN OF WOMEN** there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

Here we have Jesus Christ teaching concerning John the Baptist (which by itself is a tremendous study) that there was not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. He

He then went on to contrast “he that is least in the kingdom of God” with John, which must mean that those in the kingdom of God must enter by another birth than women can give

said among all that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than him. He then went on to contrast “he that is least in the kingdom of God” with John, which must mean that those in the kingdom of God must enter by another birth than women can give, but we’ll leave that alone for now. What

we want to know is, “What was it about John that made him the greatest prophet?”

If we consider the work of the prophets declaring the Word of God, we will find many men who were greatly used by God to accomplish this work. Many of them have their names affixed to the book of their writings in the Old Testament. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, and many such men whom the Lord used greatly.

As you might know, the prophet was known by his message. This is the way the Lord had instructed his people to measure the prophets when he taught the congregation in the wilderness:

Deuteronomy 13:1 – 3 – “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth

Chapter 1 - Until John

you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

If we look at the message that John was given to proclaim, we can quickly discern why he was called the greatest among the prophets by Christ, even though he never did a single miracle.

John 10:41 - “And many resorted unto him, and said, John [the Baptist] DID NO MIRACLE: but all things that John SPAKE OF THIS MAN were true.”

Never healed bitter waters. Never called fire down from heaven. Never raised anyone from the dead. Never restored bitter waters or healed poison stews. Didn't even make an axe head float in the Jordan river. Just preached the Word of the Lord he was given to preach and baptized as he was commanded to do.

John 1:33 - “...HE THAT SENT ME to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.”

Moses prophesied of the coming Messiah. Isaiah prophesied the Lord is coming. Jeremiah prophesied that the Lord is coming. Ezekiel spoke of the coming of the Lord. Daniel foretold with detail the exact timing of the coming of Him who would be King. Each of these prophets carried great messages to the people of the Word of the Lord. There is a striking difference between the message each of these men was given to carry and that of John the Baptist. Each of these men declared “He is coming, the Lord is coming!”, while John declared “He is here, the Lord is here!”. The great announcement of the arrival of the one “whose goings forth have been from of old, from

Chapter 1 - Until John

everlasting.”, the “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”! He had finally come after nearly 4,000 years of prophecy regarding His arrival!

A prophet’s greatness lies not in himself but in the message that he is given to carry, and we see that John’s message was GREAT!

This also speaks to the change in preaching that occurred when John arrived on the scene by Divine decree from the Almighty.

Luke 16:16 - “The law and the prophets were until John: SINCE THAT TIME the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”

It is important to remember that there is a specific reason why the Word of the Lord that was preached began to be the kingdom of God as opposed to “the law and the prophets” as they had been taught for so many years. We will get into more of this later in our chapter *A Shadow of Things to Come*, but for now we’ll simply make note that when John came with his holy message from God, something very significant was happening. A true reformation, not the one commonly taught and discussed that occurred in the 16th century, but the one spoken of by Paul in Hebrews 9:10:

“Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION.”

This reformation of things on earth by the fulfillment of God’s Word of promise needs to be discussed in more detail, as it speaks to us of the things of our own time as well - the “last days” as scripture says. Those “upon

Chapter 1 - Until John

whom the ends of the world are come.” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

So, “The law and the prophets were until John:”, and since then the Kingdom of Heaven is preached.

What can we discern from this statement that is made several times in scripture? Don’t miss this, because it is important. Ever since John the Baptist, the preaching has been the message of the gospel of the kingdom. That means if you were to open your Bible and find the place where Matthew begins “**The book of the generation of Jesus Christ**” and place everything to the Revelation of Jesus Christ’s final “**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**” between your hands, what you would have in your hands is the Word of the Lord concerning the kingdom of God. That’s right. The ENTIRE New Testament must be understood as kingdom doctrine and preaching. Any page and passage of the scriptures given there are best understood as a part of the preaching of the kingdom that started with John, was continued by Christ, and was carried on by the apostles and men who wrote the New Testament by the inspiration of the Spirit.

That’s right. The ENTIRE New Testament must be understood as kingdom doctrine and preaching.

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

Chapter 1 - Until John

That is the glad tidings we are sent to preach to the world as well. Now, that may seem simple, and it is. But it is also profound. Typical of our Lord, He speaks most profoundly while keeping things simple for us.

This being the case, whenever you read in the New Testament, no matter where you turn and where you read to obtain your study (or sermon) material, the entire context of the body of this preaching of the Word concerns the Kingdom of God. This will become more evident in powerful ways as we progress, but it is important to understand the demarcation Christ makes with these words and the way they speak to us by way of the New Covenant.

Matthew 11:13 - “The law and the prophets were UNTIL JOHN....”

We will also see that this Word sent from God to be preached since the time of John is not meant to imply the text of Old Testament scripture was made obsolete. As we know those texts can be and were used to expound the gospel of the kingdom and the things concerning Jesus Christ very well. What is being declared is that the MESSAGE being preached was changed along with a change in law, ordinances, and doctrine and we will look at the reasons why as we go along. So, we see that the kingdom preaching that began first with John and was preached by Christ, is the same gospel preaching that was continued through the New Testament:

Acts 8:12 - “But when they believed Philip PREACHING THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Chapter 1 - Until John

Acts 19:8 - “And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and PERSUADING THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

Acts 20:25 - “And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, shall see my face no more.”

Acts 28:30 - 31 - “And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and teaching THOSE THINGS WHICH CONCERN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”

We also see from Christ, that it is the gospel that will be preached through the age to the end of the world.

Matthew 24:14 - “And this GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and THEN SHALL THE END COME.”

Our thoughts and study center around the question “If they were preaching the kingdom of God, what exactly were they saying about it?!” Was this THEOLOGY to them or was it DOCTRINE? Clearly, this preaching was a body of doctrine that they had received by faith.

Hebrews 11:1 - “Now faith is the substance of THINGS HOPED FOR, the evidence of things not seen.”

So, what is this gospel, these glad tidings, that they were preaching and declaring to the world and is it still our message today?

Chapter 1 - Until John

Matthew 9:35 - “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

Chapter 2 – Approaching the Study of the Kingdom

Again, before getting into “what is the kingdom?” in all its detail, let’s continue to lay some important groundwork. The next thing I am about to share with you seems easy enough but is immensely important. More important than finding what your favorite commentators wrote about what the kingdom is. There is another group of men besides our more modern commentators and seminary professors that taught the things of the kingdom of God with great clarity and certainty! Likely, far more certainty, and just as importantly accuracy, than any commentator, expositor, preacher, or evangelist who has lived ever since. These men were uniquely equipped by Christ for the important work of establishing the body of doctrine that pertained to the New Covenant and the message declaring the things of the kingdom of God after His ascension. Those men were the holy apostles and men of God that were used by the Holy Spirit to give us our New Testament scripture.

The reason this is so meaningful is that many try to learn of the kingdom by going directly to the teachings of Christ in the gospel accounts, which leads to MANY varied interpretations and applications of scripture, many of which are neither helpful nor correct. And not surprisingly so, because even the apostles **THEMSELVES** did not understand the teaching and preaching they were hearing from Jesus concerning all these things until **AFTER** they received the Holy Ghost and were taught of the Spirit after Christ’s ascension.

For this reason, since we have seen that the entire New Testament concerns the preaching of the kingdom of

Chapter 2 - Approaching the Study of the Kingdom

God, I propose that we start, not in the gospel accounts where many parables and truths lie concerning the kingdom, but start by observing how the apostles taught the things of the kingdom of God in the other books of the New Testament. In those places where the teaching they were committing to writing was by the Holy Spirit who taught them the truth of these things AFTER the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. If you are willing to accept this methodology, you will find their Word far more illuminating and faith-building than many commentaries on the subject.

John 17:20 - “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which SHALL BELIEVE on me THROUGH THEIR WORD;”

We see Christ speak of the teaching that the Holy Spirit would provide his apostles after His departure, and we realize that the understanding they had when these epistles were written, is far beyond what they grasped from Christ during His earthly ministry.

John 16:12 - 13 - “I have yet many things to say unto you, but YE CANNOT BEAR THEM NOW. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you THINGS TO COME.”

In this passage we notice that Christ Himself taught the disciples that there were things he was going to say unto them, but they were not yet able to bear them. He then said He would teach them these things further when the Holy Spirit was come to dwell in them. So, consequently, when we read epistles and letters that were written, we are receiving the benefit of the same, more complete

Chapter 2 - Approaching the Study of the Kingdom

understanding that was given by the Spirit of God regarding the teachings of the kingdom.

This simple approach will be a helpful guide to us in our study but is often overlooked by those seeking knowledge in these things. I am grateful to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that He both gave the Spirit to teach them and has given us the same Spirit to teach us!

Many times, scripture records for us that the disciples failed to understand things correctly while Christ was with them. This is evident in several passages, and gives hope to us that, for those that love Him, Christ is leading us on all the while we do not fully grasp everything He has spoken! But by faith, we believe His Word of promise!

Luke 9:45 - “But they UNDERSTOOD NOT this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.”

John 10:6 - “This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they UNDERSTOOD NOT what things they were which he spake unto them.”

John 12:16 - “These things UNDERSTOOD NOT his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.”

Now we will begin here to look at just one of the passages from the New Testament that lie outside of the gospel teachings of Christ found in the accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to see what kind of help it may be to us. One of

the things that becomes immediately obvious to us, is that the primary references to the kingdom in their preaching speaks of a FUTURE “entering in”.

One of the things that becomes immediately obvious to us, is that the primary references to the kingdom in their preaching speaks of a FUTURE “entering in”.

Acts 14:21 - 22 - “And when they had preached THE GOSPEL to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that WE MUST THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

So, in this we see that the kingdom of God was being preached as something future to these folk’s time that they had not yet entered, but that they were left a promise of being able to “enter” which was key to their continuing in the faith. Further, the trials of faith and tribulations of life were to be borne and endured with a view to this entrance being obtained.

This may seem a small detail at first, and you may already whole-heartedly agree, but we will in time see how big a difference this makes in our preaching and application. So, if the teaching of the New Testament apostles

Chapter 2 - Approaching the Study of the Kingdom

presents the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom as something yet future to them, it is at least helpful to know that. We can also see from Luke, who spent a lot of time with Paul and had heard all of the doctrine concerning the kingdom of God, the same consistent doctrine in his gospel account as well:

Luke 19:11 - “And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because THEY THOUGHT THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHOULD IMMEDIATELY APPEAR.”

So, we have Luke sharing with us by the Spirit the thoughts of some at the time who believed the kingdom would arrive immediately - but Luke as he is writing this knows full well the doctrine of the kingdom and that the time for its appearing was not at that time. Which is what is being said. Later in his account, we have in the Olivet Discourse of chapter 21:

Luke 21:31 - “So likewise ye, WHEN ye see these things come to pass, know ye that THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NIGH AT HAND.”

We see again that this account, found in the Olivet discourse, places the arrival of the kingdom with the arrival of its' King, at the return of the great tribulation. The scriptures often speak synonymously of a Kingdom and its' King, which is true of the kingdom of God as well. Unique to this kingdom is the additional fact that the King is also synonymous for the Word of God, which will not be lost on us in our study.

Chapter 2 - Approaching the Study of the Kingdom

Many today teach a “kingdom now” theology, so it may be useful to see how our teaching squares with that of the true “church fathers”.

As a side note, I hesitate to use the term “church fathers”, of course, due to the Word spoken by Christ that we should **“call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.”**, but use it only to correct the popular idea that if there are any “fathers”, it is certainly Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude whom the Holy Spirit used to pen the New Testament, and not any of the other men we commonly hear of in that context or in your “patristics” class at seminary.

In any case, I digress and return to the matter at hand. Without going into a full dissertation at this time on the number of many references to the kingdom of God in the New Testament after the sending of the Holy Spirit, suffice it to say as a matter of study, we are well served to begin in those places where more Light has been given than vice versa.

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

Mark 1:14 - “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD,”

A third principle for our study concerning the kingdom of God comes when we consider the words of Christ concerning what the author of Hebrews declares the “times of reformation”. It serves us well to consider what that meant for the worshippers of God who lived through that reformation. A time when the glorious law of God, given by the grace of God, by the mediator Moses, was to be done away, as Paul says, as that which remaineth was to overshadow it by reason of the glory that excelleth!

2 Corinthians 3:11 - “For if that which is DONE AWAY was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.”

Why was it to be done away? Was the Word of God being altered? Was the law to be deposed? God forbid! So, what was it that occurred then?

Hebrews 9:9 - 10 - “The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was NOT YET made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was A FIGURE for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION.”

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

There is much discussion and difficulty for many regarding this reformation to this very day. Each New testament author by the Holy Spirit waged war on the fronts of error with all these same things in their day, and they continue with us still. It would be folly, I expect, to attempt to slay those arguments here, but there is an important aspect to this that we need to comprehend in our study of the kingdom.

That aspect concerns the exercise of our faith in this age of the gospel as it is contrasted to the exercise of those who had the same faith in the Word of Truth in previous ages. In ages when these things of the kingdom were still mysteries and the preaching of them not fully known unto the sons of men as they have now been manifested by the knowledge of God in His Son Jesus Christ and by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The visible exercise of faith, and the body of doctrine that accompanied it, had long resembled the very same thing for true worshippers of God, and then was reformed in the fulness of times. If you think about it, there were some very important aspects to faith and worship that had marked God's servants for millennia!

Since Calvary and the cross, we no longer erect altars, prepare sacrifices, participate in ceremonial cleansings, and many other such ordinances that were given in times past. While this seems normal to us, it was radical for those believers living at the time this doctrine was changed. The book of Hebrews was entirely written to help clarify the meaning of the work of Christ at Calvary for believing Jews of the time. All through the Old Testament there were altars involved in worship of the true God. In the New Testament, the altar spoken of is in Heaven. This **MUST** be understood. Not purely for theological reasons, but for practical and doctrinal reasons as well.

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

Hebrews 10:1 -
“For the law having **A**
SHADOW **OF**
GOOD THINGS TO
COME, and not the
very image of the things,
can never with those
sacrifices which they of-
fered year by year con-
tinually make the com-
ers thereunto perfect.”

If you would have asked anyone alive in those times, “where is the altar?”, or “where is the temple?”, or “what is necessary to become a member of the congregation”, or “what sacrifice is required to atone for sin?”, what kind of answers would you expect? My guess is that we could answer with one word - fleshly. The answers you would get might resemble answers we often give in the times in which we live when asked of our doctrine and ordinances. This is what we need to know about the Old Covenant. **ALL** of it was accomplished **IN THE FLESH** during that time, by the hands of men, dwelling in bodies of clay, and encompassed with the infirmity of their sins. In fact, the Old Covenant was even ratified by means of fleshly things, not eternal things. It was performed by a man, Moses, using blood of animals to sprinkle the man-made tabernacle and man-made vessels of ministry. None of these fleshly things held any power, righteousness, or eternal value.

Since Calvary and the cross, we no longer erect altars, prepare sacrifices, participate in ceremonial cleansings, and many other such ordinances that were given in times past. While this seems normal to us, it was radical for those believers living at the time this doctrine was changed.

Hebrews 9:19 - 23 - “For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he

took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the **PATTERNS OF THINGS IN THE HEAVENS** should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”

So, these things were not of eternal value, but neither were they unimportant. They had been ordained by God for a purpose. This body of doctrine they held was given by God, and they were to be exercised in it. Those who held this doctrine in faith understood more than others. In time, most eventually came to see this body of doctrine simply as a means to establish their own righteousness.

Romans 10:3 – “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

The truth is, there was no righteousness in it for them by **THE DOING** of those things – which is good for us to remember. Neither were they considered faithful or blameless if they neglected these things as unimportant. Christ continually warns the Old Testament congregation for allowing his ordinances to fall into neglect and for casting His commandments behind their back. We see the testimony of scripture concerning Zacharias and Elizabeth, who were the parents of John the Baptist:

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

Luke 1:6 - “And they were both RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD, walking in ALL THE COMMANDMENTS AND ORDINANCES OF THE LORD BLAMELESS.”

These fleshly things could not justify, but neither could they be neglected. There is a reason for this we must understand in our time. The members of the congregation of that time were instructed in the doctrine of Christ before He came, to serve as a **SHADOW** and **EXAMPLE** of what **HE** would fulfill upon His **ARRIVAL** - as the Lamb of God. And once He fulfilled His Word, it was complete and eternal.

This body of doctrine kept them exercised in the practice of looking forward to the coming of the **Just One**, who would by His own power **FULFILL** all the types that had been committed to them in the covenant God made with them. They were to continue to observe them, faithfully executing their duty to their God, to keep the doctrine and the **HOPE** of the **PROMISE** alive throughout their generations. The priests who served on Earth, were simply shadows of the true heavenly things yet to come.

Hebrews 8:4 - 5 - “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the **EXAMPLE and **SHADOW** of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things **ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN** shewed to thee in the mount.”**

These earthly things were given as patterns of things that were true and eternal. When we see Christ saying that the law and prophets were **UNTIL JOHN**, we understand

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

that John was sent to announce the arrival of the Anointed One who would FULFILL all the types that had been being observed for centuries! Which is why they were no longer to be PREACHED in the same way after He had come. Fulfillment had come. The Lamb had come. Reformation had come. It was time to LOOK AHEAD.

Matthew 5:17 - 18 - “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but TO FULFIL. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

It is the work of God that has power, not the work of men. Now that Christ had come to fulfil the shadows contained in the Old Covenant, the Word spoken and confirmed by the hands of an earthly mediator was to be fulfilled and done away having been rendered inoperable by the One who fulfilled it, and the New Covenant, made not after the things of the flesh such as the blood of bulls and goats and men serving as priests, was to be ushered in to the glory of God our Savior!

Hebrews 8:13 - “In that he saith, A NEW covenant, HE hath MADE THE FIRST OLD. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is READY TO VANISH AWAY.”

In other words, to put a finer point on it, once the fulfillment of the Word of God that was given by way of the Old Covenant came, another Word began to be spoken. The Word of the Lord sent to be preached by John and Jesus Christ. The Word of the gospel. The gospel of the Kingdom. The Word of God is always sent to people declaring truth concerning things which are past and

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

perfectly accurate regarding forward looking and prophetic information.

Those who lived on the earth during the times of the former things, lived lives that characterized a faith in the God who commanded them to keep His testimony. That great cloud of witnesses now speaks to us from the pages of scripture. Have WE kept His testimony? These men and women who believed what God had revealed to them concerning their coming deliverer serve as witnesses and examples for us. Although we live in a different age and preach a gospel that was still mysterious to them, their example of faith remains, and they, being dead, still speak to us today.

Hebrews 11:4 - “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.”

We no longer need to erect an altar, because that good thing has come that fulfilled it. We no longer need to circumcise our newborn males on the eighth day because that circumcision made without hands, the good thing foreshadowed to come, has come and fulfilled the type. We no longer observe Passover because that good thing prepared for us, the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, **“now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” - Hebrews 9:26.**

No more of those shadows. No more patterns of things pertaining to the sacrifice of the Lamb. Everything that was given as a shadow in the Old Covenant has now been done away in Christ, and we, upon whom the ends of the world are come, have received NEW things! But if the

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

things observed in the flesh before the time of reformation were only shadows, what of the things now observed in the flesh by those awaiting the fulfillment of His Word and Promise concerning the “times of refreshing” and the “restitution of all things”?

Acts 3:19 – 21 – “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the **TIMES OF REFRESHING shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive UNTIL the **TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”**

We gather together “unto Christ” for services as a matter of ordinance and commandment. Could that be a shadow of things to come? Certainly, if we are commanded under this New Covenant to observe such fleshly things, they must be a shadow of good things to come!

Matthew 18:20 – “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Hebrews 10:23 – 27 – “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: **NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”**

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

2 Thessalonian 2:1 - “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by OUR GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM,”

So, we gather unto Him as a shadow of the good thing we know will come by faith. This ordinance of New Testament doctrine given to the saints is intended to prophesy unto men on earth of the hope we have through faith in His promised gathering of ourselves unto Him – just like our Old Covenant brethren who were of the household of faith.

What about the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s supper? Are they shadows as well?

1 Corinthians 11:26 - “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye DO SHEW the Lord’s death TILL he come.”

1 Corinthians 15:29 - “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?”

If Christ commanded us to observe the ordinance, it MUST have a heavenly counterpart in Him to be fulfilled.

i.e. why do we do these things in the flesh if there is not a heavenly counterpart that it foreshadows? That would make the exercise purely of the flesh with no doctrinal value – not the way of our Lord. Baptism holds no meaning or purpose as an ordinance unless it conveys a corresponding truth of the faith we profess – which is the apostle’s point in that verse. If Christ commanded us to observe the ordinance, it MUST have a heavenly counterpart in Him to be fulfilled.

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

It would seem clear the ordinances that are given as a part of the body of doctrine for us under the New Covenant, are intended for the same express purpose as those ordinances given under the old – to serve as **SHADOWS** of the good things to come – shadows of the Word believed in faith. To preserve the doctrine, the faith, the hope, the promises through our adherence to living out the shadows of what we claim and expect to happen in the future by faith – just like saints of old.

We know our works are not for righteousness. Righteousness is only imputed to men by faith and is by no other means available. What then is the body of doctrine we follow in the life that we now live in the flesh?

1 Corinthians 11:2 – “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and KEEP THE ORDINANCES, AS I DELIVERED THEM to you.”

It is the same shadow of good things to come, emanating from a heart of faith in what has been promised by the Word of the Lord, that serves to light the way for others and to give occasion for them to ask of the hope that is in us.

1 Peter 3:15 – “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the HOPE that is in you with meekness and fear:”

As we move on from this chapter, continue to think of the implications of this in your life. In your church. In your family. We will examine this in a little more detail later as well. The lives we have been given to live in the flesh, have no righteousness through their own actions, but are to serve as shadows of the good things we

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

profess and expect to come by faith. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, “Thy kingdom come”, and they were also told they were being sent out as sheep among wolves. It seems that living a life that foreshadows the reality of the kingdom of God’s arrival on earth feels a little bit vulnerable. And rightfully so. That’s why we are admonished to walk by faith.

Titus 2:9 – 13 – “Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; THAT THEY MAY ADORN THE DOCTRINE OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR IN ALL THINGS. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

In other words, our walk (visible, earthly life) should reflect the doctrine of the faith we profess (invisible things of the heart). This is the thrust of all the teaching in the New Testament. Whether it is that men are to have short hair and women should have long hair, or regarding the appropriate dress code for believers, all the way to the prohibition on women teaching in the assembly, men loving their wives, children obeying their parents, and on down the list, all of these carnal ordinances have a heavenly counterpart they are intended to uphold and instruct men unto. That is the true form of creation on earth. To declare the glory of God. Especially in the churches where we are called to uphold these truths as a witness:

Chapter 3 - A Shadow of Things to Come

1 Timothy 3:15 - “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the HOUSE OF GOD, which is THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, the pillar and ground of the TRUTH.”

These are the shadows that people can see as a prophetic witness of what we profess and hold to be true in faith. There is coming a time when these shadows will be done away, and the true things known face to face.

1 Corinthians 13:9 - 12 - “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But WHEN THAT which is PERFECT IS COME, then THAT which is IN PART shall be DONE AWAY. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

I am sure it will be a real “aha” moment for us all when we stand in His presence and have a stark realization at the offenses we committed in the flesh while misconstruing the heavenly things of which we were instructed to be shadows and examples. Even more reason to live in humility now and seek Him at the throne of grace.

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

A fourth principle we will now lay down, which needs to be understood as well concerning the preaching of the kingdom. That principle deals with the **FACT** that every time God has sent man His Word, it contains information regarding promises of the future. This helps immensely in correctly understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ. You may cringe just a little at this next statement, but fully consider what the testimony of scripture is on this point – the faith the Bible speaks of is more than assent to what already is done in the past, it **REQUIRES** belief in a future not yet seen. Stick with me, and let's walk through this principle as well, and we will continue to see why the kingdom began to be preached since the time of John.

Revelation 19:10 - “...for THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.”

Let's look at some simple examples that will help us realize how the Lord works with man by His Word. This also will reinforce and build on our previous work in the chapter *Until John*. Consider this: Adam and Eve had a prophetic Word given to them.

Genesis 2:17 - “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof THOU SHALT surely die.”

It wasn't long before man experienced the reality of the Word of the Lord. In spite of the serpent's ability to persuade men to adopt a theology of uncertainty as to whether it was true, and in spite of Eve's own ideas as to whether it was complete, ultimately the doctrine of the Word of the Lord proved to be exactly true. The True

and Faithful witness is what the scripture says of the Word of God. After they sinned and experienced the reality of the prophetic Word being fulfilled in the fullness of time, the Word of the Lord came to them again, and they were required to accept this Word by FAITH.

The fulfilled Word previously given and established forever no longer was sufficient for man if he was to have HOPE and FAITH – because FAITH is the sub-stance of things HOPED for.

Genesis 3:15 – “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; IT SHALL bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

The fulfilled Word previously given and established forever no longer was sufficient for man if he was to have HOPE and FAITH – because FAITH is the substance of things HOPED for. God, in His infinite wisdom, had already before the foundation of the world, provided a means to justify fallen man. By faith. Because it is impossible to please God without faith or be justified apart from it, continuing to preach only what was already fulfilled was not enough if man was to be justified by FAITH. It was necessary that the fulfilled Word remain a part of the testimony, because the work of God continues to be built upon what he has already fulfilled and done, and without the knowledge of the past Word fulfilled, man couldn't understand the context of the Word spoken to him “throughout his generations”. Knowing that the Word of the Lord has been fulfilled in the past is imperative to understand and build our confidence in His testimony but is not

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

adequate for producing the faith that God requires to be justified in His sight.

We know that Abel accepted this new Word of the Lord to man, a message of a coming redeemer, by faith, but Cain did not. From the very beginning of time, God has declared Himself to man in ways that show He is the end from the beginning. This is the thrust of the gospel we preach, and the Word of the Lord spoken to man throughout the ages.

Noah then also received a prophetic Word concerning things to come, and he had faith in the Word spoken.

Genesis 6:13 - "And God said unto Noah, THE END OF ALL FLESH IS COME before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I WILL DESTROY THEM WITH THE EARTH."

The book of Hebrews, when examining the faith that Noah had, makes it clear he received a prophetic testimony regarding things not yet seen.

Hebrews 11:7 - "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things NOT SEEN AS YET, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became HEIR of the righteousness which is BY FAITH."

Abraham similarly received a Word of things yet future and inconceivable to the natural mind when the gospel was preached to him:

Genesis 26:4 - "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;"

Galatians 3:8 - "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

The very faith that Abraham had towards God and by which he became the "father of us all", was counted to him for righteousness as a result of his faith in the future God had promised him as we see in Genesis 15:

Genesis 15:5 - 6 - "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, SO SHALL THY SEED BE. And he BELIEVED in the LORD; and he COUNTED IT TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

So, Abraham heard the testimony of God concerning things to come, and believed His Word concerning those things.

Rahab also had heard what the Lord had done, which built her confidence in His testimony concerning things to come. By this means, she had FAITH towards God and is listed by James as an example of someone whose faith was exemplary.

Joshua 2:9 - 10 - "And she said unto the men, I KNOW THAT THE LORD HATH GIVEN YOU THE LAND, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. FOR WE HAVE HEARD how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that

were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed."

So, Rahab had heard what the Lord HAD DONE, and her confidence in the Word of the Lord concerning things to come became certain - knowing that the Lord would give the nation of Israel the land. The king of Jericho and all the other inhabitants resisted the revelation of this Word, even though they had heard it too, and their HOPE was that God's Word concerning those things wouldn't come true. Bad bet to make... as history now shows. In fact, all the inhabitants of the land believed the testimony of what the Lord had done in the past but perished as unbelievers as the book of Hebrews shows. So, believing a past record of God's fulfilled Word, is not saving faith.

Rahab's FAITH wasn't in KNOWING things that were FULFILLED. Faith was KNOWING things that hadn't even happened yet - which is her testimony. The knowledge of what was done gave her confidence in the testimony of Christ concerning what was to come - that confidence in the things not yet seen is FAITH. The knowledge of and assent to the fulfilled Word is NOT faith - it is knowledge. Wisdom is the desired result of gaining true knowledge and speaks to our FAITH.

Ecclesiastes 7:12 - "the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it."

Knowledge doesn't give life but is necessary to attain wisdom - which does give life. Knowing what God has fulfilled in the past is knowledge. It is necessary, but without a confidence in things not yet seen, it is not faith. The purpose of knowledge is to build faith. Scribes who are

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven must understand this principle:

Matthew 13:52 - "Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

The good treasures we bring forth from the heart of faith concern things that are old and new. This pertains to the actual covenants themselves as Paul used in His epistles but is a principle at work all through God's Word. The old things that are fulfilled give knowledge that builds confidence in the promises to come - that's wisdom. Let's look at some more examples. Even the Word of God to the people of Nineveh was a prophetic Word as well:

Jonah 3:4 - "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, YET FORTY DAYS, and Nineveh SHALL BE overthrown."

The men of Nineveh had faith like Abraham:

Jonah 3:5 - "So the people of Nineveh BELIEVED GOD..."

Of course, the righteousness which is by faith is imputed to those who believe God. This work of God is by the "Law of Faith", as Paul teaches, which is why the men of Nineveh are mentioned by the Lord in the resurrection among those justified by faith.

Matthew 12:41 - "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

The Word of the Lord to man has ALWAYS been prophetic, spoken concerning things to come, and declares the things that have not yet happened before they come to pass, so that when they do come to pass, we may believe the promises He has given that are yet unfulfilled.

The ability to declare the future before it comes to pass has been and is the hallmark of God's reputation among men from the beginning of time

John 13:19 -
“Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.”

So, Christ shared some things that they would see fulfilled in the short term so that they would believe His testimony concerning all that He spoke when they saw those things fulfilled. This prophecy in John 13 had to do with Judas betrayal of Him to His death, which is testimony given by Christ before it happened. When the apostles later saw this come to pass, it was to further build their faith concerning everything else Christ spoke concerning things to come. It is this quality to the Word of the Lord that God uses to set apart His Word from all other would be gods, religions, and “holy” books in the world. It also sets Christ apart distinctly as He spoke many things that have already happened and others that have yet to come. He was the only prophet ever to do this that never said “Thus saith the Lord” or “Hear ye the Word of the Lord” for, well, obvious reasons. He IS the Lord.

The ability to declare the future before it comes to pass has been and is the hallmark of God's reputation among men from the beginning of time when He told

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

Adam and Eve what would happen in the day they ate of the tree that was forbidden them, and the Lord Himself challenges anyone else to compete in this arena of the future with Him.

Isaiah 41:21 – 23 – “Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or DECLARE US THINGS FOR TO COME. Shew the things THAT ARE TO COME HEREAFTER, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.”

Isaiah 46:10 – “DECLARING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING, and from ancient times the THINGS THAT ARE NOT YET DONE, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:”

This challenge issued by God continues to separate the true Christian faith in the Lord Jesus Christ from all other religions in the earth – even from false Christianity. All other hopes (expectations of the future) that are outside of those spoken by God in His Word, will be disappointed by the counsel of God.

Proverbs 10:28 – “The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.”

Because of this, we can have a strong faith rooted deeply in God rather than the superstitious faith that has become so rampant in these last days. Our faith is not like any other so-called “faith” in the world today, for it is the faith settled upon the True and Faithful Witness, the Word of God, the very testimony of Jesus Christ. The same

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

Word of Testimony that has continually through history declared things before they have happened. All Christians today need to understand this! Many are being swept from the foundation of faith and many of our youth eternally lost because they haven't understood **THE FAITH** and have only heard do's and don'ts taught to them from the pages of scripture, or have heard an abstract form of gospel such as "inviting Jesus into your heart". The "faith" of many today is not rooted in what God said, it is a superstition that believes God will do for me if I do for Him, or is a fatalistic version of faith that teaches men that God is sovereign so it matters little what we do because He is doing everything, or it is simply knowledge of the past that falls short of true faith. The fact is, God will do what He has said, which involves blessing and cursing. Blessings for those who receive His testimony, and curses for those who refuse it.

I know there are some that also see prophecy as some kind of "sub-part" of scripture, and they avoid getting "tangled up in all that stuff". Let's be clear. It is impossible to preach the gospel, or believe it with scriptural faith, without the prophetic Word of the Lord. The entire gospel message for man today requires us to believe in a version of the future we have never seen for ourselves. Why should people believe it? What cause can you give to men that would solicit a serious consideration? Fulfilled prophecy is the hallmark of God's Word and authenticates His message. If we don't have a prophetic message from the Lord to preach to people today regarding the future, we don't have the gospel.

Romans 4:17 - "(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and CALLETH

THOSE THINGS WHICH BE NOT AS THOUGH THEY WERE."

I intend to be careful here, as it is my desire to help and not hinder but let me try to show how this important aspect of God's Word applies to the gospel in our age. Just as Adam and Eve's knowledge of the fulfilled Word of God led to their faith of the promise of a redeemer, so too our faith in the GOSPEL must hinge on our knowledge of the fulfilled Word of God concerning the Redeemer that came. The knowledge itself is not a substitute for FAITH.

"But", you say, "the gospel is the 'death, burial, and resurrection of Christ according to the scriptures' and all that is past." Yes, Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected now to live forever, Amen! This is the Word of the Lord that has now been completed and fulfilled for all eternity. It's glory and wonder will stand throughout the ages as perfect testimony to the love of God, the abundance and richness of His grace, and the enduring quality of His mercy. The power of the blood of Christ given by the sacrifice of Himself on Calvary provided an eternal wellspring of life-giving, sin-atoning, man-redeeming blood to the praise of His matchless grace! However, the gospel Christ sent His apostles to preach after His resurrection did not start and finish with only what was already done. The things that are done are necessary to be known and understood in order to have FAITH in what is promised!

1 Corinthians 15:14 - "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

That is why the faith spoken of throughout the New Testament speaks of His PROMISE and our HOPE, not only what is already done. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus gives witness and testimony that all the other

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

promises He spoke are to be fulfilled in the same way the knowledge of what the Lord had done for the children of Israel at the Red Sea produced faith in Rahab concerning what the Lord said he was going to do! The promise of the sending of the Holy Spirit was the most immediate to be fulfilled. Now, we **KNOW** because of His resurrection, which He also promised, that **ALL** the other promises He made can be expected. To believe these promises requires **FAITH**, just like Abel, Noah, Abraham, the Ninevites, and every other saint who is justified by faith that is in Christ (The Word), the true and faithful witness.

Acts 2:39 - “For the **PROMISE** is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

Ephesians 3:6 - “That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his **PROMISE** in Christ by the gospel:”

Hebrews 9:15 - “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive **THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL INHERITANCE.**”

Adam and Eve weren't told, “OK, so now you know I was truthful about the death that would come if you ate of the tree, so keep preaching to your children to believe that is why things are as bad as they are”. That gives no hope, promise, and most importantly no opportunity for faith. They were given another Word that was to be proclaimed and would give opportunity for **FAITH**. A Word that spoke of things that could be **HOPED** for. A Word concerning things **NOT YET SEEN**. A Word concerning **THINGS TO COME**.

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

We see from the definition of faith in Hebrews 11 that this knowledge, belief, and confidence in the FUTURE is a REQUIREMENT of true faith:

Faith is rooted in a holy expectation we have from God based on what HE SAID he would do, not what we WANT Him to do

Hebrews 11:1 -

“Now faith is the substance of things HOPED FOR, the evidence of things not seen.”

As Paul shares in Romans 8 concerning these promises and this hope:

Romans 8:24 - 25 - “For WE ARE SAVED BY HOPE: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But IF WE HOPE FOR THAT WE SEE NOT, then do we with patience wait for it.”

So, faith is the substance of things HOPED FOR. Faith is rooted in a holy expectation we have from God based on what HE SAID he would do, not what we WANT Him to do - sorry, name-it-and-claim-it-folks. There is no blab-it-and-grab-it faith in scripture. Faith is trusting what the Word of the Lord declares to be. That's how scriptural faith works.

The gospel message conveys no meaning to man unless taught as a means of hope with a look to the future. People will not repent and believe, or even know HOW to have Biblical FAITH for that matter, if the sum total of the gospel we preach falls short of prophecy. The place most commonly used to provide the definition of the gospel comes from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

1 Corinthians 15:1 - 4 - **“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you THE GOSPEL which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”**

You may already realize that the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians is one of the most extensive texts given in scripture on the RESURRECTION, which is what Paul is speaking to. The resurrection is one of the great hopes that we have in Christ because of His promises. And there is another scriptural promise that teaches us of God's purpose in the promise of resurrection. We will look at that a little later, but it is important to realize that everything He does is full of purpose.

Paul said he delivered unto them “first of all”, and proceeds to list the things that are DONE in Christ, which seems appropriate as it provides the knowledge necessary to understand how we got to this point in time and why we can now expect the rest of His promise to be fulfilled. In other words, all of the WORK necessary to make a resurrection of the “just” possible and to provide the atonement necessary for sins and to make us “fit” for the inheritance that has been promised, all of this WORK was done on Calvary's cross! It was the VERY REASON he came! He emphatically cried with a loud voice “It is finished”! Praise God that He paid it all in full that we might go free! Paul then goes on through the chapter to discuss all the things in the future that they had believed while he was present with them teaching them the gospel. He even goes so far

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

as to say if there is nothing for us in the gospel that speaks to the future, it is of little comfort or use.

1 Corinthians 15:19 - "If in THIS LIFE ONLY we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

In other words, there must be a future for God's people and that future is declared by the gospel Paul preached. He then says, later in the same chapter, in light of all these things which are true about Christ that are fulfilled, and all the hope we have concerning things which are to come:

1 Corinthians 15:49 - 50 - "And AS WE HAVE borne the image of the earthy, WE SHALL ALSO bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood CANNOT INHERIT the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

Now, you may not appreciate that verse as much right now as I expect you might by the time you finish this book and go back and read it, but it is immensely encouraging and faith-building! Remember, all New Testament preaching concerns the kingdom. Paul here makes this evident by tying in the doctrine of the things pertaining to Jesus Christ and the resurrection, to the kingdom and the inheritance of the saints - yes, spoken of as future here. Once we are clean delivered from the image of the earthy (Adam), and are made like unto Him after the image of the heavenly (Christ), we will be fit for our inheritance - seems like there's a verse about that as well, but we'll leave it for.....the future.

God requires faith in those who would be reconciled to Him. Faith is more than consenting to history, or even acknowledging the facts of Jesus Christ's identity as

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

the Son of God, it is believing in God for things spoken concerning the future but not yet seen! As such, our gospel must speak accordingly to the accuracy of the past as well as the promise of the future. The Law that had been preached “until John” was the prophetic message and doctrine for that age, looking forward to the coming Messiah, who would redeem His people and save them from their sins. That prophetic Word now fulfilled by Jesus Christ, the message and doctrine of God's Word being preached for this age is the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Steven pleaded with the leaders of the Jewish religion in His day regarding this very work of God – the FULFILLMENT of His Word. He told them:

Acts 7:51 - “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

They had refused the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the fulfillment of God's promise by His Son Jesus Christ – just like their fathers resisted the fulfillment of His promise to visit them in Egypt and deliver them by Moses, which is Steven's point. They were insisting on clinging to the old message and refusing the testimony of the Spirit concerning the fulfillment of that Word, which destroys their opportunity for faith, seeing that the old Word is completed and fulfilled. Just as we can see with Adam and Eve. Once the fulfillment has come, it must be acknowledged and a new Word received by faith. Accordingly, God has ALWAYS given another Word of promise to give men hope and opportunity for faith. This is why when Christ came to FULFILL the law, the message God decreed to be preached from the time of John forward is the message of His coming Kingdom – so that men might

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

believe His testimony and have faith towards Him concerning things to come. The Law now fulfilled, could no longer function as a means of faith towards God – a change in preaching was necessary.

This helps us understand what God requires of man and why the Law of Moses ceased to function among the household of faith after the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus

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Christ. Because the Law was to prophetically picture Christ's work on Calvary – a faith building message for that time as they looked for the Lamb of God who was to take away their sin. With the sacrifice now complete, continuing to declare ONLY those things that picture what Christ did on Calvary is not sufficient for men to have FAITH – which is why the ordinances of the law are not for the household of faith today. The law still functions to bring us to Christ by showing us our sin and need of a Savior – i.e. it gives knowledge. But it is not of faith.

If you think about the Word of the Lord that was preached all through the New Testament, it was always preached to the Jew first. Stop and think about that. The apostle Paul would arrive at the synagogue, where they always instructed the Law of Moses from the texts of scripture, and He would proceed to preach the Word of the Lord, the gospel of the kingdom of God, to them from the same texts. God in His wisdom had already put the Word there, but the kingdom gospel couldn't be preached or fully known until God fulfilled the Law by His Son Jesus Christ

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

and made the gospel known by His Spirit! Until these mysteries had been revealed, they were sealed up to men. Now that is a perfect display of the wisdom of God!

We can see the disobedience and error of those who continued clinging to the old message beyond its fulfillment and the error of many that still are to this day.

Acts 7:51 - "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, YE DO ALWAYS RESIST THE HOLY GHOST: as your fathers did, so do ye."

1 Thessalonians 2:16 - "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for THE WRATH IS COME UPON THEM TO THE UTTERMOST."

We know in fact that this spirit of antichrist was working according to this persuasion among those looking for their messiah and refused the Son of God that was sent to them - Jesus Christ. This spirit is still working in those who refused the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah, Deliverer, and King.

1 John 4:3 - "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

Luke 19:14 - "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us."

The understanding of this principle is paramount to our faith today. Paul was teaching Timothy of these principles in 2 Timothy. His admonishment was to study the Word to shew himself approved.

2 Timothy 2:15 - “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING the word of truth.”

We all know the verse. But the apostle's caution to the young preacher is to **RIGHTLY DIVIDE** the Word of truth. To discern between fulfilled testimony and future promises (i.e. between knowledge and wisdom) certainly must have been part of the discernment Paul was teaching Timothy to practice and observe, because we see this exact caution in the text!

**2 Timothy 2:16 - 17 - “But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hy-
menaueus and Philetus; Who CONCERNING THE TRUTH HAVE ERRED, saying that the RESURREC-
TION IS PAST ALREADY; and overthrow the faith of some.”**

Teaching things that are future promises as having already happened leads to ungodliness and the overthrowing of faith. Imagine that! Think about the universal church doctrine (which attempts to bring the future assembly of saints in heaven to the earth in the present) and kingdom now doctrine (that teach the kingdom is here and sometimes worse, that we are building it). These being taught as already come and present has certainly destroyed faith and increased ungodliness. These things were given by God to preserve our hope and holy expectation of the appearing of His Son Jesus Christ - by FAITH. Many doctrines today that were given to men as promises have been incorrectly taught as having already come, which as we can now witness for ourselves, leads to more ungodliness as people fall away from the faith, hope, and expectation of

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

their fulfillment in Jesus Christ when He appears. The list of promises given as prophetic and future is not a short one. This hope we have in Christ by faith, is declared to men to keep them living in holy expectation of His appearing to the end:

- **Resurrection** - “And have HOPE toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a RESURRECTION of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” - Acts 24:15
- **General Assembly of Saints in Heaven** - “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” - Hebrews 12:24; “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;” - Revelation 7:9
- **Eternal Life** - “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.” - Titus 3:7
- **Salvation** - “...and for an helmet, the HOPE OF SALVATION.” - 1 Thessalonians 5:8; “For we are saved by HOPE: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” - Romans 8:24

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

- **The righteousness by faith** - “For we through the Spirit wait for the HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS by faith.” - Galatians 5:5
- **Grace** - “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and HOPE to the end for the GRACE that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;” - 1 Peter 1:13
- **Inheritance** - “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the PROMISE of eternal INHERITANCE.” - Hebrews 9:15
- **New Heaven & Earth** - “Nevertheless we, according to his PROMISE, look for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” - 2 Peter 3:13
- **The Kingdom of God** - “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.” - Acts 14:22; “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead AT HIS APPEARING AND HIS KINGDOM;” - 2 Timothy 4:1
- **Redemption of the body** - “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, WAITING FOR the adoption, to wit, the REDEMPTION of our body.” - Romans 8:23
- **Rest** - “Let us therefore fear, lest, a PROMISE being left us of entering into his REST, any of you should seem to come short of it.” - Hebrews 4:1

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

Obviously, we could go on, but you get the idea. So, refusing the Holy Spirit testimony of fulfilled scripture is not rightly dividing the Word. Also, testifying of things that haven't come yet as if they were already past puts us in the same category of teacher as Hymenaeus, whom Paul said needed to learn not to blaspheme... ouch.

1 Timothy 1:20 - “Of whom is HYMENAEUS and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may LEARN NOT TO BLASPHEME.”

Rightly dividing the Word involves believing His Word concerning what is past and having faith in His testimony concerning things not yet seen – and knowing the difference by revelation of God in Christ by the Spirit. Christ said a man shall live by EVERY word of God. We need the entire testimony.

Matthew 4:4 - “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Fulfilled testimony must be believed and builds confidence concerning things yet to come. Future testimony requires faith which is built upon the fulfilled testimony. For those who say things such as “believing the Biblical account of creation is not a salvation issue”, I respectfully and wholeheartedly disagree. How can we have FAITH towards God concerning things he has said He WILL DO by Christ in times to come, such as create a new heaven and earth, while at the same time denying that He did it the first time? Our knowledge and belief in what He did the first time, builds our confidence and gives faith concerning what He has promised to come. The fulfilled testimony and promises always work that way. Promise of resurrection? Well, Christ is already risen as the first fruits.

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

Promise to destroy this present world? He's done it before. Promise of redemption of our body? He made it the first time.

This is important particularly as it pertains to the preaching of the gospel and our hope of salvation. Our preaching is to declare the HOPE of salvation by the PROMISE of God in Christ for those who be-

Our preaching is to declare the HOPE of salvation by the PROMISE of God in Christ for those who believe the testimony of Christ.

lieve the testimony of Christ. As you can see in scripture, our salvation isn't received now and is nearly always spoken of in future tense, as a promise. When in the present tense, it is spoken by faith. This point will become clearer as you progress through this study. The question is are we partakers in that promise? Salvation is a promise to those who have faith in the Word and testimony of Jesus Christ - rightly divided. It is a reward to those who keep that hope and faith to the end and walk in the light of it as faithful stewards who are not ashamed, offended, or drawn away.

There are many today who view salvation as an answer to a prayer they prayed once, or something they did once, or any other type of event in their past. Those things may have happened in their life, but they must accompany a time when they first BELIEVED if they are to be saved. Believed what? That they would be saved if they asked to be? No. Salvation is a gift to those who believe the testimony of Christ. The truth is that salvation is future to us at this moment in time and is a promise to those who BELIEVE. If our faith doesn't endure to the end, we have believed in vain - so scripture says.

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

Hebrews 3:6 - "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, **IF WE HOLD FAST** the confidence and the rejoicing of the **HOPE FIRM UNTO THE END.**"

Hebrews 3:14 - "For we are made partakers of Christ, **IF WE HOLD** the beginning of our confidence **STEDFAST UNTO THE END;**"

Hebrews 6:11 - "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the **FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE UNTO THE END:**"

1 Peter 1:7 - 9 & 13 - "That the trial of your **FAITH**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory **AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST:** Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving **THE END OF YOUR FAITH**, even the **SALVATION** of your souls..... Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **HOPE TO THE END** for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

The victory we have over the world is our faith in Jesus Christ, and if we are overcome by the world through its' cares, pleasures, desires, and trials, then we are not born of God. The faith that Christ gives, **WILL** endure unto the end, which is the whole point. Salvation is a work of God from start to finish.

Romans 12:3 - "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

soberly, according as **GOD HATH DEALT** to every man **THE MEASURE OF FAITH.**"

John 1:12 - 13 - "But as many as RECEIVED HIM, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which WERE BORN, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but OF GOD."

Our part is to receive the Word of God, every Word of it, as a perfect and true record concerning things past and faith in things yet to come. Kind of strange that everyone wants to know the future yet rejects the testimony of Christ which has shown itself over time to be perfectly accurate at foretelling the future to man. Weird...

1 John 5:4 - "For whatsoever is born of God OVERCOMETH THE WORLD: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even OUR FAITH."

I point this out here because many profess and hold to a salvation experience in their past, while the hope and expectation of the fulfillment of God's promises continues to be completely absent in their life and walk. That is because of a failure to rightly divide the Word. Because they have not rightly understood the hope of salvation as a promise made to those who receive and hold to it by faith - to the end.

Romans 5:8 - 9 - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we SHALL BE SAVED from wrath through him."

This becomes clearer in the parables of Christ concerning the kingdom, which we will look at later. Salvation is not a certificate you receive so that you can

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

produce it at the needed time when you stand before Christ to authenticate your membership in heaven. He is a judge. Not a receptionist.

Matthew 25:32 - “And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:”

It is a Word of promise spoken to men and to be received by faith. It is a Word that through faith gives light unto men that they might know the way in which they should walk. It is not a fatalistic, new age “well, God is writing my story, so I just leave it up to him” kind of faith. It is a light that shows man the end of all things before they come to pass so that those who believe the testimony can walk accordingly - by faith. In other words, we are equipped by faith in His testimony to act in a way that wouldn't make sense if the end we expect (our hope) never came to pass.

Psalms 119:105 - “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

It is faith in these yet unseen promises that teaches men how they should live. It empowers and equips them to know what decisions to make, in which “way” they should walk, and every other area of life you could mention here is enlightened by this knowledge of what is to come.

Titus 2:11 - 12 - “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

So, the knowledge of His grace towards those who are in faith, instructs and teaches us how to live – it is not a “faith” that teaches us to abdicate our responsibility because God is sovereign. If we know marriage is a shadow of Christ and the church, why would we undermine and destroy the institution of it? If we know Christ has promised eternal life, why would we live in fear of death? If we know the flesh profits nothing, why would we glory in the flesh? If we know the earth is to be destroyed, why would we lay up treasure here? If we know He is coming in judgement, why would we not concern ourselves with pleasing Him? When the works of our flesh align with faith in the Word He has spoken, then we can see the evidence of the same faith working in us that was in the great cloud of witnesses in scripture who had a testimony that they pleased God.

Hebrews 11:39 - “And these all, having OBTAINED A GOOD REPORT THROUGH FAITH, received not the promise:”

Now the promise of His Spirit, which is to seal us, teach us, guide us, keep us in the way, and to preserve us by the power of God through faith in these promises, is one we are to receive now in this life. It is given as a down payment of all the other promises that are to be received by the grace of God in Christ Jesus when He appears to receive us.

2 Corinthians 1:22 - “Who hath also sealed us, and given THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT in our hearts.”

Rather than clinging to an experience in our past 20 years ago that never impacted the direction of our life or the appetites of our heart, we should be asking if we have

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

received the promise of the Spirit, since it is to be received now in this life. Without it, we are lost.

Romans 8:9 - “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT of Christ, HE IS NONE OF HIS.”

How do we get this spirit? We will look at that later, but it is a gift given to those who believe the testimony of God's Son.

Rather than clinging to an experience in our past 20 years ago that never impacted the direction of our life or the appetites of our heart, we should be asking if we have received the promise of the Spirit, since it is to be received now in this life. Without it, we are lost.

There are promises to be received now by faith in this life, and yet others give hope concerning things to come. Obviously, if the promises of God, intended to give men faith and hope, are taught to be already come when they haven't, then we have destroyed the message that is to give FAITH - which is the substance of things HOPED for.

Kingdom preaching was sent to be just that. A Word preached unto men that declares things to come. A Word that would give men hope through faith, as well as a Word of warning to all men concerning certain judgment by that man whom God hath appointed - that's what a king does. He makes laws and passes judgement.

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

For our faith to be scriptural faith of the kind that justifies men, it must be rooted in God's Word and must carry a **PROMISE** that gives **HOPE** for things not yet seen. That is why the Word of the Lord since the arrival of John has been the preaching of the kingdom of God. The **HOPE** that is in our hearts was given to us by the Holy Word of God through **FAITH**, which is why Christ is the author and the finisher of our **FAITH**. He has spoken the Word into our hearts and created a holy expectation in us, and He will be the one who finishes the work of bringing to pass all that fulfills the expectation of His Word.

Acts 2:39	For the PROMISE is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.
Acts 13:23	Of this man's seed hath God according to his PROMISE raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:
Acts 26:6 - 7	And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the PROMISE made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which HOPE'S sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.
Romans 4:13	For the PROMISE , that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.
Romans 4:14	For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the PROMISE made of none effect:

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

Romans 4:16	Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the PROMISE might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,
Romans 4:20	He staggered not at the PROMISE of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
Romans 9:8	That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the PROMISE are counted for the seed.
Galatians 3:14	That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the PROMISE of the Spirit through faith.
Galatians 3:17	And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the PROMISE of none effect.
Galatians 3:18	For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of PROMISE : but God gave it to Abraham by PROMISE .
Galatians 3:19	Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the PROMISE was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

Galatians 3:22	But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the PROMISE by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.
Galatians 3:29	And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the PROMISE .
Galatians 4:28	Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of PROMISE .
Ephesians 2:12	That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of PROMISE , having no hope, and without God in the world:
Ephesians 3:6	That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his PROMISE in Christ by the gospel:
1 Timothy 4:8	For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having PROMISE of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.
2 Timothy 1:1	Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the PROMISE of life which is in Christ Jesus,
Hebrews 4:1	Let us therefore fear, lest, a PROMISE being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.
Hebrews 6:17	Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of PROMISE the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

Chapter 4 - God's Word to Man

Hebrews 9:15	And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the PROMISE of eternal inheritance.
Hebrews 10:36	For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the PROMISE .
2 Peter 3:9	The Lord is not slack concerning his PROMISE , as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
2 Peter 3:13	Nevertheless we, according to his PROMISE , look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.
1 John 2:25	And this is the PROMISE that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

So, the gospel is a message of **PROMISE** that requires **FAITH** to believe and gives **HOPE** to men. And, with that, we are ready to go into our next chapter to look at one last principle of our study.

Chapter 5 – Understanding All Parables

Mark 4:13 - ” And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and HOW THEN WILL YE KNOW ALL PARABLES?”

When it comes to studying the parables that Christ taught concerning the kingdom of God, there is one additional principle given in scripture that is good for us to review. We certainly will not attempt to address all parables but will show this principle that may help in your own study.

Since the doctrine being taught was that of the kingdom from the time of John, it follows then that the parables being taught related to kingdom doctrine.

Did you ever wonder how wonderful it would be to have the Lord walk you through every parable in scripture with the clarity recorded for us in scripture for the parable of the sower? In this singular instance of His teaching the mysteries of the kingdom, we

have recorded in scripture **EXACTLY** how two of these parables were to be understood! This puzzled me for a long time as I wondered why other explanations weren't given in scripture relating to other parables. Then, it became clear when the Lord makes this statement recorded for us in Mark 4:13, that the Holy Spirit in fact preserved exactly what would be needed for His work throughout the age. Jesus tells us in this passage that **IF** we know **THIS** parable, then it is the key to knowing all parables.

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Since the doctrine being taught was that of the kingdom from the time of John, it follows then that the parables being taught related to kingdom doctrine. We see this taught by Christ in Mark 4. All the parables He taught were more than kingdom theology - they were teaching - kingdom doctrine. So, all the parables spoken by Christ pertain to the kingdom, because it is the kingdom that has been being preached FROM the time of John the Baptist UNTIL the END of THIS age.

Mark 4:11 - “And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in PARABLES:”

So, when we see later in Mark 4:33 that

“And with many such parables spake he THE WORD unto them, as they were able to hear it.”

we ask what “word” was it that was being spoken? It can be nothing other than the Word of the kingdom as He has been saying all along. This speaks to our other chapter on *The Word of the Lord to Man*, but THE WORD here is not the Bible generally, it was THE WORD of the kingdom which is THE WORD for this age, which is THE WORD that is being taught in the parable of the sower - the word of the gospel of the kingdom of God. The same “THE WORD” Paul had sown in Ephesus:

Ephesians 1:13 - “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard THE WORD of truth, THE GOSPEL of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”

In Colossae:

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Colossians 1:5 - “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in THE WORD of the truth of THE GOSPEL;”

In Thessalonica:

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received THE WORD in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:”

To Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:2 - “Preach THE WORD; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

By James:

James 1:22 - “But be ye doers of THE WORD, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

So, in each of these cases “the Word” is not the Bible in a very broad and general sense, but in the sense of the Word of Christ concerning the gospel of the kingdom and the things concerning Jesus Christ. Now, we know this can be taught from Old Testament scriptures with great clarity as well, but the Word wasn’t “the law and prophets” in their former way speaking of the Lamb of God to come, that was now fulfilled and the Word sent into the world was the King that was to come. The very same Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and waiting until the time appointed from the Father.

Jesus then tells his disciples that this parable **MUST** be known to know all the other parables that He used to teach the things of the kingdom. It follows then, that we have in this one instance all the information we

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

need to understand everything about the kingdom of God - the preaching of the word of promise all the way to the end of the world and the harvest.

The reason this is necessary to understand becomes clearer as we follow it through. Many today try to insert the “church”, or their interpretation of church, into the kingdom parables in various and assorted ways. It seems in our zeal to promote the “church”, we may have read the “church” into places in scripture where it may or may

It seems in our zeal to promote the “church(es)”, we may have read the “church” into places in scripture where it may or may not fit – hence replacement theology and the like. With some it seems it is here the church, there the church, everywhere the church, church.

not fit – hence replacement theology and the like. With some it seems it is here the church, there the church, everywhere the church, church. Now, the church IS a VERY important doctrine and the Lord Himself placed great value on it by purchasing it with His own blood (you don’t sit under my dad’s preaching for 36 years and not KNOW that!), but that doesn’t require reading the church of which Christ spoke into everything in scripture to try to emphasize its’ importance. Many do this with the Olivet Discourse as well and get their end-times doctrine all out of whack with the larger body of scripture.

Even those who hold a proper view of the local church can fall victim to this in their zeal. So, rather than reading the church INTO ALL parables, as is the case with

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

some today, let's see what Christ says of the ONE PARABLE that is KEY to knowing all the others, viewed together with the information he clearly gives of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13. By looking at the only two parables, the parable of the tares and the parable of the sower, that we have explained in scripture in this detailed way, we should then, by Christ's account and with His Spirit helping us, be better able to look at other parables through them as a lens of instruction.

In the parable of the tares Christ gives very clear answers to what the types represent to His apostles:

Matthew 13:37 - 43 - "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

So, if we unpack the types in this parable and set them in order, here is what we KNOW to be factual concerning this parable:

1. The Sower - Son of Man
2. The Field - The World
3. The Good Seed - The Children of the Kingdom
4. The Tares - Children of the wicked one

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

5. The Enemy that sowed the tares - the devil
6. The harvest - the END of the world
7. The Reapers - the angels

Fantastic! No guess work or suppositions or hermeneutical maneuvers needed here! Just clear, concise doctrine that is very straightforward. Also, noteworthy perhaps is the absence of any mention of church in the local, New Testament sense that we typically think of, which likely would have made an appearance in our own expositions if Christ had not given it to us by the Holy Spirit. Not that this parable is not FOR the churches, but that its' sole purpose is not to represent "the church" per se. These parables testify to the work of Christ, as sower, through this entire age in sowing the world with a crop to be harvested at the end of the age. It has to do with His Word and the work of that Word in the hearts of men. It is given to INSTRUCT MEN unto the kingdom of God rather than to teach us theology. You may remember John the Baptist had already been preaching the kingdom of God and preparing the hearts of the people with his preaching:

Luke 3:17 - "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable."

So, the way the Lord taught these parables was intended to instruct men concerning things to come, not to teach them a theology lesson. With this information, let's now look at the parable of the sower:

Matthew 13:19 - 23 - "When any one heareth THE WORD OF THE KINGDOM, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed

by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

So, here we have the following detailed explanation given by Christ:

1. The seeds - the Word of the Kingdom
2. The Fowls - the wicked one
3. The Thorns - care of THIS WORLD & deceitfulness of riches
4. The Stones - that within the earth that prohibits moisture
5. The Wayside - he which did not understand the word
6. The Stony Places - he that hath no root, and is offended when persecution or tribulation arises because of the word
7. Thorny Places - he that received the word, but has it choked out by the thorns
8. The Good Ground - he that hears, understands, and endures

We immediately see several things that are important here. The common view of these two parables in which

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

the seed is represented as the “Word of God” in one parable, and then represented as “the children of the kingdom” in the other. These are in perfect agreement in the kingdom gospel! What glory!

1 Peter 1:23 - “Being BORN AGAIN, not of corruptible SEED, but of incorruptible, BY THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

The fact is that God sees His Word in us and the comple-tion of that work as synonymous with each other. In one sense the seed is the Word itself, and in another it is the completed work of that seed in those who have received it by faith.

2 Corinthians 5:17
- “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **NEW CREATURE**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Romans 8:23 -
“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **WAITING**

FOR the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

1 John 3:2 - “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and **IT DOTH NOT YET APPEAR** what we shall be: but we know that, **WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR**, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

So, being born again of the SEED of the Word of God by the power of His Spirit, the new creature not yet brought forth, is groaning within ourselves waiting for the redemption of our body, which is the creature that will be brought forth when the sons of God are finally made manifest. We

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

see from the doctrine of the kingdom gospel taught throughout the New testament the agreement with the parables of the kingdom that were a mystery to those “without”. The fact is that God sees His Word in us and the completion of that work as synonymous with each other. In one sense the seed is the Word itself, and in another it is the completed work of that seed in those who have received it by faith.

We know from the Word of God that man is formed from the earth, and that after being formed and made a living soul God spoke His Word to the man – and he was required to receive it by faith. In other words, man wasn’t formed by the Word of God being spoken, as were other aspects of creation. He was rather formed by the hands of God from the earth and THEN the WORD was spoken TO the man to be received. So, the picture of Christ sowing His word into the soil of the earth is exactly and entirely accurate – not just an interesting example using familiar agricultural examples that were familiar to the people of the day – seems like we hear a lot of that kind of thing these days... We know that God the Father is the husbandman of the earth, as He says in His Word:

John 15:1 – “I am the true vine, and my Father is the HUSBANDMAN.”

James 5:7 – “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the HUSBANDMAN waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.”

Matthew 13:30 – “Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

It is evident that the parables set forth so clearly here show us what the apostles taught throughout the New Testament. Not that the kingdom is here as having “come”, but that the WORD of it, the word of PROMISE like that spoken to Abraham, is being sown through preaching, and that in the end of the world, there is to be made an end of this preaching because the fulfillment will have come – just like the law of Moses was fulfilled by Christ at His first coming and ceased to function among the household of faith. No one will SEE it and say, “hey, it is real! Can I come in too?” No, faith in God’s Word is required – faith means you receive it before you enter it. An evil generation seeks a sign and thinks, “then I would believe”. No, you will have just seen it ... that’s not faith.

If we want to say that the kingdom is here in any sense, it can only be in the sense scripture gives, which is that it is present with us by promise – in His Word. That God views the Word of promise as entirely true as the real arrival of what He has spoken is clear. After all, He SPOKE, and the worlds appeared. He has now spoken by His son, and soon the Word spoken is to appear. We see this concept clearly at work in another place where the word and the fulfillment are referenced as synonymous:

Luke 17:20 - 21 - “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHOULD COME, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU.”

It is hugely important to resist all the theological urges here and look at the examples we have of how the kingdom was taught by the apostles after the sending of the Holy

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Spirit, which actually makes our job easier. The kingdom does not come with observation **BECAUSE IT IS BY PROMISE, AND THUS BY FAITH!** The Word of promise is always to those who believe!

Galatians 4:28 - “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the CHILDREN OF PROMISE.

Romans 9:8 - “That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE are counted for the seed.”

As Christ was teaching those who were demanding to know **WHEN** it would appear, he taught them that it wasn't to come to them by observation because it is an inheritance promised to those who are in hope of receiving it by his promise through faith. He then makes the statement that “the kingdom of God is within you”. Now we could wrestle with this in all sorts of imaginative ways, which some do, but there's no need to identify this as anything other than what we have already been taught - the seed of the Word of God! If the kingdom rests within us by having received the word of the gospel by faith, then we can clearly understand the statement made by Christ as **DOCTRINE** and not **THEOLOGY**. This also makes clearer for us the statement we looked at earlier regarding receiving the kingdom:

Mark 10:15 - “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not RECEIVE the kingdom of God as a little child, he SHALL NOT ENTER therein.”

The Word of God concerning the kingdom, the seed, was already in them because it had been heard, the question is what kind of hearer are we? The parable of the sower gives us four different kinds of hearers. Hearers that

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

have the Word snatched away before they can understand by the **enemy without** - Satan. Hearers in whom the Word doesn't mature because of the **enemy within** - the stones of the heart of our own carnal nature. Hearers in whom the Word is choked to death by the **enemies among** - the present world and its system of cares, riches, and pleasures. The fourth example in the parable is the only one who overcomes the world by receiving the word in faith and hoping unto the end as we have been commanded. Christ admonishes many times about hearing because hearing is how we "receive" the things of God:

Luke 8:18 - "Take heed therefore how ye hear..."

It is really clarifying to accept what the scripture teaches on this because then Christ immediately goes on to say to those whom He had just taught about the kingdom of God (His Word) being within them:

Luke 17:22 - 25 - "And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Immediately after telling them these things about the kingdom being within them (by His Word), he then goes on to discuss and teach concerning the promise and hope of the coming of the Son of Man! We see the fulfillment of the Word of the gospel of the kingdom being related to the return of the Son of Man in many other places in scripture as well. This clarifies that the “kingdom of God” (also called “kingdom of Heaven by Matthew, likely for the sake of the

Jewish crowd he was writing to) is not only referring to the supreme and sovereign rule of God the Father in the heavens (that fact is not and has not been a mystery of any sort!), but looks to the time in which He will reign by His Son Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ assuming the throne of glory will be the kingdom that is “of God” and not “of men”. For this reason, Christ refers to the coming of the Son of Man as the kingdom of God that is promised to come and hoped for by MEN – well, at least those of faith. Look at a few of these promises from the “beatitudes” in Matthew 5 that all look forward to the promised kingdom:

Hearers that have the Word snatched away before they can understand by the enemy without - Satan. Hearers in whom the Word doesn't mature because of the enemy within – the stones of the heart of our own carnal nature.

Hearers in whom the Word is choked to death by the enemies among – the present world and its system of cares, riches, and pleasures.

Matthew 5:3 - 10 - “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Blessed

are they that mourn: **THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.** Blessed are the meek: for **THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.** Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for **THEY SHALL BE FILLED.** Blessed are the merciful: for **THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.** Blessed are the pure in heart: for **THEY SHALL SEE GOD.** Blessed are the peacemakers: for **THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD.** Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for **THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."**

Each blessing in this passage has a specific and direct correlation to kingdom doctrine and represents a promise of Christ to those who receive His Word and testimony by faith. These promises were mysteries to those "without". The doctrine of the kingdom of God was revealed by Christ to His apostles as He showed them of the coming reign of the son of man and the fulfillment of all these blessing and promises which had been given. The fulfillment of the promises of God to MEN. The inauguration of His reign where MEN dwell. All of this will be done by that MAN whom He has appointed heir of ALL THINGS, the man Christ Jesus!

Matthew 19:28 - "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the re-generation **WHEN** the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, **YE ALSO SHALL** sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Matthew 25:31 - "**WHEN** the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, **THEN** shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:"

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Hebrews 1:8 - “But unto THE SON he saith, THY THRONE, O GOD, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.”

Jesu Christ has been given the dominion and kingdom of God, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, expecting ‘til His enemies be made His footstool:

Hebrews 10:12 - 14 - “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth EXPECTING TILL his enemies be made his footstool.”

At the time appointed of the Father, He will return, having received the kingdom of His Father, and when He appears in the glory of His Father and of the holy angels to sit upon the throne of His glory, the Kingdom of God will have come as He promised. So, Jesus Christ Himself, as the firstborn among many brethren, is currently waiting in hope and expectation as He waits for the appointed time of the Father when He is to receive what has been appointed to Him - He is our example! He is living in the expectation of being with us as we live in the expectation of being with Him just as a bride may long to be united with her betrothed! Christ mentioned certain aspects of this expectation of His to the apostles in direct context of the coming kingdom of God:

Matthew 26:29 - “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, UNTIL THAT DAY when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Mark 14:25 - “Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, **UNTIL THAT DAY** that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Luke 22:18 - “For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, **UNTIL THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL COME.**”

While speaking of this love Christ has towards us and the love we also have towards Him as a result, John makes this statement by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

1 John 4:17 - “...because **AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.**”

He is waiting and expecting to return, and we are living in hope and expectation of His coming. He is suffering the violence of the world with all its sin and wickedness, for now, and so are we called to do.

Romans 12:19 - “Dearly beloved, **AVENGE NOT YOURSELVES**, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

Matthew 5:39 - “But I say unto you, That **YE RESIST NOT EVIL**: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

Romans 12:17 - “**RECOMPENSE TO NO MAN EVIL FOR EVIL**. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.”

You get the idea... Once His enemies are made to be His footstool, the “till” will be fulfilled and all the other fulfillments awaiting the “until” will be brought to fruition.

Acts 3:20 - 21 - “And he shall send **Jesus Christ**, which before was preached unto you: **Whom THE HEAVEN**

MUST RECEIVE UNTIL the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

So Jesus Christ has been appointed heir of all things, is waiting to receive them from the father (we view this transaction in Revelation as the Lamb comes to take the book from Him that sat on the throne) and has been received up into the heavens UNTIL it is time for Him to appear and sit on the throne of His glory. Oh, and it will be GLORY! He is worthy of the proclamation - “**Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.**”!

But without going any further into those particulars for now, He also tells them what we have already seen earlier in our study. That before there is a kingdom reign there is a time of suffering for Christ - and for those who would heed the gospel call to “**Follow Me**”!

2 Timothy 2:12 – “If we SUFFER, we shall also REIGN with him:”

Matthew 5:10 – “Blessed are they which ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS’ SAKE: for THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM of heaven.”

persecuted here doesn't mean for our righteousness – as if people will treat us poorly because we are a “goody two-shoes”. Since He IS our righteousness, for those who are in Him by faith, it has to do with suffering for Him and His testimony

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

By the way, persecuted here doesn't mean for our righteousness – as if people will treat us poorly because we are a “goody two-shoes”. Since He IS our righteousness, for those who are in Him by faith, it has to do with suffering for Him and His testimony, which is why the next verse states:

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

So much for the prosperity gospel that allures men through the lust of the flesh to the things of this life, I guess.... Good doctrine will always slay error, and any teacher or doctrine that appeals to the things of the flesh ought to be a red flag in comparison of the true gospel that calls us to die to this present world and live in expectation of the next. If a teacher himself is under the bond of sin through covetousness, then we can readily discern he is a deceiver and is himself deceived:

2 Peter 2:18 - 19 – “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they ALLURE THROUGH THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, THEY THEMSELVES ARE THE SERVANTS OF CORRUPTION: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”

This message of a Savior who suffered, died, and rose to redeem His saints (those who through faith in His name are made fit by the work of the Holy Spirit in receiving the blessing of Abraham, the righteousness which is by faith),

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

so that He can bestow on them the inheritance that has been promised, prepared before the world began, is the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ - the gospel of the Kingdom of God. This preaching of the mysteries of the kingdom of God in scripture, as we will continue to see, speaks much more particularly to the mystery of God's work through Jesus Christ in confirming these promises, to be received by those who have long embraced these precious promises when He returns, than it does just to the known fact of the reign of God the Father from His throne in Heaven.

We see then from these two parables that are explained, that the parables of the kingdom have to do with the work of Christ through the preaching of the Word, the end of the world and the lot each man has in the world to come based upon the response to the preached Word, the certainty of the end of the world, the certainty of the world to come. What is in view is the coming kingdom of Christ and the doctrine that declares to men how they may gain entrance into that kingdom. We have men who are made to be new creatures received into the kingdom by the new birth (the wheat) and men who are sent away to be destroyed by fire (the tares). We see that also taught by Christ in Matthew 24 during the Olivet discourse as well.

Matthew 24:38 - 42 - "For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

So, everyone in Noah's day was living their NATURAL life with an EXPECTATION that things would continue to go on as they had. They weren't watchful for the fulfillment of the WORD spoken to them because they hadn't received it by faith. Then, in the fulness of time, the world was destroyed, and they were left with no escape. Jesus says it will be so in the end of this world.

These words "taken" and "left" are rendered from Greek words that mean "to take to one's self; to join to one's self" and "to send away; to bid to go away or depart" respectively. So, "taken" and "left" is not a geographical representation from an earthly perspective. It is rather speaking of those who are accepted and received and those who are told to depart and are sent away. Exactly what our parables teach of.

From a parable perspective, this statement from Christ is immensely important and helpful when studying the other parables concerning the kingdom of God. It is also useful to remember the principles already laid down concerning the study of the kingdom that we have seen.

1. The Word of the Lord from the time of John's preaching has been kingdom preaching – warning men to escape from the wrath to come and giving promise and hope to those who believe of eternal life.
2. The preaching of the kingdom of God is best understood from the epistles of the apostles and working back into the teaching of Christ concerning the kingdom.
3. Ordinances committed to men to observe in the flesh are given to prophesy and foreshadow future fulfillments of God concerning His Word of

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

promise - which is why the ordinances were changed by Christ when He had fulfilled the old types.

4. The Word of the Lord to man has always been prophetic because He requires faith - faith is the substance of things hoped for. Which is why the preaching changed at the time of John and began to be the preaching of the kingdom of God.
5. When studying kingdom parables, the information in the parable of the sower and the parable of the tares must be understood first. If it isn't **"how then will ye know all parables?"**

Now, it is still impossible to think we will ever agree completely on the exposition of all other parables, and that is OK. They should, however, be taught as kingdom doctrine and NOT moral stories & guidelines - as they are typically seen to those "without". They also should be consistent with kingdom doctrine of the things we see all through the New testament. I'll share a couple examples to show what I mean, and then leave this one alone.

Matthew 13:44 - "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

From this parable, some will say that the treasure is the "church" and that Christ gave everything to purchase it. Now, that is not a concerning thing to teach necessarily, but it doesn't build faith or give instruction to men regarding the kingdom, which the parable is given to do. Consider the words of Christ in this place of scripture:

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Luke 14:33 - “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that FORSAKETH NOT ALL THAT HE HATH, he cannot be my disciple”

So, there is kingdom doctrine at work here stating that in order to gain the field in view here and the treasure it holds, it is going to “cost” everything a man has. We will see better, I believe, as we go through the book and look at the doctrines of the kingdom, that there are some very clear teachings here for us. From our first parables we know the field represents the world, and, as you will see in a coming chapter, this field to be gained is the world to come. The treasure found and hid is the promise of the Word of God, the Testimony of Christ, which is hidden in the person of Jesus Christ Himself who is the Word made flesh. This treasure was “hidden” as God came in the flesh and must be “found” by faith:

Isaiah 45:15 - “Verily thou art a God that HIDEST thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.”

The Lord himself was “hidden” in the form of man, as we know. We see the parable teaches that the treasure is hidden and when a man finds it, he hides it as well. When a man finds this treasure, hidden in the person of Jesus Christ who is the Word made flesh, he receives the Word into his heart by faith where it remains hidden until the day of redemption. The man that has found this treasure, will willingly and joyfully forsake all that he possesses to obtain the inheritance promised to Abraham -the world to come, represented by the field that gets purchased. Every effort and treasure go towards the purchase of the field that is to be gained. The parables are doctrine to instruct men unto the kingdom of heaven.

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Luke 14:26 - “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

This is not a geographical “leaving” that is spoken of, as we know we are bound by duty to God to care and provide for our families – it is as with all things with God, spoken of the inner man in the heart. The heart of a man must be delivered from living in the desire and hope of anything other than the promises which are of God in Christ in order to be His disciple and all of his HOPE must be fixed upon Christ alone and the confidence that He will fulfill His Word! For this to happen, His Holy Spirit must be involved.

Luke 9:26 - “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, IS FIT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

Colossians 1:12 - “Giving thanks unto the Father, WHICH HATH MADE US MEET to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:”

The power of faith and the sustaining hope to endure come from His Spirit. Looking back demonstrates a faith that is vain – and not Godly faith. Thus, we see all the warnings from Paul about those who are not delivered from the lusts of the flesh who will have no inheritance in this world to come – whereof we speak.

We can see this kingdom doctrine from the parable here in Matthew 13 in action right in scripture over in Luke

The “rich young ruler” as we call him today, could not heed the words of Christ to “Follow Me”. He settled for the reward of this life rather than the reward Christ would give in the world to come.

19! With this parable of the treasure in a field in mind, let’s look at another occasion in scripture that bears this story out in “real time” as Christ is teaching.

Right after the rich young ruler went away sorry in chapter 18 of Luke, the disciples marveled at His statement:

Luke 18:24 - “...How hardly shall THEY THAT HAVE RICHES enter into the kingdom of God!’ For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

They marveled because they lived in a culture and time that taught if you were “blessed” by God, you would be wealthy and rich. It was assumed that if you were well to do, it was because God had blessed you. The “rich young ruler” as we call him today, could not heed the words of Christ to “Follow Me”. He settled for the reward of this life rather than the reward Christ would give in the world to come. He was looking for a commandment to keep in order to gain eternal life, which when He was given by Jesus, he could not attain unto it – story of man’s life. Immediately after this account, we go into chapter 19. In this account, we will see the words of Christ come true which He spoke concerning salvation of a rich man:

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Luke 18:25 - 27 - “For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And he said, The things which are impossible with men ARE POSSIBLE WITH GOD.”

Though it might be impossible WITH MEN for rich men to be willing to trade the reward of this life's riches for a PROMISE from Christ concerning things to come, yet Christ would show the POWER OF GOD to do the impossible. Enter, one particular rich man...

Luke 19:2 - “And, behold, there was a man named ZACCHAEUS, which was the chief among the publicans, and HE WAS RICH.”

Immediately following this discourse, Luke gives record of just such a work of God. Many have marveled at the story for generations, and there is even a cool children's song to boot, but this story cannot be understood fully without understanding the gospel of the kingdom. Let's follow Luke's account a little further:

Luke 19:5 - “And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

There's a lot here you should come back and view after finishing the rest of this study, but let's catch a couple of things here that correlate to our parable:

Matthew 13:44 - “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

To understand the account of Zacchaeus conversion, we must know what Christ was preaching to him over their meal together. It was the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom - the promise of an inheritance in the world to come. Even though we could speculate that this was kingdom preaching because it has been the preaching of the Word of God since the time of John, in this case we KNOW without reservation from the very next verse following this account that it was kingdom preaching in view:

Luke 19:11 - “And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.”

As Christ was teaching at Zacchaeus' home, the conversation and thoughts of some who were present and hearing Christ's teaching was that the kingdom would immediately appear - so some thought these things would appear very soon. So, it is clear that as they were visiting, Christ was teaching and preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Luke 8:1 - “And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and SHEWING THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

This teaches us that Zacchaeus had **HEARD** (Romans 10:17) the **TESTIMONY** of Christ (which is prophecy - Rev. 19:10) concerning the kingdom, had **BELIEVED** the Word of God, was justified in the sight of God by faith (Romans 5:1), and thus salvation (which is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8) had come to Zacchaeus house - by faith. We know from scripture, this is how saving faith works.

Romans 10:17 - “So then FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, and hearing BY THE WORD OF GOD.”

Revelation 19:10 - “... the TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS the spirit of PROPHECY”

Hebrews 11:1 - “Now FAITH IS the substance of THINGS HOPED FOR, the evidence of things not seen.”

Ephesians 2:8 - “For BY GRACE are ye SAVED THROUGH FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”

Romans 5:1 - “Therefore being JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

The works which Zacchaeus says are in his heart to do, serve as a witness that He had received the testimony of Christ concerning things to come, and this work of God in

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

the heart of Zacchaeus serves as testimony to the power of God. This whole account stands in contrast to the power of men from the rich young ruler in the previous chapter. All that man's works could not justify him or prepare him to receive the testimony of God - because God resists the proud but gives GRACE to the HUMBLE. One such grace is the opening of the ears to HEAR so that we might receive His testimony. In contrast to the rich ruler who prized his own keeping of the commandments, God had chosen Zacchaeus, a sinner of the Publican's (tax collectors - notorious for their greed and fraud) to show forth the praise of His glory. Zacchaeus was now among the household of faith - a saint, with an inheritance in Christ in the world to come. He accordingly then gladly gave back 4 times as much as he had taken fraudulently and gave half his riches to the poor - sounds like He didn't have much left..... as far as MEN can see. But he had found THE great treasure. The very things he had once been so covetous for, now held little value in his heart. He had been made a partaker of a New Covenant and made a recipient of eternal life in Christ by faith - better promises than the things of this life can offer. He had found the treasure that was hidden. He had gladly sold all that he had. He had obtained the field - the world to come.

This exposition may not be entirely clear at this point in the book, but once you have finished the other chapters, come back and look at it again and see them in that light. Remember, Christ's parables are NOT given to be moral instruction, per se, they are kingdom doctrine - every one of them. Many who have lived in the "light" of them as only moral guidelines for living a moral life will be disappointed in the end.

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Luke 11:35 - “Take heed therefore that the LIGHT which is in thee BE NOT DARKNESS.”

A strong caution from our Lord given here and reminds us there is MORE to FAITH than CONSENT to some of the truths of Christ such as His deity and power. James warns of an empty “belief” that is of the kind that assents to things that are true ABOUT Him but fall short of saving FAITH in Him. Even the devils confess to the identity and power of Christ:

James 2:19 - “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

How does that compare to Zacchaeus? Well, Zacchaeus had FAITH in Christ - he had HEARD the WORD of TESTIMONY and BELIEVED in some things that he then stood in HOPE of - that he had not yet seen. He did so on the EVIDENCE that Christ had proven Himself to Zacchaeus to be a man whose testimony was BELIEVABLE, and Zacchaeus committed himself to living in that hope. The example of Zacchaeus stands in agreement with the testimony of the author of Hebrews concerning PROMISES, FAITH, HOPE, and PATIENCE as we wait on the Lord to fulfill all His good pleasure.

Hebrews 11:1 - “Now FAITH IS the substance of THINGS HOPED FOR, the evidence of things not seen.”

Hebrews 6:12 - “That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through FAITH and patience INHERIT the promises.”

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Hebrews 10:36 - “For ye have need of PATIENCE, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive THE PROMISE.”

Of course, SOME who heard the things being taught thought that the kingdom was to immediately appear, but Christ goes on from there to teach some more PARABLES to show them the truth of its time and coming.

Lastly, let’s look at the parable of the pearl of great price.

Matthew 13:45 - 46 - “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

If a man were a merchant, then He is looking for something of great value, not so he can simply possess it, but so that he can exchange it. That’s what merchants do. This pearl that was found, was worth more than everything else the merchant had, and his HOPE of GAIN through possessing it was great! It was the most profitable possession he had ever found, so He forsook all to obtain that one thing of great value.

Pearls in scripture aren’t used often, but they were known to be represented as things of value in the form of proverbs or wise words:

Matthew 7:6 - “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your PEARLS before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

In the concordance, you will find this definition of the Greek word here translated “pearls” in our Bible:

I - a pearl

II. - a proverb, i.e. a word of great value”.

So, Christ would have been instructing them of not casting the valuable things of Christ in their preaching before scoffers and men that would see no value in them – no need picking a doctrinal fight if there is no hope of gaining their soul. Like dusting off their feet when their testimony wasn’t received.

The Word of the kingdom is being preached now to men as a Word of Promise. Those who possess that Word by faith will inherit with Christ as joint heirs.

This fits the doctrine of the kingdom to a “T” as you will continue to see as you move through the coming chapters. The Word of the kingdom is being preached now to men as a Word of Promise. Those who possess that Word by faith will inherit with Christ as joint heirs. But, in order to possess this Word, it requires an abandonment of the hope and security of everything in this world that a man values in his heart and has hope and trust in – all the things that are precious to the natural mind. We by nature trust in these natural things we can see and know, but this is wicked in the sight of God. We are to love and trust the creator, not the creation. These false securities and hopes will fail men in the end.

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

Proverbs 18:11 - 12 - “The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit. Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.”

This same idea of a merchant is also represented by Christ in his question to his disciples and those who would be disciples in the book of Mark:

Mark 8:37 - “Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

The question here is not rhetorical. We need an answer. The response to that question is of immense importance **“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:” - Romans 2:7**

The Lord gives the answer in the very next verse of Mark 8 and it is the same answer as our parable. The merchant man sold all that he had to obtain something that brought him hope of great gain:

Mark 8:38 - “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of ME and of MY WORDS in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh, teaches that the testimony He has given by His Word must be received by faith, and is the only thing a man can possess that he can give in exchange for his soul.

Chapter 5 - Understanding All Parables

With these principles established and with what we have seen so far from scripture, let's move ahead looking at some of the more specific details of kingdom doctrine. Parable study will be easier once we have gained more of the doctrine of the faith as it pertains to the kingdom. You can always go back and study them on your own later with these things in view. I pray it will be clarifying and faith building for you to do so. That is the point of Christ's teaching - instruction for men.

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

We don't often hear the phrase "the gospel of the kingdom" these days. We might want to ask ourselves the question, "Why?". We should labor to uphold these doctrines that were committed to the Saints. Seemingly, at least part of the reason it is seldom heard lies in the fact that theologians have convinced many of some form of a mystery kingdom that is here on the earth now

but loosely or ill defined, that perhaps it is the church or at least part of it, and many other such ideas that make for great and interesting THEOLOGY, but not for very good DOCTRINE. Actually, it sounds just like something a PhD theologian might come up with, but does it seem like the Lord Jesus Christ we serve? Maybe not as much. Would he have gone everywhere preaching theology? Would He have commanded His disciples to go into every town and village teaching it if it was theology? The kingdom is only a "mystery" to those who are without and don't understand its doctrine.

When these things were taught by Christ, they were taught as doctrine. His doctrine is useful in meaningful and practical ways that increase our FAITH - not our

Theologians have convinced many of some form of a mystery kingdom that is here on the earth now but loosely or ill defined, that perhaps it is the church or at least part of it, and many other such ideas that make for great and interesting THEOLOGY, but not for very good DOCTRINE

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

doubt. If He was preaching it, it was doctrine. If the apostles were preaching it, it was doctrine. Is it our preaching and doctrine?

While many people intrinsically seem to know that these other mysterious theological ideas are not good doctrine (I say so because it doesn't get preached much from the pulpit, which is a bit of a tell), there also seems to be a struggle to put it into clear terms and to teach and preach it to people in a way that helps their FAITH to grow and for more fruit to be produced in their lives to the glory of God. This doesn't need to be, rather shouldn't be the case. We need the whole counsel of God and shouldn't leave any part of it untaught because it seems difficult to us to do so. Especially what was THE MESSAGE being preached throughout the entire New Testament. We'll touch more on why this may be the case in a later chapter, but the entire course that things have run concerning the preaching of the kingdom reminds me of a verse in an epistle to the Galatians,

Galatians 5:8 - "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you."

Is it likely that the very message that was declared from the time of John through the end of the ministry of the Apostle Paul, and foretold by Christ as being the message that will be preached UNTIL the time of His return, has somehow become so purely theological that it is unnecessary to our faith? Or has it become so misunderstood that it results in much human effort in the building of it but holds no faith? I can't imagine that a persuasion of that sort is of Him that calleth us.

When we discuss the gospel of the kingdom, it is important to explain that we are not suggesting that there

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

are different gospels in scripture. Rather, there are different titles given to the gospel that focus on certain aspects of its character and truth. It is similar with many things in scripture such as the Holy Spirit. You may find the same Holy Spirit spoken of as the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Wisdom, or the Spirit of Grace. Now, we know all of these speak of the one and selfsame Spirit, but the names used throughout scripture emphasize different aspects of His work, deity, and power.

So, it is with the gospel. We may find in the scripture the gospel of the kingdom of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of Christ, the gospel of God, the gospel of your salvation, or the gospel of peace. These all speak of the same and one true gospel, but may by their use in various aspects reflect the work of the Father, Son or Spirit respectively as it pertains to this gospel, or may enlighten our minds to a particular attribute of God or result of the gospel when received in our hearts by faith. In every case, the gospel is the gospel is the gospel.

When we speak of the gospel of the kingdom or the gospel of the kingdom of God, we are speaking, perhaps, in the way that most broadly describes the entire plan of redemption ordained by God for men because it carries us all the way through to the new creation and the eternal inheritance of the saints. The world to come when that new creature born in us of God will be brought forth and the sons of God will be made manifest. You may not yet see how that could be just by using the title for the gospel “the gospel of the kingdom of God”, but as we continue to unfold the Word of God concerning this, I trust that “God shall reveal even this unto you.” If not, then you’re no

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

worse off. After all, I'm mostly writing this for my daughters, to strengthen and encourage them in the faith for the journey ahead - as this present world darkens and the falling away hastens on.

Most often today, the gospel of Christ is thought of in terms of what was accomplished by Christ at His first coming to earth by the virgin birth. This seems to leave a great gap and difficulty in the understanding of many when they fail to see the relevance of what happened almost 2,000 years ago. Typically, to compensate for this we try to put people in mind of their own death. "Do you know if you will go to heaven when you die?" we may ask. A fair question to be sure, but quite a departure from the gospel that warns men of Christ's coming return and the judgment to follow as all will stand before Him - both the living and the dead.

Acts 10:42 - 43 - "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ORDAINED OF GOD TO BE THE JUDGE OF QUICK AND DEAD. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

Colossians 1:27 - 28 - "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: WHOM WE PREACH, WARNING EVERY MAN, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:"

1 Peter 4:4 - "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: Who shall give account to him [Jesus Christ]

that is **READY TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.**"

Christ won't come into our hearts simply because we ask Him to. He has promised to send His Spirit to dwell in the hearts of those who BELIEVE. Believe what? That He will come and dwell in my heart if I ask Him to? A short answer - No. The long answer is - N-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o...

Further, it leads us to complicate the preaching of the gospel. I'll give you a "for instance". Many have ceased preaching the gospel of the kingdom which can be believed, as seen in scripture, for various theological reasons, but have no difficulty in making up their own mystical gospels. I don't know how many times I have heard those seeking to evange-

lize the lost and lead them to Christ use phrases such as "ask Jesus into your heart", or "make Him the Lord of your life" or "ask Jesus to forgive you", "pray the sinners prayer" or many other phrases we have created in our attempt to communicate the gospel.

OK, so there are many problems here, which we will not entirely enumerate, but we see from scripture, for example, that Christ won't come into our hearts simply because we ask Him to. He has promised to send His Spirit to dwell in the hearts of those who BELIEVE. Believe what? That He will come and dwell in my heart if I ask Him to? A short answer - No. The long answer is - N-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o... We must believe His GOSPEL. We must receive His testimony. IF we BELIEVE His gospel,

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

then He will keep His promise to send His Spirit into our heart.

Ephesians 1:13 - “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the WORD OF TRUTH, the GOSPEL of your salvation: in whom also AFTER THAT YE BELIEVED, YE WERE SEALED with that holy Spirit of promise,”

There are real problems with this approach. We seem to feel it necessary to lead people to “do” something when it comes to the gospel. The people that end up “praying the sinner’s prayer” or “walking the aisle”, and ultimately baptized and placed into our congregations may or may not **KNOW THE GOSPEL**. Even if they ask Christ to forgive them, if they don’t **KNOW** the gospel, just telling you how it is, danger ahead concerning their faith. Until someone **UNDERSTANDS** the gospel, they will not be able to put their **FAITH** in Christ in the way scripture teaches us to do in **HOPE** of His **PROMISES**, and they will likely spend the rest of their days in one of two camps:

1. Constantly battling the feeling “they didn’t do it right” and are unstable in their “faith” rather than increasing in it, or
2. Continue to cling to an event in their past when they were “saved” (whatever that means to them) and remain apathetic or unfruitful in their life as it pertains to the gospel.

The problem with each of these approaches to the gospel mentioned above is that they sound close enough to the truth that they largely go unnoticed. None of those responses, however, were **EVER** preached in the New Testament as the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peter never said, “Men and brethren, Make Jesus the Lord of your life!”

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

Paul never preached, “Ye men of Athens, ask Jesus into your heart!” ... All of these have crept into churches because the gospel has not been thoroughly understood and taught in many cases.

Paul spent an entire DAY talking to people who **ALREADY KNEW SCRIPTURE** as he expounded the gospel to them. Why would He do this? So that they could **BELIEVE** the word of the Lord concerning the kingdom of God that He was proclaiming – so they could have faith in the promises of Christ!

Acts 28:23 – “And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom HE EXPOUNDED AND TESTIFIED THE KINGDOM OF GOD, persuading them CONCERNING JESUS, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, FROM MORNING TO EVENING.”

I realize it may be awkward and difficult to teach this thoroughly when following the modern pattern of spending a few minutes at the so-called “altar” while the congregation continues to re-sing “**JUST AS I AM**” over and over as we lead someone to Christ at the end of a service... OK, a little kidding there. Nonetheless, the truth of these things is clear in scripture.

Ultimately, we are left to take solace in the way the Apostle Paul did:

2 Timothy 2:19 – “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The LORD KNOWETH them that are his....”

Our hope for men lies in the work of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts and not in the power or wisdom of the men who are preaching his gospel! I can assure you, this

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

has been my sustaining hope since I was called to preach His gospel and serve as a pastor. However, when you set forth the gospel of the kingdom of God, it carries very clear to the listeners ear and you can be left with only two groups. Look at the very next verse from Acts 28 when Paul spent this whole day expounding the things concerning Jesus and preaching the Kingdom of God to them:

Acts 28:23 - 24 - “And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And SOME BELIEVED the things which were spoken, and SOME BELIEVED NOT.”

It was clear that there were those who believed and those who did not, and that has always been the difference between those called to be Saints and those who die in unbelief. When the Word of the kingdom was preached, they either believed the things told to them, or they did not. Those who believe His Word and testimony, the Bible says, are justified in His sight and will have the righteousness of God imputed to them by faith, so that He can fulfill all His good pleasure in them. Now, the TRIAL of that faith will prove what sort it is as Peter says. Some believe in vain. Some believe unto salvation.

One quick way to discern the understanding a person has regarding their faith and the gospel is to ask them simply, “When you stand before Christ, as we know from scripture that we will, what confidence do you have of being declared un-condemned even though you have sinned and violated God’s law?” Our answer MUST rest upon PROMISES of God from HIS WORD that are true in

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

Christ and that promise must rest in our hearts by faith in a way that gives us a hope (expectation) of salvation, deliverance, forgiveness, and redemption. If this question cannot be answered in this way, they may need more instruction concerning the things of God. We have so complicated the gospel today in many cases, that we often seem to have more than these two camps shown in response to Paul – believing and unbelieving.

As we will see with further study in this book, the phrase “Kingdom of God” is associated particularly with the events surrounding Christ’s return at the end of the age, and describes the nature of the world to come, in which we will receive the promise of redemption, the promise of eternal life, and the promise of eternal inheritance.

This aspect of our faith is important to mention here as it will come up later pertaining to the kingdom. Do we have eternal life now, or will we receive it later? The Bible teaches both.

Mark 10:30 – “But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and IN THE WORLD TO COME ETERNAL LIFE.”

Titus 3:7 – “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.”

1 John 2:25 – “And this is THE PROMISE that he hath promised us, even ETERNAL LIFE.”

1 John 5:13 – “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

So, Christ spoke of us receiving eternal life in the world to come, Paul speaks of the hope, or expectation, we have of it being brought to us, and John says that it is both promised to us and we have it. So, is it promised to us or do we have it now? Scripture clearly teaches both, but why? Faith is the answer.

Romans 4:17 - “(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”

Those who have believed the promise by faith do indeed have eternal life. As God’s children we are made part-takers of the divine nature according to the working of His Spirit and the new birth. Accordingly, we also share in His declaration of those things which be not as though they were. In other words, speaking of the promises as if they are already fulfilled because they are so certain! John speaks of it as something we have abiding in us. How did it get there? It is through receiving the Word of God by faith:

1 Peter 1:23 - “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

So, it is the Word of the Lord that lives and abides forever, which is Jesus Christ according to John 1:1-3, and with Him abiding in our hearts by faith through receiving His Word, we can be assured of the eternal life that we possess in Christ. However, we only possess this promise now by faith, and are living in the hope, or expectation, of it being fulfilled. Those whose faith endures to the end, will receive the promise itself.

John 6:63 - “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK unto you, THEY ARE SPIRIT, AND THEY ARE LIFE.”

We haven’t yet experienced the life that is promised to us, but we have received an earnest payment of the promise that has been made. Eternal life will be given to those who believe, and it will be experienced after the resurrection in our glorified bodies which we will receive when he returns for us, which is why Christ said we will receive it in the world to come.

We haven’t yet experienced the life that is promised to us, but we have received an earnest payment of the promise that has been made.

This principle also applies to salvation itself, which is received now as a promise by faith but is to be received in actual fulfillment when Christ appears. That is why we live in the hope of salvation as Paul says.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 - “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the HOPE OF SALVATION.”

And we are preserved by the power of God through faith unto salvation as Peter declares.

1 Peter 1:5 - “Who are kept by the power of God THROUGH FAITH UNTO SALVATION ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Therefore all the apostles admonished those who had professed a good profession to hold fast to the faith and endure to the end. Those who hold to the faith in earnest

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

expectation of the promises being received, will receive the reward of the saints.

Mark 13:13 - “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall ENDURE UNTO THE END, the same SHALL BE SAVED.”

Acts 15:11 - “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ WE SHALL BE SAVED, even as they.”

Hebrews 3:6 - “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, IF WE HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE and the rejoicing of the HOPE FIRM UNTO THE END”

1 Corinthians 1:7 - 8 - “So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also CONFIRM you UNTO THE END, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 1:9 - “That the trial of your FAITH, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS.”

Many today think of “when they got saved” as something that already happened to them, but you will see from scripture that salvation is a promise to those who believe the truth, the gospel, the testimony of Christ. God has appointed those who receive the testimony of Christ to obtain salvation and it can only be obtained by our Lord Jesus

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

Christ. It is part of the inheritance of the saints actually as we see from Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:14 - “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be HEIRS OF SALVATION?”

We further see from scripture that salvation is to be looked for at the appearing of Jesus Christ. All who fell on sleep in Christ having this living hope inside of them will also be partakers of this gift of inheritance.

Hebrews 9:28 - “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM shall he appear the second time without sin UNTO SALVATION.”

Paul says in Romans 8 that we are saved by hope, but we haven’t yet received that which we are hoping for – that’s because it is a promise to those who believe the testimony of Christ.

Romans 8:24 - “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

We can see in many instances of scripture words that give testimony to the hope of salvation that we possess as a promise from Christ. This hope we have is a persuasion of faith that the Lord is might to execute His Word, as the prophet Joel declares.

The fact that God views His Word and the actual fulfillment of it in time as synonymous, is both a good lesson for us and also helpful to our understanding of the kingdom of God since it is a promise that works the same way.

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

We will see exactly how it is the same with the kingdom as we continue, but let's quickly look at an example:

Mark 10:15 - "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever SHALL NOT RECEIVE the kingdom of God as a little child, he SHALL NOT ENTER therein."

I have seen many people wrestle with passages such as these that become much clearer when we see how God views his Word concerning something as synonymous with its fulfillment. After all, it's how he made the worlds. He doesn't speak and things not happen... Here we see concerning the kingdom that we must receive it to enter it. Could be confusing, but it is like eternal life, salvation, and many other promises in His Word. We must first receive the promise of it by faith, the word of the kingdom, and then we will be given entrance when all these things are fulfilled. So, the "kingdom" received is the Word preached, and the "kingdom" entered is the kingdom brought to pass in the fulness of time when the word is to have its fulfillment.

In this way, we are both "in the kingdom" by faith and "waiting for it", just as with eternal life which we "have" by faith but have yet to "receive".

Revelation 1:9 - "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for THE WORD OF GOD, and for THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST."

Acts 14:22 - "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, and that we must through much tribulation ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

We will look at some other passages such as these later but suffice it to say this understanding of these promises is an exercise in faith. First faith in the Word, then fulfillment of the promise.

That's how God works. He requires faith. Remember the father of faith?

Genesis 15:5 - 6 - "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, SO SHALL THY SEED BE. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

The gospel of the kingdom is the things declared to be true concerning Jesus Christ by the witness of the Holy Spirit which speaks of things to come. Those who hear and receive this Word, can have confidence towards God that they will be accounted righteous just like our father Abraham (FYI, Abraham never asked Christ into his heart, either...). The gospel of the kingdom is what men were sent to preach since the time of John the Baptist, since the time came for the fulfillment of the law and prophets. The law ceased to be preached as doctrine for practice on earth because it was fulfilled in Christ, so if we are preaching the gospel of the kingdom, can it already be here? Not in accordance with the way God works by his Word. His prophetic testimony is given before the fulfillment to give men opportunity for faith. The kingdom message is the prophetic component of the Word of the Lord to the people of this age just as the law was prophetic to the people in the prior age. The nation of Israel was chosen to represent and declare this knowledge so that people would have the opportunity to hear the Word, gain the knowledge of man's

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

sin and need of a redeemer, believe the testimony, and put their faith in the promise.

God has in this age called out believers from every nation and sent us as one holy nation to announce what is true in His Son Jesus Christ before it comes to pass, so that all who will believe may be saved.

1 Peter 2:9 - “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; THAT YE SHOULD SHEW FORTH the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:”

Those who believe the Word of the Lord preached in all the world concerning the work of God in Christ, receive an inheritance among the Saints of Light, being made fit for such a place by the grace of God according to the mighty working of His power in us by His Spirit and according to the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:17 - 21 - “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the HOPE of his calling, and what the RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in THIS WORLD, but also in THAT WHICH IS TO COME:”

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

Ephesians 2:7 - “That in the ages to come he might shew **THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”**

Colossians 1:27 - “To whom God would make known what is **THE RICHES OF THE GLORY of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:”**

So, the gospel of the kingdom speaks of the things pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ and communicates to man the reality of the coming age God has promised. It also declares who may enter that kingdom and who will not, and further declares that every man will find himself bound by the Word God that He has spoken. You can't choose not to participate...

Every man born into the world has a destiny in the world to come that is foretold by the Word of God whether that man believes the testimony of Christ or not.

Luke 16:16 - “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and **EVERY MAN PRESSETH INTO IT.”**

Every man born into the world has a destiny in the world to come that is foretold by the Word of God whether that man believes the testimony of Christ or not. God's Word will take hold of every man, regardless of that man's personal persuasion in the matter.

Acts 13:40 - “Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;”

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

The message of this gospel declares plainly who Jesus Christ is as the Son of God and promised Seed of Abraham, that He came to shed His blood and save His people from their sins, that He is raised by the power of God and is both Lord and Christ, that He is now at the right hand of the Father making intercession for the saints, that He is certain to return and to reign on his throne of Glory as the Seed of David, and offers a promise to those who will believe of having an inheritance in His eternal kingdom. This promise is the same one that Abraham received. The promise of eternal inheritance. This inheritance and its correlation to the kingdom is another important part of the faith we have, that we share with Abraham, that was fulfilled in Christ. The very promise made to Abraham is now made available to “whosoever will” through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 6:17 - “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto THE HEIRS OF PROMISE the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

Hebrews 9:15 - “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL INHERITANCE.”

Hebrews 10:36 - “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might RECEIVE THE PROMISE.”

Once you begin to see the gospel promise of the inheritance promised to Abraham, which we will study in more detail in a coming chapter, the preaching of the kingdom found throughout the New Testament books can be studied and understood through the faith of the hope we

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

have in that promise. Again, the entire New Testament is kingdom doctrine. You will begin to see the inheritance as a central theme of the gospel of Jesus Christ – the gospel of the kingdom of God. Since Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all heirs of this promise, Christ teaches of their fellowship in His kingdom:

Matthew 8:11 – “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”

So, the Kingdom of God, or as Matthew calls it in His gospel the Kingdom of Heaven (they are the same thing scripture clearly shows – despite very difficult work by theologians to make them different. Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience who were particular about writing the name God, so He used Heaven in all but 4 places, which are direct quotes from Christ. Clearly, if something comes from “Heaven” it is from “God” whose throne is there. The Kingdom that is “of Heaven” is also the Kingdom that is “Of God”. OK, little long. Back to our regularly scheduled thought), in scripture is shown to be:

1. The **WORD**, His Son Jesus Christ, who is King of Kings – the Word made flesh and the Just One who will reign on the throne of glory.
2. His **WORD** of testimony – God views His Word concerning things the same as the very fulfillment itself.
3. The Fulfillment of His **WORD** – “the world to come” as Paul says, “whereof we speak”. We will be speaking of it in our next chapter.

The mystery of God’s kingdom is made clear in the person of Christ, who is God in the flesh, the express image

Chapter 6 - The Gospel of the Kingdom

of His person, the fulness of the Godhead bodily. It is by His Son that He will reign over all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. They were created by Him and for Him.

If this Kingdom is not received by man, now by faith as a little child, that man will not enter either. If a man is not born again by the power of it, he will not enter it. If a man's righteousness doesn't exceed the scribes and pharisees, he will not enter. Not everyone that says "Lord, Lord" will enter, but only those who do the will of the Father - which is to believe. If a man is trusting riches, He will not be able to enter. If a man is trusting his own righteousness, he cannot enter. If a man is looking for a messiah other than the one the Father sent, Jesus Christ, he will not enter. Many will seek to enter but shall not be able. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter. Considering these truths, many of our modern, theological debates about salvation and Christianity begin to look as silly as the theological experts of Jesus' day when asking their questions of Him. Consider the testimony given in scripture concerning these things:

Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as

I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

Chapter 7 – The Hope of the Saints

I had completed this book, once, and then decided I did in fact need to add a chapter on the topic of HOPE, because it is so critical to the gospel we believe and preach from God's Word. We will endeavor here, as briefly as we can, to look at what this HOPE communicates to us.

This is an important question we need to get squared away with respect to the gospel of Jesus Christ and of His kingdom, the question of our HOPE. You can't study the New Testament without seeing this word spoken of time and again. It is essential that we spend at least a few minutes looking at a scriptural view of what this means as it relates to our preaching and faith.

What is HOPE anyway? Simply speaking, hope is the reason we do everything we do. At the most fundamental level, all human behavior is rooted in HOPE. It is why we work, plan, and play the way we do. When Christ speaks of our hope, he is speaking to this deeply rooted expectation that produces fruit in our lives via the "works" that we can see. The very reason we do anything is because of the expectation we have, our hope, that gives it purpose and value. The importance of this is essential to our understanding for several reasons.

One of these reasons is that "works" can be seemingly similar from person to person but can be rooted in very different hopes. God looks upon the heart and is a judge of those "works" that we can't see with the eyes. For example, one person might give mightily to the work of God with his finances - in hope of earning God's favor. Another may give mightily as well - to attempt to

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

obligate God to bless Him in some way. This is not pleasing to God and is an attempt to sway His perfect judgement or gain His favor through bribes - of which He is not in favor.

Exodus 23:8 - “And thou shalt TAKE NO GIFT: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.”

Deuteronomy 16:19 - “Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt NOT RESPECT PERSONS, NEITHER TAKE A GIFT: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.”

Proverbs 17:23 - “A WICKED MAN TAKETH A GIFT out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.”

These areas where judgement is perverted by the giving or taking of gifts is not just good advice for man, it is instructional to us of His holy character, as He will not be bribed or obligated through the efforts of men. All the religious teachings to the contrary, come from those who do not KNOW the one true God. He gave men the pattern of not taking gifts, because it reflects His perfect and holy judgement which doesn't respect persons or take bribes:

Deuteronomy 10:17 - “For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, NOR TAKETH REWARD:”

In scripture, God clearly condemns these practices that pervert His holy and righteous ways for filthy lucre sake:

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Micah 3:11 - “The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.”

So, we should know, if we have read His testimony, that He will not be persuaded from judgement or justice with gifts - things we do “for Him” in the flesh.

Another man may of a good heart and conscience towards God give just as mightily as our first two examples in His desire to demonstrate FAITH towards God in His eternal promises because of the HOPE that man has. If a man has been delivered from the lusts of the heart by the power of God through FAITH in His gospel, then his actions of giving are “good works” being made so by the blood of Christ that has purged the man’s conscience from sins by faith. We must first be justified in His sight, made righteous by God through faith in His Word, and granted His Spirit before we are able to offer Him a gift of a pure heart.

Acts 15:8 - 9 - “And God, which KNOWETH THE HEARTS, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH.”

Hebrews 10:22 - “Let us draw near with a TRUE HEART IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, having our HEARTS SPRINKLED from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

This is what God desires from man. A faith of the heart in the **WORD HE HAS GIVEN**, that results in works that are rooted in that faith towards God. The outside may look the same to man, but God knows our hearts. If we are giving to Him for what we expect to get back in this life or to obligate Him in some way to do things for us, He is not ignorant of that fact. While the external practice of these may **APPEAR** the same, only those things done in **FAITH** will please God.

Knowing that much, we who are of the household of faith in our time need to ask the question, “what is our **HOPE?**”. Is it that we can “go to heaven when we die? That’s not a bad hope to have, but is it the hope of the gospel from which we are not to be moved away? Is it a hope that was embraced by the apostles in their teaching or a modern interpretation of their confidence? Is it a hope that keeps us grounded and settled in the faith? Is it a hope that comforts our hearts and establishes us in every good word and work? Is it a hope that will work in our lives to keep us pure? Is it a hope that serves as spiritual armor?

While we can certainly have confidence in Christ regarding the death of our flesh, we will see in scripture, that our hope, the one spoken of in scripture that is in Christ, was not delivered to the saints as an earnest expectation (the definition of hope) regarding their death, but the arrival and appearing of their Savior Jesus Christ. This cannot be glazed over as an unimportant distinction or dismissed as a semantical exercise. The hope of the gospel must continue to be **TAUGHT** and **BELIEVED** the way it was in the apostles’ time. The subtlety here leaves us open to all manner of temptation and error if we let these things slip:

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Hebrews 2:1 -

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things WHICH WE HAVE HEARD, LEST at any time WE SHOULD LET THEM SLIP.”

If we accept a gospel that only gives us hope of “going to heaven when we die”, then we have ALREADY been moved away from the true gospel hope.

Colossians

1:23 - “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL...”

I will show you from scripture the importance of this hope, and how that if we accept a gospel that only gives us hope of “going to heaven when we die”, then we have ALREADY been moved away from the true gospel hope.

All through the scripture, hope is a primary theme of God’s people. It is necessary to our faith. It is defined from the Greek word as an “earnest expectation”. It is not the kind of way we use the word today when we answer someone “I hope so”. That use implies a possibility. The scriptural use is one of which a person is persuaded is a fact. The origin of the hope, or expectation, is what is important. True Hope comes from knowledge, belief, and confidence in the testimony of Christ, the true and faithful witness of the Father.

Revelation 3:14 - “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, the beginning of the creation of God;”

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Satan, the one who has sown corrupt seed of false testimony and witness, is the source of all other hopes.

John 8:44 - “Ye are of your father THE DEVIL, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for HE IS A LIAR, AND THE FATHER OF IT.”

Only the hope that is founded on the true foundation, Jesus Christ, will stand the test of the storm. These hopes are compared by the wisest man who ever lived besides Jesus Christ in his book of Proverbs:

Proverbs 10:28 - “The HOPE of the righteous shall be gladness: but the EXPECTATION of the wicked shall perish.”

So, where we get our information makes all the difference when it comes to our expectations being fulfilled. If our hope is in any of the devil’s thousands of variations of the truth, well, those are lies, so don’t be surprised when it doesn’t come to pass. That’s why they call it a lie... However, if you have believed the true witness, then all your hope will be realized in due time. It is impossible for God to lie, which is the key concept to understanding the gospel and faith. Seems simple enough but is missed by all too many.

In many places we can see the hope that the psalmist had, and we can recognize it immediately as the hope of our gospel as well.

Psalms 119:114 - “Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I HOPE IN THY WORD.”

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Psalm 130:5 - “I WAIT FOR THE LORD, my soul doth wait, and IN HIS WORD DO I HOPE.”

I won't go at length here, but this principle is and always has been important to those of the household of faith. Our hope is in Him. In His Testimony. In His Word. In His Son. All of these are one and the selfsame hope. The hope itself is of divine origin having been authored by God Himself when He spoke the Word to us that was believed by faith! Because we are confident of the Lord's truth and character, we know His Word and His promises to those who believe Him cannot be broken.

So, as far as the gospel of the kingdom is concerned, we have been given HOPE according to the promises of Christ. All the promises of God are true in Christ, which explains why Paul says that He IS our hope:

2 Corinthians 1:20 - “For ALL THE PROMISES of God IN HIM ARE YEA, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”

1 Timothy 1:1 - “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, WHICH IS OUR HOPE;”

So, we could go on at great length here about all these things as far as the promises. Hope of Resurrection? Christ is the resurrection. Hope of eternal life? He is the life and eternal life is in Him. Hope of an inheritance? We are joint heirs with Him. Hope of a reward? He is our great reward. We could investigate all these things in scripture and study them for a long time, but let's just jump to the point. Since He IS our hope,

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

that means we are earnestly expecting.....that's right.
HIM!

Titus 2:13 - "Looking for that BLESSED HOPE, and the GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST;"

The hope of the gospel is Jesus Christ Himself and specifically, the fulfillment of the **PROMISES** made to those who believe **WHEN HE APPEARS**. All of creation currently is waiting for this event. The redeemed saints who "sleep" in Christ are waiting in His presence for this event. The saints on earth who are yet in the days of their flesh are waiting for this event. Christ Himself is at the right hand of the father "expecting" and waiting for His Father's command to return for His bride. His appearing, mentioned in about 1 out of every 25 verses or so in the New Testament, is the blessed hope of all who are of the household of faith - both which are in heaven and in earth.

This is the hope that was preached and believed by those hearing the gospel from the apostles after the ascension of Jesus Christ. This is a big deal! Don't dismiss this without full consideration of the things to be learned here. Even when the apostle Paul famously teaches the believers at Thessalonica to "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" regarding those who had died among the saints, the reason is not because we believe we will die and be with them again! **NO!!** he would have **NEVER** taught that because He wanted them to be steadfast in the hope of the gospel! He said, **"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will GOD BRING WITH HIM."** What a

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

difference! He told them not to sorrow because Christ would bring those departed saints with Him when Christ came for them! Amen!

Now, we could look at the words of Christ to the churches in revelation where He pleads with them to repent regarding their faithfulness to watch. We could look at the fact that He taught only those with a watchful and expectant faith of His return would walk in white with Him as worthy saints. And we could continue for long hours to explore the reasons these things are important to Christ. It is evident, and abundantly so, that our Lord requires the good works of watchfulness from His saints.

This hope of His return is the lively hope Peter speaks of and is the hope of the gospel that we are warned not to be moved away from by Paul. It is a holy admonishment given from our Savior to the apostles nearly 2,000 years ago:

Luke 21:36 - “WATCH ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

Mark 13:37 - “And what I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH.”

**Revelation
3:3 - “Remember
therefore how thou
hast received and
heard, and hold fast,
and repent. If there-
fore thou shalt not
WATCH, I will**

*This hope of His return is
the lively hope Peter
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of the gospel that we are
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away from by Paul.*

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

And was passed on by the apostles to the saints in the churches as they were taught to be patient and watchful. They even taught that it would take strength, prayer, sobriety and being grounded and settled:

1 Corinthians 16:13 - “WATCH ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

Colossians 4:2 - “Continue in prayer, and WATCH in the same with thanksgiving;”

1 Thessalonians 5:6 - “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us WATCH and be sober.”

1 Peter 4:7 - “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and WATCH unto prayer.

This is being grounded and settled in the faith in scripture. This is the diligence and patience required by the saints of God to hold fast firm unto the end:

Hebrews 3:6 - “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we HOLD FAST the confidence and the rejoicing of the HOPE FIRM UNTO THE END.”

Hebrews 6:11 - “And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of HOPE UNTO THE END:”

1 Peter 1:13 - “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and HOPE TO THE END for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”

Chapter 7 – The Hope of the Saints

So, what was “the end” to the apostles? Clearly the appearing and revelation of Jesus Christ, until which time we are to be steadfast in this hope of the gospel.

2 Corinthians 1:13 – “For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;”

1 Corinthians 1:8 – “Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Hebrews 3:14 – “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;”

All the epistles put the saints in remembrance of this blessed hope, and often so. They, like their Lord, were admonishing the saints to be watching for the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus

When we begin preaching a “when you die” gospel, we have abandoned the thrust of the faith – the faith that has an expectation of His return.

Christ. This “work” is necessary for those who would be witnesses to the truth. Those who would be salt and light to the world of the gospel. To keep a witness in the world to the truth of His coming and to keep themselves unspotted from the world. Clearly, we see from our Lord that our faith, our hope, His promise, and His return are all inextricably connected. Those who have professed faith in Christ but are not living in hope and expectation of His appearing have not yet known the truth of gospel preaching.

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

When we begin preaching a “when you die” gospel, we have abandoned the thrust of the faith – the faith that has an expectation of His return. The return that He requires us to be expecting to be counted “worthy” of Him. We have taught men of a gospel that is removed from the very hope it was intended to give and uphold. We have thus given men an EXPECTATION of living out their natural lives in the flesh, to be received into His presence when they leave the earth. Dangerous ground indeed – if you accept the witness of Christ concerning His things. Christ clearly taught His disciples that those professing faith in Him who are faithful to be watching for His return would be the ones who receive the promise of the inheritance:

Luke 12:43 – “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.”

And Paul teaches that He will appear unto salvation for those who are watching for Him:

Hebrews 9:28 – “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

And Christ warns those of the churches to repent and remain watchful lest He come on them unawares:

Revelation 3:3 – “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and REPENT. If therefore thou shalt not WATCH, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

The faith and hope of the gospel hinges upon the return of Christ, and that must be sounded in our gospel preaching as well as be a living hope in our hearts by faith.

Colossians 3:4 - “When Christ, who is our life, shall **APPEAR**, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

1 Timothy 6:14 - “That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the **APPEARING** of our Lord Jesus Christ:”

2 Timothy 4:1 - “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his **APPEARING** and his kingdom;”

2 Timothy 4:8 - “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his **APPEARING**.”

Titus 2:13 - “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious **APPEARING** of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

Hebrews 9:28 - “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he **APPEAR** the second time without sin unto salvation.”

1 Peter 1:7 - “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the **APPEARING** of Jesus Christ:”

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

1 Peter 5:4 - “And when the chief Shepherd shall APPEAR, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

1 John 2:28 - “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall APPEAR, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

1 John 3:2 - “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall APPEAR, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

This appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ is the hope of the gospel. All the promises of God are in Him yea and amen. Resurrection, redemption, eternal life, salvation, grace, glory and inheritance all lie within our hearts by promise according to His Word, and all those expectations we have from His promise will be brought with Him when He appears for us! Now that is an anchor of the soul for the heirs of promise:

Hebrews 6:17 - 19 - “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the HEIRS OF PROMISE the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: WHICH HOPE WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;”

A lively hope of the things of the one who has begotten us again:

1 Peter 1:3 - 5 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

mercy hath begotten us again unto a **LIVELY HOPE** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To **INHERITANCE** incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God **THROUGH FAITH UNTO SALVATION** ready to be revealed in the last time.”

And is the hope people need to see in us so that they might ask of the reason we have it!

1 Peter 3:15 - “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that ASKETH YOU A REASON OF THE HOPE that is in you with meekness and fear:”

The preaching of the gospel ought to put men in expectation of Christ’s appearing and coming for us rather than our death and going to Him. We can see this very clearly in the preaching of John the Baptist and the apostles as well. John had been sent to prepare the way of the Lord – through his preaching.

Luke 3:15 - “And as the people were in EXPECTATION, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;”

Why were the people in expectation? John’s preaching and message had prepared the people by putting them in **EXPECTATION** of the arrival of Christ. Those who received this testimony of John’s concerning the arrival of Christ, had hearts that were hopeful or expectant of Christ’s arrival, and because of that were concerned about their preparedness for the events he was declaring. The verses immediately prior to verse 15 speak of the concern of these expectant folks as to this very thing:

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Luke 3:10 - “And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?”

Luke 3:12 - “Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?”

Luke 3:14 - “And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do?...”

In all his preaching, John the Baptist was prophetically declaring things to come that would put the people in holy faith and expectation. Our preaching ought to do the same.

This hope and expectation was in their hearts by faith and got there through the preaching of John. He was declaring the truth of Christ’s judgement by warning of the wrath to come. He was declaring the coming of the Christ who would take away the sins of

the world. The one who is preferred before John and was before John. He was preaching of the harvest at the end of the age. The gathering of the wheat into the barn and the burning of the chaff with unquenchable fire. The scripture says he also preached many other things in his exhortation to the people. In all his preaching, John the Baptist was prophetically declaring things to come that would put the people in holy faith and expectation. Our preaching ought to do the same.

Those who are of the household of faith, maintain their expectation to the END - meaning until they receive what they are hoping in Christ for. Many in John’s day, Christ’s day, and the apostles’ day “went away”, “walked no more with Him”, or “went out from them”.

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

These became offended along the way as they lost faith in the promises He had spoken.

John 6:61 - 62 - “When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?”

These had received the Word with gladness but became offended along the way or turned back to the world with its’ cares & pleasures. Many had misunderstood the things they heard and thought all these blessings and promises were to come to them now in this natural life – when they didn’t come, they went away. In John 6 Christ asks concerning their offense **“What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?”** i.e. will you continue to believe in the promise of the kingdom even if you see me go away? Will you be steadfast and faithful to the Word I have spoken even if I go away and you haven’t seen the fulfillment of those things? Will that mean to you that the promises are not true? The blessing is to those who endure, which is also another promise from Christ:

Luke 7:23 - “And BLESSED IS HE, whosoever shall NOT BE OFFENDED IN ME.”

Offended is a way of speaking of anything that causes someone to stumble and begin to distrust or desert the one whom we ought to trust and obey. Christ warns that those who are offended in Him by what they see in this world or experience in this life will be turned back from following Him – i.e. they received the seed but did not overcome the world.

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

The hallmark of God's work in a person's heart is a confidence in Him that cannot be shaken. A hope that endures until the end. A faith that is steadfast in His promise and gives victory over this world.

2 Peter 2:19 - "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."

May we be overcome by the work of God's Word in our hearts and His promised reward rather than by the cares of this world and its' present rewards.

Job 8:13 - 15

So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's **HOPE** shall perish: Whose **HOPE** shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Job 27:8	For what is the HOPE of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?
Psalms 71:5	For thou art my HOPE , O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth.
Psalms 119:81	My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I HOPE in thy word.
Psalms 130:5	I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I HOPE .
Jeremiah 17:7	Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose HOPE the LORD is.
Lamentations 3:26	It is good that a man should both HOPE and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.
Acts 2:26	Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in HOPE :
Acts 23:6	But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the HOPE and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.
Acts 24:15	And have HOPE toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Acts 26:6 - 7	And now I stand and am judged for the HOPE of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, HOPE to come. For which HOPE'S sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.
Acts 28:20	For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the HOPE of Israel I am bound with this chain.
Romans 4:18	Who against HOPE believed in HOPE , that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.
Romans 5:4 - 5	And patience, experience; and experience, HOPE : And HOPE maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.
Romans 8:20	For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in HOPE ,
Romans 8:24 - 25	For we are saved by HOPE : but HOPE that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet HOPE for? But if we HOPE for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Romans 15:4	For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have HOPE .
Galatians 5:5	For we through the Spirit wait for the HOPE of righteousness by faith.
1 Corinthians 9:10	Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in HOPE ; and that he that thresheth in HOPE should be partaker of his HOPE .
1 Corinthians 15:19	If in this life only we have HOPE in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.
2 Corinthians 3:12	Seeing then that we have such HOPE , we use great plainness of speech:
Ephesians 1:18	The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the HOPE of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
Ephesians 2:12	That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no HOPE , and without God in the world:
Ephesians 4:4	There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one HOPE of your calling;

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Colossians 1:5	For the HOPE which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;
Colossians 1:23	If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the HOPE of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;
Colossians 1:27	To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the HOPE of glory:
1 Thessalonians 1:3	Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of HOPE in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;
1 Thessalonians 4:13	But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no HOPE .
1 Thessalonians 5:8	But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the HOPE of salvation.
2 Thessalonians 2:16	Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

	given us everlasting consolation and good HOPE through grace,
1 Timothy 1:1	Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our HOPE ;
Titus 1:2	In HOPE of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;
Titus 2:13	Looking for that blessed HOPE , and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
Titus 3:7	That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the HOPE of eternal life.
Hebrews 3:6	But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the HOPE firm unto the end.
Hebrews 6:11	And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of HOPE unto the end:
Hebrews 6:18	That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the HOPE set before us:
Hebrews 6:19	Which HOPE we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Chapter 7 - The Hope of the Saints

Hebrews 7:19	For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better HOPE did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.
1 Peter 1:3	Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively HOPE by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
1 Peter 1:13	Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and HOPE to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
1 Peter 1:21	Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and HOPE might be in God.
1 Peter 3:15	But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the HOPE that is in you with meekness and fear:
1 John 3:3	And every man that hath this HOPE in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Chapter 8 – The World to Come

Luke 18:29 - 30 - “And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in THE WORLD TO COME life everlasting.”

An important aspect of the inheritance of the saints involves a phrase from scripture that speaks of the work God has promised to do by His Son Jesus Christ - to make all things new! This phrase is “the world to come” and is an important aspect of the promises of God in scripture and especially as a part of the preaching of the kingdom of God. Christ used this term Himself and so did the apostles in their writings. We would like to look briefly at this doctrine because it is the world of which Abraham was promised to be heir as spoken of in Romans chapter 4. The world we look for as joint heirs with Christ of the promises made to the fathers. It is in this world that we will finally have a world wherein dwelleth righteousness - and no wonder as the Lord Himself will dwell there.

Many promises made by God in His Word are spoken to be FOREVER, and yet we haven't seen them fulfilled in this world. That is because this world will not be forever but is destined to be destroyed as foretold in the scriptures. In the world to come, all these things concerning that which is to be forever, will be fulfilled.

Genesis 13:15 - “For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed FOR EVER.”

2 Samuel 7:13 - “He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom **FOR EVER.**”

Daniel 7:18 -
“But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom **FOR EVER**, even for ever and ever.”

Ezekiel 37:28 -
“And the heathen shall know that I the **LORD** do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them **FOR EVERMORE.**”

Ezekiel 43:7 -
“And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel **FOR EVER**, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.”

*In these and other places, we see the promises of God that are forever. However, we see that on earth now, they are not yet realized or fulfilled. That is because this age and world will have an end, after which an age and world are to be ushered in that will last **FOR-EVER** and be without end.*

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Chapter 8 - The World to Come

The children of Israel have not been planted in their land to inhabit it forever – yet.

The Son of David is not set down on the throne of His father David – yet.

The saints of God have not taken possession of the kingdom – yet.

The sanctuary of God has not been established in the midst of His people – yet.

The eternal throne in the midst of the people of Israel hasn't been placed – yet.

We even know the promise that was confirmed to Mary by Gabriel when He announced the Word of the Lord to her concerning the birth of Jesus included an affirmation of His coming eternal reign.

Luke 1:31 – 33 – “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God SHALL GIVE unto him the throne of his father David: And HE SHALL REIGN over the house of Jacob FOR EVER; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Yet, for all these promises spoken, Mary never saw the fulfillment of this Word during her lifetime. These things are not a contradiction at all. We see from the scripture that the promises are all future things God has said he **WILL** do, and that **WHEN** God does them, they will be forever. So, from our previous text in Luke 1, we know that **WHEN** Jesus receives the throne of His father David, He will reign on it **FOR EVER** from that point forward. If He were to fulfill them now in this age, they would have an

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

end because this earth is destined for destruction, so we see that He has spoken them by His Word as a promise of what He will do and that when He does it, it will be forever.

Ecclesiastes 3:14 - “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be FOR EVER: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.”

Harking back to our chapter on *A Shadow of Things to Come*, we see this clear distinction in the finality of what God does versus man. When men offered sacrifices after the flesh, it was never lasting, but when Christ offered Himself once for all, the Word of God was fulfilled FOREVER. No more sacrifice for sins. The one sacrifice He made when he offered up Himself, was the only one needed for it to be done.

Hebrews 7:27 - “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for THIS HE DID ONCE, when he offered up himself.”

In some scriptures we see the contrast between now and forever very clearly:

2 Peter 3:18 - “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both NOW and FOR EVER. Amen.”

The promise of this coming world has been long foretold by the Word of the Lord, as we have already seen by the promise God made to Abraham. This is especially made clear by the prophet Isaiah.

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

Isaiah 65:17 - “For, behold, I create NEW HEAVENS and a NEW EARTH: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”

Isaiah 66:22 - “For as the NEW HEAVENS and the NEW EARTH, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.”

And was revealed by the Holy Spirit through other prophets as well.

Haggai 2:6 - “For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.”

This becomes even clearer in the New Testament as additional LIGHT regarding the truth and time of the things that are to be brought to pass are taught with even more detail and clarity as they focus and expound the teachings of the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews speaks of this prophecy from Haggai regarding the removing of the things of this present world.

Hebrews 12:26 - 27 - “Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth THE REMOVING of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

The removing of the things of this present world is then spoken of in contrast with the kingdom promised to

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

the saints by inheritance in Christ through the promise to Abraham in the very next verse...

Hebrews 12:28 - 29 - “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.”

So, all the works of man and this present age are to be removed, but the kingdom we are receiving cannot be moved because it is the work of God and not man. While it is tempting to go into all the prophetic revelations of the Holy Spirit regarding the end of this world, I will attempt to stay on the track that is most relevant to our study of the world to come. Peter also correlates the arrival of this long-expected world with the hope of the promise we have received from the Word of truth and with the removal of this present world by elaborating on the teaching from Isaiah.

2 Peter 3:9 - “The Lord is not slack concerning his PROMISE, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which THE HEAVENS SHALL PASS AWAY with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, THE EARTH also and the works that are therein SHALL BE BURNED UP. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his PROMISE, look for

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, wherein dwelleth RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

So, there are promises made regarding the end of this PRESENT world that must first be fulfilled before the promise of the world to come is received. The destruction by fire of this present evil world is necessary to the accomplishment of the scriptures concerning the arrival of the kingdom of God. Christ taught His disciples of all these things as He revealed the mysteries of the kingdom to them.

Luke 21:31 - “So likewise ye, WHEN YE SEE these things come to pass, KNOW ye that THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NIGH at hand.”

Many people place the destruction of the present world at the end of the millennium in their thinking, but that seems to be at odds with the Apostles teachings and other revelations from scripture (we will look at this in more detail in a coming chapter). If the kingdom is to be forever, and Christ will dwell among the nation of Israel forever, and they will inherit the land forever, and the throne of glory upon which Christ will sit will be forever, it seems that the removal of the present world must precede the inauguration of those events. Since the creation of the earth was performed by the Word of God, it is to be forever – however, the works of man and the earth as we know it will be destroyed according to the promise of God. Notice another prophetic Word by the Spirit from Isaiah:

Isaiah 45:17 - 18 - “But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an EVERLASTING salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded WORLD WITHOUT END. For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath

established it, **HE CREATED IT NOT IN VAIN, HE FORMED IT TO BE INHABITED: I am the LORD; and there is none else.**”

So, the Lord formed the world to be inhabited, and inhabited it shall be - so He tells us. This is in fact what Peter teaches in the passage we just read, and is seen in Hebrews, Haggai, Isaiah, and in each account of the Olivet Discourse:

Of what day and hour is Christ discussing? The hour in which the heavens and earth shall pass -discussed in the immediately preceding verse.

Matthew 24:35
- 36 - “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

Of what day and hour is Christ discussing? The hour in which the heavens and earth shall pass -discussed in the immediately preceding verse. He then likens the event He is referencing to the flood of Noah’s time. You might remember that story. The one where God destroys the entire earth... So, this event at the end of the great tribulation is to be accomplished prior to the ushering in of the kingdom that has been promised - before the millennium. The other Olivet accounts in Mark and Luke read the same:

Mark 13:31 - 32 - “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

Luke 21:33 - 36 - “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

So, heaven and earth are to pass away as the prophets foretold. Not the removing of the creation God made. A removal of the corruption and wickedness wrought by man and a removal of those works influenced by Satan. None of the works accomplished by man or Satan, or even a shadow of them, will survive the age - no legacy, no monument, no landmark.

Isaiah 65:17 - “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and THE FORMER THINGS SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED, NOR COME INTO MIND.”

Only the work of God in Christ will stand as a memorial of His work and grace. Once these things are removed, we will see a times of refreshing and restitution of all things sent from the Father by the hand of Jesus Christ

Acts 3:19 - 21 - “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the TIMES OF REFRESHING shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

These are the promises of God concerning the true and faithful words which He has spoken unto us by His Son, who will make all things new.

Revelation 21:5 - “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

The millennium doesn't denote the end of the world as far as the creation of it goes, as is commonly thought. It denotes the end of the adversary of God and the final victory of Christ over Satan, Sin, and Death.

1 Corinthians 15:26 - “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

With at least that much under our belts and before we get stuck here too long, which is tempting for those who love the promises of God, let's look at a few other passages in the scriptures that speak of the world to come:

Matthew 12:32 - “And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the WORLD TO COME.”

Mark 10:30 - “But he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the WORLD TO COME eternal life.”

Luke 18:10 - “Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the WORLD TO COME life everlasting.”

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

Luke 20:34 - “ And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain THAT WORLD, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:”

Ephesians 1:21 - “Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in THAT WHICH IS TO COME.”

Hebrews 2:5 - “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the WORLD TO COME, whereof we speak.”

Hebrews 6:5 - “ And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the WORLD TO COME,”

So, in Hebrews 2:5, Paul writes by the Holy Spirit that it is the world to come **WHEREOF WE SPEAK** - i.e. our teaching and preaching of the things of the kingdom of God. This preaching of the world to come is central to the preaching of the kingdom and the faith we profess in the Word of God spoken in our time. Once we understand the preaching that was taking place concerning the world to come, all the other passages about this **PRESENT WORLD** make more sense to our understanding of the scriptures because they are being shown in **CONTRAST** to each other. We also can see how they are at odds with one another **ALL THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT!** One is of God and the other of men. One will be a place where righteousness dwells and one is a place of wickedness and sin. One is the Kingdom of Christ, the true light, and one is the kingdom of darkness. One is of the power of the Holy Spirit, and one is of the spirit of

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

disobedience. Time would fail us here to capture the breadth of this topic, but let's look at some examples.

When we see the parable of the sower and the seed sown among thorns, what we have is the Word of God concerning the world to come and the allure of the present world that keeps men blinded to the truth - the truth that God has judged the world and it is to pass away and that He has promised to make a new world. Let's look:

Matthew 13:22 - "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth THE WORD [of the kingdom from verse 19]; and the care of THIS WORLD, and the deceitfulness of riches, CHOKE THE WORD, and he becometh unfruitful."

So, consequently, we see these worlds at odds with each other. You cannot serve God and mammon as it were. You cannot love this world and its riches while also living by faith in the Word God which He has spoken concerning both this world and the world to come. Laying up treasure on earth is, after all, contrary to kingdom doctrine. Not just because it preaches well, but because trust and confidence in the things of this world is contrary to the working of faith in God's promises and complete trust in Him and His Word. You may remember Christ's teaching of how hard it is to enter the kingdom for those who trust riches:

Mark 10:24 - "And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that TRUST IN RICHES to enter into the kingdom of God!"

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

How do you know if you have trust in riches? Because you struggle to let go of them, as the young man in scripture that had great wealth.

Mark 19:21 - “Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, HE WENT AWAY sorrowful: for he had great possessions.”

So, the young man heard the word, but it was choked out by the love of this world and its riches. They provide a false sense of security – a security that opposes true faith in Christ. How do you know if you trust in riches? How generous are you able to be with the things over which you have been made steward? Could you lose everything and still have peace, joy, contentment, and faith? You could if you believed in the gospel of the kingdom.

We could look at countless examples of this promise and its contrast to this present world, but let’s simply conclude by saying this: There is a world to come that is promised.

In it, all who have been justified by faith are to receive eternal life. This world to come is to be of the Holy Spirit, subject to Christ as King and to the saints who are joint heirs with Him by faith. The name of Jesus Christ will be exalted above every principality, power, might, dominion, and name in this world and in the world to come.

*Could you lose everything
and still have peace, joy,
contentment, and faith?
You could if you believed in
the gospel of the kingdom.*

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

When we see the preaching of the kingdom and the aspect of the things we speak concerning the **WORLD TO COME** from scripture, all of the other scriptures speaking of **THIS WORLD** make for clearer understanding because they are given to us as a **CONTRAST** to the world that is promised to come – not only a general statement of an invisible system we can't see, although the god of this present world controls that as well. That is why we see teaching all through the New Testament that speaks of “the world”, because, as we are told in Hebrews, it is the world to come, whereof we speak, being contrasted to this present world of which the world speaks. The question is, which world are you living for, hoping in, and speaking of? As Paul told the Philippians, our citizenship is in heaven and we are not of this world. The world to come will be “of God” and under the dominion of Christ as the second Adam, as opposed to this present world under the dominion of Satan by way of the fall of the first Adam.

2 Peter 2:19 – “...for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”

Psalm 17:14	From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion IN THIS LIFE , and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and
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Chapter 8 - The World to Come

	leave the rest of their substance to their babes.
John 8:23	And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of THIS WORLD ; I am not of this world.
John 12:25	He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in THIS WORLD shall keep it unto life eternal.
John 14:30	Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of THIS WORLD cometh, and hath nothing in me.
John 15:19	If ye were of the WORLD , the WORLD would love his own: but because ye are not of the WORLD , but I have chosen you out of the WORLD , therefore the world hateth you.
John 16:11	Of judgment, because the prince of THIS WORLD is judged.
John 17:6	I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me OUT OF THE WORLD : thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.
John 17:14	I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD , even as I am not of the world.
John 18:36	Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of THIS WORLD : if my kingdom were of THIS WORLD , then would my

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

	servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.
Romans 12:2	And be not conformed to THIS WORLD : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
1 Corinthians 2:6	Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of THIS WORLD , nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:
1 Corinthians 2:8	Which none of the princes of THIS WORLD knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
1 Corinthians 2:12	Now we have received, not the spirit of THE WORLD , but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
1 Corinthians 3:19	For the wisdom of THIS WORLD is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.
1 Corinthians 7:31	And they that use THIS WORLD , as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.
1 Corinthians 7:33	But he that is married careth for the things that are of THE WORLD , how he may please his wife.

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

1 Corinthians 10:11	Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ENDS OF THE WORLD are come.
1 Corinthians 11:32	But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with THE WORLD .
2 Corinthians 4:4	In whom the god of THIS WORLD hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.
Galatians 1:4	Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD , according to the will of God and our Father
Galatians 4:3	Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the WORLD :
Galatians 6:14	But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the WORLD is crucified unto me, and I unto the WORLD .
Ephesians 1:21	Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in THIS WORLD , but also in that which is to come:
Ephesians 2:2	Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of THIS

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

	WORLD , according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.
Ephesians 6:12	For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of THIS WORLD , against spiritual wickedness in high places
1 Timothy 6:7	For we brought nothing into THIS WORLD , and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
Titus 2:12 - 13	Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in THIS PRESENT WORLD ; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
James 2:5	Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of THIS WORLD rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?
1 John 4:17	Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in THIS WORLD .
1 John 5:4	For whatsoever is born of God overcometh THE WORLD : and this is the victory that overcometh THE WORLD , even our faith.

Chapter 8 - The World to Come

Revelation 11:15	And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of THIS WORLD are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.
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Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

One of the topics that will be helpful to us in our study and understanding of the kingdom, is the inheritance of the Saints. This is another little wonderful doctrine of the faith that is taught with the gospel from Abraham all the way to the end of the age. Because the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul of Tarsus, clearly taught all the churches concerning this inheritance as a part of his gospel, we need to follow this out as well. It may even hide a few other pleasant surprises of clarity for us once we see how we, today, become partakers with Abraham. It undoubtedly was an imperative for Paul as he instructed the predominantly Gentile churches in their new-found faith. It will be tempting for us (me), to delve too deeply here, so I'll do my best to guide along without feasting too much on any one part of the testimony of Christ concerning these things, but they are rich indeed!

The first mention of any inheritance was in a conversation that God had with Abraham. God was making a promise and a covenant with him concerning this very thing, and it is where it all begins for us in this study as well, since it is Abraham's promise that we are made a partaker of. Let's pick up on this conversation as it is recorded for us in scripture:

Genesis 15:7 - 8 - "And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land TO INHERIT IT. And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

OK, so it's going to feel like I breeze over some significant history, well, because I am, but we won't leave out any essential substance of the doctrine here. Basically, God is here promising Abraham, after Abraham believed God concerning a promise of the future and was accounted

righteous for believing the Word of the Lord, that he will inherit the land. Abraham asks how will he know that he will inherit it? And God gives him a token pledge of the covenant by confirming the oath Himself while Abraham is in a deep sleep.

The important thing to realize here is that Abraham and God BOTH KNEW that they were not discussing what Abraham would get in this world, but rather in the world to come - after the resurrection. Abraham didn't come away from this conversation believing the rest of his life would be easy and God would give him all this land - he expected to INHERIT it. This clearly speaks to us of the world to come and the eternal life we are to receive in the resurrection of the just - if we are justified by faith like Abraham.

The scriptural proof of this is found in several places in scripture, but the most clarifying comes in the book of Romans from the apostle Paul who knew a lot about these kinds of things.

The important thing to realize here is that Abraham and God BOTH KNEW that they were not discussing what Abraham would get in this world, but rather in the world to come – after the resurrection.

Romans 4:13 “For THE PROMISE, that he should be the HEIR OF THE WORLD, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but THROUGH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.”

Hold on, cowboy. Say what again? That’s right. Abraham was promised to be heir. And that was the conversation he was having with the “Word of the Lord” in Genesis 15:

Genesis 15:1 - “After these things THE WORD OF THE LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying”

So, who was that? Well, it was the Lord. The same Lord who came to earth and fulfilled what was necessary to justify Abraham so that he could give him the promise he made to him in that covenant! You see, Abraham, like us, was not fit to inherit because he would die because of sin.

1 Corinthians 15:50 - “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood CANNOT INHERIT the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”

However, God is not a liar and promised him he would INHERIT. In order that God might fulfill His promise, he then did what was necessary to fulfill the promise by shedding His blood to justify Abraham so that he could glorify him and fulfill all His good pleasure in him. So in Romans, Paul is teaching that the promise made to Abraham was that he was to be heir of the world, and that this promise to Abraham and his Seed (Christ), was fulfilled by the coming of the Redeemer to offer His life a ransom for Abraham.

In short to recap, Abraham was promised inheritance, Abraham was not fit to inherit because of sin, God

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

sent His own Son to redeem Abraham and pay for his sin, Abraham then was justified by faith through the blood of Christ, and is now able to receive the inheritance having been forgiven all trespasses. In other words, you guessed it, the gospel. This is confirmed by scripture in many places, but to look at another passage from the epistle to the Romans...

Romans 15:8 - “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS:”

Acts 13:32 - 33 - “And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that THE PROMISE WHICH WAS MADE UNTO THE FATHERS, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.”

So, Paul taught the Gentiles about Abraham because it was necessary for their understanding and knowledge of the gospel (He didn't ask them to invite Jesus into their heart...). This was the gospel he preached and the Word of the Lord which was believed by “as many as were ordained to eternal life”.

Acts 13:48 - “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life BELIEVED.”

The importance of this doctrine of inheritance is a dominant theme of the gospel as we will attempt to show. As you begin to take notice, you will find it all over the place in your Bible. Look at this portion of Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1

“He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and TO MAKE THEM INHERIT THE THRONE OF GLORY;...”

So, Hannah must have known scripture and prophecy. That is because God has prepared some things for those that love Him, and He has taught us of them that we might be delivered from the corruption that is in this world through lust. This inheritance promised to Abraham, to be heir of the world, is fulfilled in Christ. This promise is still available today and is received the same way it was when Abraham received it – by faith. It is Abraham’s promise. We are made partakers of it through Christ. The promise is now a “whosoever will” gospel as opposed to the “Now the LORD had said unto Abram” gospel that was preached to him.

The Word of the Lord wasn’t spoken to everyone in Ur, but rather just Abraham. It is now sent to “every creature”. That is why Abraham is called the “father of us all” by scripture. God chose him and set him apart for his own purposes, just as He does with all his Saints, but Abraham is set forth in scripture as the first – the initial example – the Father of us all. Abraham didn’t receive the inheritance by inviting Jesus into his heart, or making Him Lord of his life, or even by works which he could do under his own power. It is by faith!

Romans 4:13 - 14 - “For THE PROMISE, that he should be the HEIR OF THE WORLD, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of FAITH. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:”

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

Romans 4:16 - “Therefore it [the inheritance] **IS OF FAITH, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed;...”**

Galatians 3:18 - “For if **THE INHERITANCE be of the law, it is no more of promise: but **GOD GAVE IT TO ABRAHAM BY PROMISE.**”**

Galatians 3:13 - 14 - “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the **BLESSING OF ABRAHAM might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”**

So, what is the blessing of Abraham? I’m glad you asked! That means you’re following along pretty well. The blessing of Abraham is not the inheritance. The inheritance is the inheritance. The blessing is what was necessary for God to fulfill His good pleasure toward Abraham in giving him the inheritance. Remember, he wasn’t fit. But having received the blessing, he is fit! The blessing is the promise of the Spirit and the righteousness which is by faith. We see Isaac speak of this to Jacob in Genesis as these promises of the inheritance were passed down through the family.

Genesis 28:4 - “And **GIVE THEE THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; **THAT THOU MAYEST INHERIT** the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.”**

The blessing of the Spirit and the gift of the righteousness which is by faith is necessary for inheritance to be a possibility. Isaac had been taught of these things by his father, Abraham, and was now passing them on to his son

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

Jacob. It is in this family context of receiving the promises of God by faith that we see the vile and profane person of Esau as he despised the promise, the covenant, and the blessing in favor of what he could have in this world and this life right now.

Genesis 25:32 – “And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?”

We see an attitude contrary to that of faith. An attitude of clinging to this life as precious. Not uncommon in Christianity today, but considered profane by the author of scripture. This was Esau’s testimony among a family that knew the promises. Interestingly, Esau honestly still expected to inherit, but his “hope” was disappointed:

Hebrews 12:17 – “For ye know how that afterward, when **HE WOULD HAVE INHERITED** the blessing, **HE WAS REJECTED**: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

The words “would have” mean that he expected to. It was his hope to inherit, but he was refused the blessing. He had always looked for those things that would profit him in **THIS LIFE**, and so being ignorant of the truth and unbelieving in his heart towards God, he was rejected. There is a ring

It is in this family context of receiving the promises of God by faith that we see the vile and profane person of Esau as he despised the promise, the covenant, and the blessing in favor of what he could have in this world and this life right now.

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

of truth in this warning from Hebrews for those under the New Covenant. If you are not delivered from the love of the world, don't expect to inherit. The testimony of God's Saints throughout the ages has been that they "loved not their lives unto the death", because we believe and know that God has prepared for us a more enduring substance.

Revelation 12:11 - "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES unto the death."

Hebrews 10:34 - "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and TOOK JOYFULLY THE SPOILING OF YOUR GOODS, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

1 John 2:15 - "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

The contrast between this present evil world and the word of God concerning the world to come couldn't be clearer. They are two different kingdoms. The earthly kingdom is our home by natural birth and is under the dominion of man and control of Satan, but those who have placed their faith in Christ according to the gospel of the kingdom are dead to this world and hid in Christ until His appearing and kingdom.

2 Timothy 4:1 - "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead AT HIS APPEARING AND HIS KINGDOM;"

Colossians 3:2 - 4 - "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For YE ARE DEAD,

and YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

We now live in the days of our flesh as pilgrim's and strangers here. Being dead to the flesh, it no longer has power over us to drive us about with its' appetite, lust, and desire for the things of this present world. We are now hidden in Christ and waiting to appear with Him when he appears. He has promised a world to come of which we have only tasted the powers.

Hebrews 6:5 – “And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of THE WORLD TO COME,”

We can only enter that world by the new birth, the spiritual birth, the birth from above, being born again in Christ as a new creature who is to partake of a new creation. A sort of first fruits of His creatures. Jesus Christ is the second Adam for that reason. By reason of those who are new creatures born of the Spirit by the Word of God through faith in Jesus Christ, we will be given a place in the world to come – an eternal place. No one possessing only the natural birth will be granted “entrance”, but only those born again by the incorruptible Word of God. Those who are “born again” are made so by the conception of the seed of the Word of God into their hearts by faith through the power of the Holy Spirit, and will be “brought forth” as the sons of God in due time.

1 Peter 1:23 – “Being BORN AGAIN, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, BY THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

1 John 3:2 – “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and IT DOTHT NOT YET APPEAR what we shall

be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

Romans 8:19 – “For the earnest expectation of the creature WAITETH FOR THE MANIFESTATION of the sons of God.”

James 1:18 – “Of his own will BEGAT HE US WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH, that we should be a kind of FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS CREATURES.”

The inheritance is the very foundation of the promise made to Abraham and to us. God has left the promise of His Word regarding the work of His Son Jesus Christ, to atone for sins so that they might be given the gift of eternal life. Those who will believe that promise are told to forsake living for this life and this present world in favor of a world they have never seen, but only heard about by the Word of the Lord, and told that God will grant them the blessing of Abraham and make them fit as well to receive the inheritance promised to Abraham. Being heir of the world.

Colossians 1:12 – 13 – “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath MADE US MEET TO BE PATAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”

This is the testimony of Paul himself concerning the work the Lord would do through him as a chosen vessel to the Gentiles:

Acts 26:15 – 18 – “And I said, Who art thou, LORD? And he said, I AM JESUS whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a

witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, **AND INHERITANCE AMONG THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED BY FAITH THAT IS IN ME.**”

Of course, being “sanctified by faith that is in me” is the same faith Abraham had when the Word of the Lord came to him and he believed it, and the same faith Paul had when the Word of the Lord came to him and he believed it, and every other Saint who has been made a partaker in the inheritance. Have you similarly believed the Word of the Lord in this time? He still declares the good things he has prepared for those that love him – now is the acceptable time!

2 Corinthians 6:2 - “(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”

What is needed is faith.

How many who have “believed” in Christ today know anything of this inheritance? How many can trace back the promise of which the gospel of Christ makes us a partaker to Abraham and understand the importance of what took place in that conversation for US? It seems, most today have a “believe in Jesus and ask Him into your heart so you can go to heaven when you die”, kind of gospel with little of the substance and certainty of the things taught in the scriptures that gives clear hope and faith of better things than these. That is probably why most

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

Christians imagine our eternal existence in heaven as an endless church service around the throne (which by the way would be an infinite privilege, joy, and pleasure by itself!!) with little understanding of the life we are promised to which Paul speaks in:

1 Corinthians 6:2 - “Do ye not know that THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?”

He continues in verses 3 and four with comparisons of “this life” versus the world to come that he just referred to...

1 Corinthians 6:3 - 4 - “Know ye not that we shall JUDGE ANGELS? how much more things that pertain to THIS LIFE? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to THIS LIFE, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.”

The reason Paul can teach of these things to the church at Corinth is because he had taught them the gospel of the kingdom, the promise of the inheritance to Abraham that was confirmed in Christ and was now made available through faith to all who would believe.

The inheritance is central throughout the New Testament scriptures, even more so than in the Old Testament when the promise was first spoken! That is because the inheritance of the saints is directly related to the kingdom of God that has been being preached since the time of John.

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

The inheritance is central throughout the New Testament scriptures, even more so than in the Old Testament when the promise was first spoken! That is because the inheritance of the saints is directly related to the kingdom of God that has been being preached since the time of John. That was why Paul could speak to the Saints which were at Corinth about the inheritance of the saints in light in judging the world, and is why James, among the other New Testament authors who taught the things of the kingdom of God, spoke of this kingdom inheritance to the saints:

James 2:5 - “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world RICH IN FAITH, and HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM which he hath promised to them that love him?”

This inheritance of the saints further clarifies for us how exactly the kingdom of God was taught by the apostles in the new testament, seeing that the inheritance, like as with Abraham, is to be received in the world to come and NOT in this present evil world. There is a tremendous body of evidence in the scriptures that confirm this to be the true teaching of the kingdom for this age. The only departure of this seems to be when we get into the gospels, because if we start there it is easy to get confused. However, if we start with the epistles, and learn how they understood, believed, and taught the kingdom, then we can go back to the gospels with a GREAT amount of clarity. Just a few more scriptures about the inheritance of Abraham as heir of the world, the inheritance of the saints, the inheritance of the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 1:10 - 11 - “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure

which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: **IN WHOM ALSO WE HAVE OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE**, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"

OK, couple of things here. What is the good pleasure of the Father concerning this inheritance He has promised?

Luke 12:32 - "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM."

So, it is His good pleasure to give the kingdom to the saints. This will be done through Christ who is heir of all things:

Hebrews 1:2 - "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom HE HATH APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS, by whom also he made the worlds;"

This mystery of His will, as Paul calls it, the good pleasure of the father that he speaks of in the same terms as Christ during His ministry, is to give an inheritance to the saints who have placed their faith in Him, forsaken this present evil world, forfeited their own lives, and followed Him by FAITH. In other words, we who have believed God, like Abraham, have obtained an inheritance through the grace of God which is in Jesus Christ because it is the good pleasure of the Father to do so. And since Christ is heir of all things, and we are in Christ, then that new creature formed in us by the working of the Spirit through faith

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

in the Word is also heir with Him who is appointed to receive all things.

Romans 8:16 - 17 - “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then HEIRS; heirs of God, and JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

And we here see the same pattern as our Savior left us, that we should first suffer, and then be glorified with Him.

2 Timothy 3:12 - “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL SUFFER persecution.”

Philippians 1:29 - “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to SUFFER for his sake;”

This inheritance of the kingdom becomes a central tenet of the faith that Paul preaches in his epistles to the churches and should also be in ours as well! It teaches that, the inheritance is to those who believe the promises of God and that their faith will be manifest in actions that make sense of the doctrine they profess.

It also teaches, as Christ did, many will EXPECT to inherit, but will be rejected because their faith was in vain.

Matthew 7:22 - “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and IN THY NAME DONE MANY WONDERFUL WORKS? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

If you are a “kingdom now” believer, you will be at great risk of being in this group as you work to improve this present world by your efforts. Being busy in many ways working to improve man’s natural state and working to improve and protect that which God has spoken against and condemned to destruction. This, seemingly right, social gospel, sounds very wholesome to the natural mind, but will be shown to be the doctrine of men in the end. To embrace it is to savor the things of men and not of God. All these wonderful works are not nearly so wonderful in the sight of God our Savior as the work of believing His Word and the one whom He sent.

John 6:29 – “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

Hebrews 11:6 – “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Those pictured in Matthew 7 may have believed something in His name and done many things in His name but were never delivered from the power of Darkness unto the power of light. They continued loving this present world and did little or no work in seeking the kingdom of God (let alone seeking it first), or doing the good works done in faith, laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come.

The parable of the sower brings all this teaching home as it pertains to the gospel of the kingdom.

Matthew 13:18 - 19 – “Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth THE WORD

**OF THE KING-
DOM, and under-
standeth it not, then
cometh the wicked
one, and catcheth away
that which was sown in
his heart. This is he
which received seed by
the way side.”**

*None of these first three
cases of seed sown over-
come or endure, which are
qualities unique to His
workmanship and His chil-
dren.*

This parable continues to be useful in our study in other ways, but here we notice that the word sown is the “word of the kingdom”. We then go on to see all the adversaries that are against the fruitfulness of the Word in people’s lives. The adversary without, Satan, catching away the seed. The adversary within, our own nature and stony ground of the heart. And the adversaries among, the world and its system and values that keep us blinded to the truth of God’s Word and thus in bondage to this present life. None of these first three cases of seed sown overcome or endure, which are qualities unique to His workmanship and His children.

1 John 5:4 – “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

Matthew 13:23 – “But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word [of the kingdom v.19], and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

So, in closing this chapter, we now know that the inheritance of the saints consists of several things that were all promised to Abraham and his seed (which is Christ),

which we could look in many places of scripture to further study, but have included a reference to review each aspect of this inheritance of those who are the saints of God:

- The promise of resurrection – Acts 26:6 – 8 & 18–
“And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the **PROMISE MADE** of God **UNTO OUR FATHERS**: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, **THAT GOD SHOULD RAISE THE DEAD?**..... To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, **THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE** forgiveness of sins, and **INHERITANCE** among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”
- The promise of eternal life – Titus 3:7 – “That being justified by his grace, we should be made **HEIRS** according to the **HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.**”
- The promise of being heir of the world with Abraham through Christ – Romans 4:13 – “For **THE PROMISE**, that he should be the **HEIR OF THE WORLD** was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”
- The promise of the kingdom – James 2:5 – “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and **HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM** which he hath **PROMISED** to them that love him?”

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

So, the kingdom is the inheritance of the saints as joint-heirs with Christ, which is given by the Word of God, a Word of promise, and is granted to those who believe the promise of God in Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for His people so that they could be forgiven all trespasses and inherit according to His Word. This was the work the author of Hebrews was doing by the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of Hebrew believers to the reality of the kingdom prepared by God for those who believe as opposed to their old view of the kingdom.

Hebrews 9:15 - “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the PROMISE OF ETERNAL INHERITANCE.”

James 2:5 - “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM which he hath promised to them that love him?”

Revelation 21:7 - “He that overcometh SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

It is for this reason we now have the earnest, or down-payment, of the inheritance that is promised. The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom carries a promise for the immediate present as well, which we are told is the earnest of what we are promised to receive in the world to come. How sweet is the presence and fellowship of the Holy Spirit in our lives! And that’s just an advance on the remainder of the things promised to those who follow Christ by faith!

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

Colossians 1:22 - “Who hath also sealed us, and given the **EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT in our hearts.”**

2 Corinthians 5:5 - “Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the **EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT.”**

Ephesians 1:13 - 14 - “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the **EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”**

Ephesians 4:30 - “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed **UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION.”**

So, the kingdom is promised by inheritance to the saints, and is to be received in the day of redemption, and until then we have been sealed with the earnest of the inheritance, the Holy Spirit of God. Can I get an AMEN in here?!

It is worth mentioning here that the inheritance also teaches us of the things of the law as Paul teaches the Galatians. The Old Covenant of works is represented allegorically by Hagar. Ishmael was a name given by God to the son of Abraham that was born of the flesh. This son, whose name means “God will hear”, is a fascinating study on its own, but for our purposes here is worth noting as it pertains to inheritance. Those of the law, though the natural seed of Abraham, were rejected by God as heirs because flesh and blood cannot inherit. No, a new birth is required to be made fit for the inheritance, and that requires faith and not the works of men. As Ishmael was

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

rejected from being heir, so too all those who exercised themselves in the law of God for righteousness and sought not the mercies of God to receive His righteousness by faith.

Galatians 4:30 - “Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman SHALL NOT BE HEIR with the son of the freewoman.”

So, we see clearly those who are the children of that covenant will not inherit the kingdom. They will be rejected and cast out as unfit being of the natural works of men. What is needed is righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the pharisees or any righteousness we can attain through the law - we need the blessing of Abraham to inherit, which was given to the son of Promise. The son born by the power of God and not according to human wisdom or power - to the praise of His glory!

So, even in our understanding of the Old Covenant law and its place in God’s plan for mankind and our use of it in the preaching of the gospel today, the doctrine of the inheritance is an instrumental piece of the faith and doctrine we preach to safeguard against error. Isn’t man’s attempt at law-keeping what got us in this mess to begin with? Surely, it’s not the answer to getting out. What is needed is faith. We are children of a better covenant that has better promises. Children of Sara (Covenant of Promise) as those born of promise and not of Hagar (Covenant of Law) as those born of works.

Galatians 4:31 - “So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.”

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

A covenant that doesn't make a remembrance of sins every year as the Old Law was intended to do:

Hebrews 10:3 - "But in those sacrifices there is a REMEMBRANCE AGAIN made of sins EVERY YEAR."

But completely removes them from remembrance forever:

Hebrews 10:17 - "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I REMEMBER NO MORE."

Which is why the Bible states clearly that we are COMPLETE in Christ.

Colossians 2:10 - "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"

We can add nothing to His work to perfect it or make it better in God's sight - actually it is an insult to Him and a sin of pride when we think we can. Baptism can't perfect or add to His work. Taking communion. Community service. Donations to charities and hospitals. Perfect church attendance. Nothing performed by the flesh can be for righteousness. There is no work we can do to be made righteous because in our flesh dwells no good thing.

John 6:63 - "It is the spirit that quickeneth; THE FLESH PROFITETH NOTHING: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

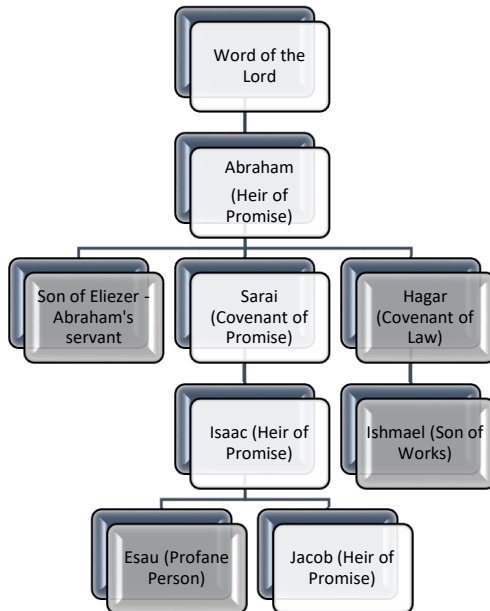
Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

Romans 7:18 – “For I know that in me (that is, **IN MY FLESH,**) **DWELLETH NO GOOD THING**: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

And all our righteousness's are as filthy rags in His holy sight:

Isaiah 64:6 – “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as **FILTHY RAGS**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”

We can look at Abraham and follow the promise of inheritance to learn some important lessons that are brought out in New Testament scripture:



Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

If we follow the promise of inheritance from the Word of the Lord to Abraham and on to Isaac, who was born of Sarah, and then down to Jacob, we can also find scriptures that teach why these other men were rejected which is also instructional from a gospel perspective. It is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that we are told will be in the kingdom of God.

Matthew 8:11 - “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”

That is why Paul uses these men as examples for us. To warn of the pitfalls that lie in the way of those who trust in the things of the flesh to inherit or who “know” enough to expect to inherit but need to “believe” in the one who made the promise to receive it.

Galatians 4:22 - 23 & 30 - “For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But who was OF THE BONDWOMAN was born after the FLESH; but he of the freewoman was by PROMISE..... Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman SHALL NOT BE HEIR with the son of the freewoman.”

Hebrews 12:16 - 17 - “Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, AS ESAU, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he WOULD HAVE INHERITED the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

What is needed is not the works of the flesh, the confidence of our works, or a profane attempt to appropriate God's blessings to ourselves in this natural life. What is wanted is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who has given testimony from the Father concerning His promises of things to come.

2 Timothy 1:12 - "... for I know WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Trusting in ourselves, our heritage, or any other confidence, will be disappointing.

If we expect to inherit, we must have a promise from Him that can be received into our heart by faith. We know the inheritance is of promise:

Romans 4:14 - "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:"

Just for good measure, I wanted to include this chart of verses regarding the inheritance of the saints as well, so I did. This, for me, helped me to see what a strong tenet of the faith this inheritance is and was to the apostles and saints of days gone by. I hope they are an encouragement and blessing to you, and that they help you to see the consistency of the preaching of the kingdom throughout the New Testament concerning this promise and our partaking of it through faith in Christ.

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

Acts 20:32	And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an INHERITANCE among all them which are sanctified.
Acts 26:18	To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and INHERITANCE among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.
Romans 4:13	For the promise, that he should be the HEIR of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.
Romans 4:14	For if they which are of the law be HEIRS , faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:
Romans 8:17	And if children, then HEIRS ; HEIRS of God, and JOINT-HEIRS with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.
1 Corinthians 6:9	Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not INHERIT the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
1 Corinthians 6:10	Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

	extortioners, shall INHERIT the kingdom of God.
1 Corinthians 15:50	Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot INHERIT the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.
Galatians 3:18	For if the INHERITANCE be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.
Galatians 3:29	And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and HEIRS according to the promise.
Galatians 4:1	Now I say, That the HEIR , as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;
Galatians 4:7	Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an HEIR of God through Christ.
Galatians 4:30	Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be HEIR with the son of the freewoman.
Galatians 5:21	Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not INHERIT the kingdom of God.
Ephesians 1:11	In whom also we have obtained an INHERITANCE , being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

Ephesians 1:14	Which is the earnest of our INHERITANCE until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
Ephesians 1:18	The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his INHERITANCE in the saints,
Ephesians 3:6	That the Gentiles should FELLOW-HEIRS , and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
Ephesians 5:5	For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any INHERITANCE in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
Colossians 1:12	Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the INHERITANCE of the saints in light:
Colossians 3:24	Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the INHERITANCE : for ye serve the Lord Christ.
Titus 3:7	That being justified by his grace, we should be made HEIRS according to the hope of eternal life.
Hebrews 1:2	Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed HEIR of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
Hebrews 1:4	Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

	INHERITANCE obtained a more excellent name than they.
Hebrews 1:14	Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be HEIRS of salvation?
Hebrews 6:12	That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience INHERIT the promises.
Hebrews 6:17	Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the HEIRS of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:
Hebrews 9:15	And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal INHERITANCE .
Hebrews 11:8	By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an INHERITANCE , obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.
Hebrews 11:9	By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the HEIRS with him of the same promise:
Hebrews 11:17	By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world,

Chapter 9 - The Inheritance of the Saints

	and became HEIR of the righteousness which is by faith.
James 2:5	Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and HEIRS of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?
1 Peter 1:4	To an INHERITANCE incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,
1 Peter 3:7	Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being HEIRS together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.
1 Peter 3:9	Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should INHERIT a blessing.
Revelation 21:7	He that overcometh shall INHERIT all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

The term “saints” in scripture simply means “holy ones”. We will not endeavor here to shew all the various aspects of how this term is used in scripture, however. For our purposes, we are looking specifically at how the Word of God speaks of the group of saints that are spoken of as those who will receive the inheritance that is promised to them by God through Jesus Christ.

When we begin to see the inheritance that is promised to the saints as a central piece of the gospel that was preached, some of the other kingdom preaching comes into clearer view, at least for me:

Ephesians 4:1 - “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk WORTHY OF THE VOCATION wherewith ye are called,”

This verse follows 3 chapters of the apostle setting forth the gospel of the kingdom which he had preached, and which had been believed in the city of Ephesus. We can clearly see in the first few chapters the apostle laying out the doctrine of the kingdom as he then switches to application of this doctrine to the present life we now live by this faith we profess starting in chapter 4 with the admonition to “walk worthy” of the vocation wherewith we are called, because we are called to be “saints”.

Romans 1:7 - “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, CALLED TO BE SAINTS:”

1 Corinthians 1:2 - “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, CALLED TO BE SAINTS, with all that in every

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”

A few of these previous verses in Ephesians regard aspects of the doctrine of the kingdom which we have already touched on, so for context I have included below:

Ephesians 1:11 - “In whom also we have obtained an INHERITANCE, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”

Ephesians 1:14 - “Which is the EARNEST [down payment] of our INHERITANCE until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

So, here we also see that the kingdom, promised by inheritance, is not going to be received UNTIL some other things happen, which also helps us understand the down payment of that inheritance and the timing God has in view for the kingdom. More on that later... a few more from Ephesians...

Ephesians 1:18 - “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may KNOW what is the HOPE of his CALLING, and what the riches of the glory of his INHERITANCE in the saints,”

Ephesians 2:2 - “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of THIS WORLD, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:”

You will notice a lot of scripture that contrasts “this present world” and the world to come and many such statements that refer to a future time God has promised, also more on that later...

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

Ephesians 2:6 - 7 - “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places IN CHRIST JESUS: That IN THE AGES TO COME he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 2:12 - “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and STRANGERS from the COVENANTS OF PROMISE, having NO HOPE, and without God in the world:”

Ephesians 2:16 - “And that he might reconcile both unto God IN ONE BODY by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:”

Ephesians 3:6 - “That the Gentiles should be FELLOWHEIRS, and of the same body, and PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE in Christ by the gospel:”

We will see this “same body” idea in the correct context as we view the saints of God who are in Christ, Abraham’s promised seed, as those who are made partakers of the promise God gave to Abraham - you know, grafted in. Some view this as being fulfilled in view of the New Testament congregation exclusively since it is a mixture of Jew and Gentile, but we see clearly from an understanding of the inheritance and the promises that the body of saints in view here doesn’t separate the new testament congregation from the old, but rather makes those saints of the New Testament congregation members of the same body as the saints of old by being partakers of the same promise - since the promise was originally made to Abraham and we are made partakers.

We may look at this more in another chapter, but the conversations and theology around the “bride of

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

Christ” begin to make a lot of sense in view of these things regarding the saints and the mystery of the Father’s will to give the saints the kingdom by His Son Jesus Christ with whom they are joined as one spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:17 - “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”

This is likely why the New Jerusalem revealed to the apostle John by the Lord Jesus Christ when he was taken to be shown the bride, has foundations with the apostles’ names and gates with the twelve tribes’ names. Like I said, maybe more on that a bit later, but the Word of God is clear that New Testament believers are to be joined to Christ by being made partakers of the promise that was made to Abraham - that he would be heir of the world, which is why we are here called **FELLOW HEIRS**. Paul then goes on to explain that this mystery was revealed to him so that it could be declared in the world, preached unto men v.8, and through the faith of those who believe and are convinced of the Word of God concerning these things, this truth might be known by the church, that is through the church as a means of revelation, as a shadow of the very image of things that are to come when these things are fulfilled in time - the redemption of the purchased possession, the manifestation of the sons of God, the times of refreshing from the Lord - all of which hinge on Christ’s appearing - all of which is predicated upon Christ’s completed work at Calvary and the power of His resurrection.

1 Thessalonians 4:14 - “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

So, this calling of ours to be saints, declares the good will of the Father shown to us by Christ that it is the father's good pleasure to give those who are of the household of faith the kingdom, and thus we are called to "fear not". Things may be difficult and troublesome during these days of our flesh in this present world, but the Fa-

ther has great things in store for the saints, the glory of which is not to be compared with anything we could think, ask, or imagine.

Things may be difficult and troublesome during these days of our flesh in this present world, but the Father has great things in store for the saints, the glory of which is not to be compared with anything we could think, ask, or imagine.

Romans 8:18 - "For I reckon that the sufferings of THIS PRESENT TIME are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which SHALL BE revealed in us."

The glory to be revealed in us by the power of Christ when the sons of God are manifest, when we are to be brought forth, and we shall be like Him!

Romans 8:19 - "For the earnest expectation of the creature WAITETH for the MANIFESTATION of the sons of God."

1 John 3:2 - "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not YET APPEAR what we shall be: but we know that, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

The destiny of the saints of God, who are reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ before this mystery of God is finished, is to be joined together in Him, be like Him, and to REIGN with him – all to the glory of His GRACE! Remember, the testimony of all saints is that they do not deserve such a place and that they acknowledge their presence there as the sole act of His kindness towards them. Not one saint will be there because they think they have earned it or deserve it! We should be seeing at this point, even though we haven't delved into all the characteristics or teachings of Christ concerning the kingdom, that the vocation of the saints is one of service to Christ in receiving the kingdom with Christ and of reigning with him in it over the world.

Remember, there will be natural bodied believers that are preserved through the tribulation period that will be granted entrance into the kingdom age as well. They are not, however, to reign with Christ as kings. They will be responsible for repopulating the earth after the return of Jesus Christ. He will send forth His angels to gather out of His kingdom everything that does iniquity or offends, and all that will be left at that point on the entire earth will be those who were preserved by the power of God through FAITH!

Matthew 13:41 - “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

If the saints are to reign with Christ, over whom will they reign? Well, not each other. We are one body in Christ. The New Jerusalem, home of the saints, has no

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

temple in it, which is the place of His throne. His throne and temple are to be on earth according to Ezekiel and Revelation. Which makes sense. He won't be reigning over saints, who are made to be one with Him. We are His body. He will be reigning over all of creation with His saints, which is the glory He has spoken of that He will give to the saints.

Revelation 2:26 -27 - “And HE THAT OVERCOMETH AND KEEPETH MY WORKS UNTO THE END, to him will I give power over the nations: And HE SHALL RULE them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”

Revelation 21:7 - “HE THAT OVERCOMETH SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

We know the overcomer is Christ Himself, and that all those who are in Him by faith overcome with Him by His power. The promise in these verses is from Christ to the saints who overcome the world by the Word of His Testimony. He has called us to be saints. Called us to be like Him. The saints are called to reign with Christ over all of creation – thus, the remarkable statement from Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:2 - 3:

“Do ye not know that THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS? how much more things that pertain to this life?”

And according to Hebrews 1:1 - 2:

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS, by whom also he made the worlds;”

And further in Romans 8:17:

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and JOINT_HEIRS WITH CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may BE ALSO GLORIFIED TOGETHER.”

So, we see that Christ, the seed of Abraham, is appointed heir of all things, and that those who are in Christ will be joint heirs seeing that we are His body. This means that all those who are in Christ and partakers of this promise of Abraham to be heir of the world, will be those that comprise the government of the new world that is yet to come. To this agree the words of the apostles and prophets:

Isaiah 9:6 - 7 - “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the GOVERNMENT shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his GOVERNMENT and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even FOR EVER. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

Psalms 8:4 - 6 - “WHAT IS MAN, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest

him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put **ALL THINGS** under his feet:"

2 Timothy 2:12 - "If we suffer, we shall also **REIGN WITH HIM**: if we deny him, he also will deny us:"

This wonder of God concerning His work and inheritance in the saints confounds the natural mind. Why would God choose such a weak and lowly creature to reign over all of creation – even beings as perfect and mighty as angels?! I can hear the angels as they curiously ask concerning these things... "So, those little guys are to inherit the kingdom and reign with Christ over all creation?" It is no wonder they are curious about what God is doing!

1 Peter 1:12 - "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things **THE ANGELS DESIRE TO LOOK INTO.**"

Once you begin to see the wisdom of God in this mystery, it's not hard to imagine the angels being curious about this work! Regardless, they minister unto us of His things and rejoice to see God continue to teach them new things about Himself – like His mercy and grace. Since He intended to show unto principalities and powers the wonders of His grace, then the inheritance of the saints, the mystery of the eternal reign of men over all creation through Christ Jesus, certainly checks that box!

Personal speculation at work in this paragraph, but I can't help but wonder if Satan got wind of this plan regarding God's work in creation and His heart was

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

hardened towards God in pride as He couldn't imagine himself worshipping a man. Of course, that man is God – the man Christ Jesus. And all angels are made subject to Him, commanded to worship Him, and will bow the knee to Him – even Satan.

1 Peter 3:22 – “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; ANGELS and AUTHORITIES and POWERS being MADE SUBJECT unto him.”

Hebrews 1:6 – “And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the ANGELS of God WORSHIP HIM.”

Philippians 2:10 – 11 – “That AT TE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of things IN HEAVEN, and things IN EARTH, and things UNDER THE EARTH; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

If so, it wouldn't be the first time the Word of God prophetically set things in motion to fulfill the Word by declaring it to those who would refuse it and work against it – think Joseph. OK, I digress...

We have teaching from the Lord Jesus Christ in some of the kingdom parables concerning His promise to those who follow Him by faith in the word of God concerning this future kingdom as well. The same kingdom that James says is promised to the heirs of God – those joint-heirs with Christ:

Luke 19:15 – 19 – “And it came to pass, that WHEN HE WAS RETURNED, HAVING RECEIVED THE KINGDOM, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by

trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, **HAVE THOU AUTHORITY OVER TEN CITIES.** And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, **BE THOU ALSO OVER FIVE CITIES."**

We notice also that the reign spoken of in scripture is not limited to 1,000 years but is to have no end. This reign is what Christ had taught his disciples of all throughout his earthly ministry. We have several conversations recorded in scripture of Him speaking to them of these **PROMISES**, which they were to accept by faith. It is perhaps the carnal mind of Judas that expected these promises pertained to this natural life and this age, like Esau, that was his undoing and left him open for Satan's using and work. The carnal mind sees blessings from God as things to be consumed upon itself because of lust. The Spiritual man sees the blessing is in the service itself - knowing Christ more intimately and working for His glory and praise rather than our own.

John 5:44 - "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?"

We know Judas was covetous, which is a direct disqualifier for God's kingdom.

1 Corinthians 6:9 - 10 - "Know ye not that the unrighteous SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, NOR COVETEOUS,

nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, SHALL INHERIT the kingdom of God.”

In Paul’s teaching on the kingdom of God in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and in Galatians, he clearly warns the churches that the COVETEOUS have no part in God’s kingdom – It seems it might very well have been this covetousness that shows us the carnal

If someone claims to follow Christ but fails to be delivered from the lusts of this present evil world, they are at serious risk of deceiving themselves. Judas clearly was such a man.

mind of the man who was to betray Christ into the hands of His enemies - walking in the flesh, as a thief.

John 12:4 – 6 – “Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because HE WAS A THIEF, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”

Christ said He was a devil, but that He had chosen Him to fulfill the Word of God

John 6:70 – “Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?”

These warnings against the desires of the flesh for this world were also taught by Christ so that men who profess faith in the gospel, might examine themselves to see if they are really in the FAITH. If someone claims to follow

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

Christ (i.e. believe His testimony concerning this present world and believes His gospel of a world to come in the resurrection of which those who follow Him by faith have a part) but fails to be delivered from the lusts of this present evil world, they are at serious risk of deceiving themselves. Judas clearly was such a man. He had heard the many teachings of Christ of the things that awaited the twelve apostles:

Matthew 19:28 - “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, YE SHALL SIT upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Matthew 16:19 - “And I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 17:20 - “And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, YE SHALL SAY unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and NOTHING SHALL BE impossible unto you.”

But being a natural man, Judas couldn't understand that Christ was speaking of the world to come, and that we must FIRST suffer. This is, of course, speculation on my part as to Judas, but these warnings in scripture are there for all to see.

Hebrews 4:1 - “Let us therefore fear, lest, a PROMISE being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

All these passages above speak of future reigning, future glory, and future power that the disciples would receive in the kingdom as part of their inheritance. There are many who struggle to find deeply theological and difficult interpretations of these passages because they look for a fulfillment of them during the earthly lives of the apostles. These interpretations vary greatly, as you can imagine, because if there was a fulfillment of them during their earthly lives and before they are to bear the image of the heavenly (Christ), it ISN'T clear exactly how, which explains why everyone's interpretations of these passages are so difficult and vary greatly. If we accept what the New testament apostles taught concerning the kingdom doctrine, that it is a **PROMISE** given by the Word of the Lord, things get clearer.

There isn't a good doctrinal reason to press the fulfillment of these scriptures into the present rather than the future tense in which they are given, as the text clearly communicates a future fulfillment in them in light of the promises Christ had made to them of the kingdom. No wonder they were so eager for it to come! Here would be a good place to talk of scriptural patience and waiting on the Lord, as the faithful apostles had to learn.

Luke 8:15 - "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit WITH PATIENCE."

Luke 21:19 - "IN YOUR PATIENCE possess ye your souls."

1 Thessalonians 1:3 - "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and PATIENCE OF HOPE in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;"

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

You could go on for a long time looking at this scriptural patience of waiting upon the Lord that is rooted in faith! However, let's get back to the topic at hand...

These things promised to the apostles by Jesus Christ would wait until the time appointed by the Father.

1 Timothy 6:14 - 15 - "...until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which IN HIS TIMES HE SHALL SHEW, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;"

Once the apostles were brought forth and manifest as the sons of God, and were made like Him, they would, in their perfected and glorified state of complete unity with the Lord Jesus Christ exercise this power on His behalf. Just as the thrones were future promises, so too these wonders of reigning with Christ in the world to come when nothing was to be impossible to them. Nothing because their will would always be in perfect keeping with the Lord Jesus Christ's who does always those things that please the Father, because they are to be made like Him. Clearly, the text is speaking of the future, of which some say was brought to pass at Pentecost, but I think we shall see that Pentecost was in no way a fulfillment of the kingdom and its PROMISES, but rather the down payment of a greater promise Christ intends to keep to His people. A promise that goes all the way back to Abraham.

2 Peter 3:9 - "The Lord is not slack concerning his PROMISE, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Regardless, if Judas was a "kingdom now" theologian, as it appears likely, it didn't end well for him. The

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

Father has committed all those things to His own power, and they will not come to pass until the time He has APPOINTED, when this age and world are over. The reason the 4 apostles, Peter, Andrew, James, and John approached Christ privately, asking Him of His return and THE END OF THE WORLD, makes much more sense when you realize that Christ had taught them, as those who were revealed the mysteries of the kingdom, that His kingdom would not come until this world had come to an end.

Matthew 24:3 - “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of THE END OF THE WORLD?”

He had often taught them of the end of the world, which is why they were asking Him for more clarification and signs as to how they would know it was close. They were looking for His return because the end of the world, His return, and the kingdom they looked for were all known to them by His teaching to be contingent upon each other. What they lacked was an understanding of the timing, which is why on the VERY DAY of His ascension they were still asking if it was kingdom time or not!

Acts 1:6 - “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

Fifteen years later, they had been taught by the Holy Spirit concerning the work of Christ and the purposes of God concerning the kingdom. They had accepted that there were yet some purposes in scripture foretold that God was bringing to pass before he concluded this age and set up the kingdom that had been promised. James,

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

speaking to the witness of the Holy Spirit concerning these things testified:

Acts 15:15 - 16 - “And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, AFTER THIS I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:”

So, by this point in time, the apostles had been taught more of the kingdom and the Father’s will by the Word of God as the Holy Spirit did indeed show them **THINGS TO COME**, as Christ had said. James was teaching here, that before Christ was to build again the tabernacle of David, He would in fact first gather a people out from among the Gentiles for His name – those who were to be fellow-heirs and of the same body – a previously unknown mystery that God had now revealed to them by **HIS SPIRIT**. This is the same aspect of this current age that Paul taught the Romans, lest they should be puffed up in their mind – which actually has already happened as you likely know in replacement theology (the idea, of man, that the New testament church has replaced Israel).

Romans 11:25 - “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”

So, the apostles had to learn – patience. Patience is required by those who wait upon the Lord to fulfill His promises, because His time frame is in a different context than ours.

2 Peter 3:8 – “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

So, the apostles had learned the kingdom would not be brought to pass until the fulness of Gentiles was brought in, and then the Lord would turn His attention back to the house of David to establish his kingdom – forever. In the meantime, they were to walk worthy of the calling, to occupy until He comes, to be as stewards over their Lord’s goods, and to watch for His appearing. This has been the lot of the saints since the time of Abel.

There will not be ANY among the saints that believe they DESERVE to be there! We EXPECT to be there according to His PROMISE! That is because to be a saint, you must believe the gospel, and the gospel is for sinners. Righteous, or self-righteous, need not apply (Thanks, Dad. I borrowed that from your book).

The saints are to be joined with Christ for all eternity, to reign with Him in His glory, and to dwell with Him forever as trophies by which His grace is known! Saints possess no righteousness of their own but are accounted righteous by God through faith in Christ Jesus. The means of His performing that was accomplished by Christ on Calvary’s cross, because there can be no remission without the shedding of blood! Christ will be had in honor among these saints and glorified in them, because everyone who is a saint KNOWS they will only be there enjoying the

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

richness of the things of Christ by HIS grace and goodness!
He paid the price of our deliverance!

1 Corinthians 6:20 - “For YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

There will not be ANY among the saints that believe they DESERVE to be there! We EXPECT to be there according to His PROMISE! That is because to be a saint, you must believe the gospel, and the gospel is for sinners. Righteous, or self-righteous, need not apply (Thanks, Dad. I borrowed that from your book).

2 Thessalonians 1:10 - “When he shall come to be GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, and to be ADMIRER IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

2 Timothy 4:8 - “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that LOVE HIS APPEARING.”

Revelation 11:16 - 18 - “And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, AND TO THE SAINTS, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

I thought I would finish the chapter with a few references to the saints in scripture and some of the promises given to those who are among them – by being sanctified by the faith that is in Christ.

Psalm 37:28	For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his SAINTS ; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
Psalm 89:5	And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the CONGREGATION OF THE SAINTS .
Psalm 89:7	God is greatly to be feared in the ASSEMBLY OF THE SAINTS , and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.
Psalm 149:1	Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the CONGREGATION OF SAINTS .
Daniel 7:18	But the SAINTS of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.
Daniel 7:22	Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the SAINTS of the most High; and the time came that the SAINTS possessed the kingdom.
Daniel 7:27	And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the SAINTS of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

Romans 1:7	To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be SAINTS : Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 1:2	Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be SAINTS , with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:
1 Corinthians 6:2	Do ye not know that the SAINTS shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?
Ephesians 1:1	Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the SAINTS which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:
Ephesians 1:18	The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the SAINTS ,
Ephesians 2:19	Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the SAINTS , and of the household of God;
Ephesians 5:3	But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh SAINTS ;
Philippians 1:1	Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the SAINTS in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Chapter 10 - Called to be Saints

Colossians 1:2	To the SAINTS and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Colossians 1:12	Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the SAINTS in light:
Revelation 11:18	And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the SAINTS , and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.
Revelation 14:12	Here is the patience of the SAINTS : here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Chapter 11 – Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

Luke 11:2 – “And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.”

As the Lord teaches His disciples to pray, He shares this with us by the same Spirit, that they were to pray “thy kingdom come” which was then followed by that prayer that is still in our hearts as we await the arrival of that kingdom “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth”. These are not unrelated thoughts in this prayer, but clearly show that the Lord intended for His Word of promise concerning the kingdom which was to come to be a sustaining hope for His people throughout their lives and generations until His appearing. Some believe the kingdom came at Pentecost, which we can clearly show is not the case, some believe it is “the church” today, which we can show is not the case, while some believe that it is our job to socialize the world in such a way that it becomes somehow the kingdom of God on earth now in this present world, again, clearly not scriptural. It is His Word of promise and our hope by faith.

Here in this passage, the Lord teaches them to be certain in prayer to keep this request in their hearts and minds. This “looking unto Jesus”, which is spoken of by Paul in the book of Hebrews, lays out in front of us the hope we profess through faith in the promises of God –

Hebrews 12:1 – 2 – “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily

beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The author then, led by the Holy Spirit, goes through the chapter to discuss the chastening of the Lord, taking heed against covetousness for the things of this present world, the inheritance, and concludes the chapter with the destruction of this present world that God has promised and of the kingdom we are promised that is to come! That entire chapter, along with most of the New Testament, might be like reading brand new for the first time for many Christians today when read with the kingdom of God teaching in view.

The promise of these things is declared in many places in scripture, such as by Zacharias when filled with the Holy Spirit on the day the Lord Jesus was brought to the temple to be circumcised:

"That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." - Luke 1:74 - 75

This hope in His promise being brought to pass will be undoubtedly a time of refreshing for all those who "wait upon the Lord" and those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" and who "according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Isaiah 40:31 - "But they that WAIT UPON THE LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with

wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Is there any doubt that this verse is not prophetic of the saints when they are made like unto Jesus Christ in the resurrection and have received the inheritance of the kingdom long promised?

Matthew 5:5 - 6 - “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:”

2 Peter 3:13 - “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

God’s people have always exercised themselves in prayer for Him to fulfill what He has spoken and promised to them. It is the most natural prayer in the world for one who is in the faith.

So, it is clear Christ intended for His disciples to keep this in mind for themselves during prayer. The prayer that God would fulfill the promises made concerning this very thing - that there would be a fulfilling of the promise He made to bring to pass an age in which His will was done as perfectly on earth as it is in Heaven. God’s people have always exercised themselves in prayer for Him to fulfill what He has spoken and promised to them. It is the most natural prayer in the world for one who is in the faith. This fulfillment of the kingdom is exactly what He will accomplish by that man whom He hath ordained, the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes to reign on the throne of His glory.

Zephaniah 3:8 - “Therefore WAIT YE UPON ME, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.”

Another place in scripture where people see the Kingdom taught and are led to believe it must have already arrived is found in Luke 9:27 because Christ there says that some who were alive in His day would see it. But what exactly does that signify? Can this one of few instances that seems to teach counter to what we see through the rest of the New Testament pave the way for a different understanding of the kingdom? As we will see with a little study, there is no reason to use this one text from Christ (before the Spirit came and taught His apostles they were in fact still looking for it to come) to lead us to believe it somehow came already. Actually, this has overthrown the faith of some. Let's look at the passage:

Luke 9:27 - “But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.”

Now, before we read on and decide that this was fulfilled on the mount of transfiguration, which some do teach, we should first look at other gospel accounts as well to see how this same conversation is preserved by the Holy Spirit there. Remember, the accounts of the gospels are complimentary not contradictory. They give a more full and complete picture when taken as a whole. We will find this very same exchange in which this conversation took place also in Matthew 16:28:

Matthew 16:28 - “Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man COMING in his kingdom.”

What is interesting, and entirely consistent with all the other teaching of the kingdom we see from the apostles later on, is that to compare these two passages we would need to understand that the “Kingdom of God” in Luke 9 equals “the Son of Man coming in his kingdom” in Matthew 16. In other words, when the Holy Spirit instructed Luke to write “the kingdom of God” it is synonymous with the account that Matthew wrote describing the same thing as “the Son of Man coming in his kingdom”. Some read the one account in Luke, and think “well, then it must have already come?”. However, by comparing scripture with scripture, we can avoid those pitfalls.

So, we can read that passage and know that Jesus was teaching that there would be those who saw “the son of man COMING in His kingdom” before they tasted of death. So, is this what happened on the mount of transfiguration? Well, they didn’t see the Son of Man COMING in His kingdom on the mount of transfiguration. They beheld His glory & majesty. At Pentecost? No account of witnesses seeing the Son of Man COMING in His kingdom there either. If not, when did it happen? Further, He taught his disciples that He would not be coming in His kingdom until the things foretold in the Olivet discourse were fulfilled - placing the event at the end of the great tribulation.

Luke 21:27 - “And then shall they SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING in a cloud with power and great glory.”

Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

How could any of them have seen His coming in His kingdom, and yet all the apostles continue to teach that we are living in hope of it all the way through the New Testament?

Firstly, we could rightfully understand here that He is speaking to them in the same sense that He speaks in John 8:52. Jesus there uses the exact same language and example of death:

John 8:52 - "... If a man keep my saying, HE SHALL NEVER TASTE OF DEATH."

So, we see in the spiritual sense here, any man who was standing there that kept His sayings (i.e. His Word and Testimony), would see the son of man coming in His kingdom and not taste of death. In that sense, our exegesis of the text is very much correct and true by the account of Christ. Any man that has received the testimony of Christ by faith has been spared the tasting of death and has passed from death unto life.

John 5:24 - "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that HEARETH MY WORD, and BELIEVETH on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and SHALL NOT COME into condemnation; but is PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE."

He will thus see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom having never tasted of death. This is a factual and truthful account of the words spoken by Christ and corresponds to all the other kingdom doctrine and gospel teachings of the things of Christ in scripture. That much being said, there are a couple other thoughts about this we might share as well.

Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

Enter one John, the apostle whom Jesus loved, who was given a revelation by the Lord Jesus Christ. We have an entire view of the future according to the revelation of Jesus Christ to him on the aisle of Patmos. You might be surprised to see what it includes.... In opening his book, he tells us:

Revelation 1:1 - 2 - “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that HE SAW.”

All through the book he is using the phrase “I saw” - over 40 times as I count them. In closing his book, he tells us:

Revelation 22:8 - “And I John SAW these things...”

Among the many wonders that he was shown, which he saw, was in the portion of the book described by Christ as “the things which shall be hereafter”. In this view of the things to be done hereafter (probably given in 90 - 92 AD), is this view of the Son of Man coming in His kingdom, just as Christ had taught and all the other apostles had taught:

Revelation 19:11 - 16 - “And I SAW heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and HIS NAME IS CALLED THE WORD OF GOD. And the armies which were in heaven

followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**”

So, John did in fact, before his death, see the Son of Man **COMING** in His kingdom in the glory of His Father and His holy angels to sit upon the throne of His glory. It is tempting at this juncture to veer off into the many prophetic wonders that surround these wonderful pages of scripture, but for the time being, we are content that Christ spoke the truth concerning this fact in every sense. His coming was witnessed by John before his death, and will be witnessed by men who have never tasted of death as those having placed their faith in Him. Not just the “Kingdom of God” in some mysterious unseen way as could be thought from Luke 9. But in the very sense conveyed by the same text in Matthew 16 concerning the coming of the Son of Man. The same coming He often taught to His disciples, which is why they asked Him of the sign of His coming when they approached Him on the mount of Olives.

Matthew 24:3 - “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be THE SIGN OF THY COMING, and of the end of the world?”

If we go back to Luke chapter 9:27, we will notice that the verse began with “But I tell you...”, so what was being discussed immediately prior to this that led to the statement. Well, once again, I’m glad you asked...

Luke 9:26 - “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.”

Imagine that! Christ clearly here is discussing the Son of man coming in the glory of His Father. This teaching is in the same conversation with the famous teaching of “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”. This is kingdom preaching. This is the gospel. This is FAITH in God to fulfill His Word. To live in clamor for the riches of this time, is to DEMONSTRATE unbelief in what He has SPOKEN.

Notice:

Matthew 16:24 - 26 - “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Jesus here was teaching of denying the natural desires for the things of this life, dying to the natural man who was brought forth by natural birth in the image of the earthy, and following Christ through this world as a pilgrim and stranger. Those who have FAITH in His Word, are not afraid to do so because of the confidence in what He has promised by means of the inheritance to those who do. This world is condemned because of sin, and the dominion of the first Adam is to be destroyed along with all of the works of men, but through this age Jesus Christ is, by the sowing of gospel seed and according to His mercy and grace, creating new creatures for a new world. Those

Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

created by his Spirit and power through faith in the Word of God by His Son Jesus Christ, are to be made in the image of the second Adam and brought forth in the new world that he has promised – wherein dwelleth righteousness (which is why we need to be made fit). Foolishness to the Greeks. Stumbling block to the Jews.

**“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”
– 1 Corinthians 1:24**

The announcement of the arrival of the fulfillment of this spoken Word is clear to John in the book of Revelation.

**Revelation
12:10 – “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, NOW IS COME salvation, and strength, and THE KINGDOM OF OUR**

GOD, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

When we speak of Kingdom come or kingdom came, scripture gives testimony by the apostles, who were called to be witnesses of these things, that they all looked for a kingdom to come – by His promise.

When we speak of Kingdom come or kingdom came, scripture gives testimony by the apostles, who were called to be witnesses of these things, that they all looked for a kingdom to come – by His promise. Any understanding of the kingdom in the here and now, is spoken as the Word of promise and is received by faith, not as some ethereal mystery theology that is of little value or meaning

Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

and promotes the absence of these doctrines, hopes, and promises in our churches today. We can see clear witness to these facts in the New Testament.

Acts 14:22 - “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

If we “must enter” then it is not here yet.

1 Corinthians 6:9 - “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?”

The inheritance is clearly not received until the return of the Son of Man whose reward is with Him. What we have right now is the Holy Spirit indwelling as a down payment on the inheritance promised.

Galatians 5:21 - “Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Again, inherit, like Abraham, speaks of the world to come in the resurrection.

Ephesians 5:5 - “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

Again, inheritance is a promise we share with Abraham, to be given in the world to come.

Colossians 1:13 - “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the

power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

Again, in the context of the inheritance. The following verse **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"** speaks of the same faith.

Ephesians 1:14 " - Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

So, redemption is spoken of by faith as well, just like eternal life, of which we live in hope of the promise, according to the apostle. Which is why in Romans 8:23 we are shown we are waiting for redemption

Romans 8:23 - "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Waiting for the adoption. The redemption. Waiting by faith.

Colossians 4:11 - "And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me."

Workers Unto the kingdom. Again, we are waiting for it by faith.

1 Thessalonians 2:12 - "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."

He has called us unto it. We're waiting by faith.

Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

2 Thessalonians 1:5 - “Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:”

We suffer for it. We’re waiting by faith.

2 Timothy 4:1 - “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who **SHALL** judge the quick and the dead **AT HIS APPEARING AND KINGDOM;**”

He will judge when He sits on the throne of His glory, just as Christ taught in:

Matthew 25:31 - 34 - “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:”

So, we’re waiting by faith.

2 Timothy 4:18 - “And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will **PRESERVE ME UNTO** his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

He will preserve me, by the power of God through **FAITH** in His promise until his kingdom comes. So, we’re waiting by faith.

Hebrews 12:28 - “: Wherefore we RECEIVING a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

We’re receiving it, spoken in His Word of promise by faith (which is the only way it can be received), and since it cannot be moved, it is not of this age or present world. It is laid up as an inheritance for the saints. So, we’re waiting by faith.

James 2:5 - “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and HEIRS of the kingdom which he hath PROMISED to them that love him?”

Again, its spoken in the context of PROMISE and INHERITANCE, so we’re waiting by faith.

2 Peter 1:11 - “For so an entrance SHALL BE ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

An entrance will be ministered, because it hasn’t come yet. We’re trusting that an “entrance” will be granted, because we’re waiting by faith.

Revelation 12:10 - “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, NOW IS COME salvation, and strength, and THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD, and the power of his Christ...”

Interestingly, in Revelation 11, right before we are shown the great signs in the heavens of the woman, her seed, and the dragon in chapter 12, we are told this:

Revelation 11:18 - “thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest GIVE REWARD UNTO thy servants the prophets, and to THE SAINTS”

And then, in Revelation 12, the soon arrival of the kingdom is announced in view of the defeat of the dragon, beast, false prophet, and the kings of the earth. What reward is promised to the saints that would be announced right before the announcement of the coming of the kingdom of God? It's the inheritance we've been discussing, so we're waiting by faith.

Isaiah 30:18 - “And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that WAIT for him.”

We have further discussion to make on this point, and I'll make every attempt to be brief. During the Olivet Discourse, one of the most detailed accounts of end times prophecy in scripture, Christ sets forth a framework for the end of this world for His apostles. He speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD specifically in Luke's account, and follows all the way through the times of the Gentiles to the abomination of desolation, great tribulation, final signs of His return, and the arrival of the Son of Man. In Luke's account, we have this statement made:

Luke 21:31 - “So likewise ye, WHEN YE SEE these things come to pass, KNOW ye that THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NIGH at hand.”

He then makes the statement, “Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.” This is

Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

in perfect harmony with the Hebrews 12 scenario as well as every other account of the kingdom taught by the apostles in the New Testament. The kingdom of God would come upon the arrival of the Son of Man after the fulfillment of everything foretold concerning the appointed time of the end of this world.

Some have said because Christ taught that it was “at hand” during His earthly ministry, they were convinced it was already here. Let’s look at what Peter says in His epistle concerning these things:

1 Peter 4:7 - “But THE END of all things IS AT HAND: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”

Peter taught at the point of his first epistle, some years after the ascension of Christ, that THE END, the same words Christ had so often used in His kingdom teachings, was AT HAND. So, the words “AT hand” do not convey “imminent” in the sense we might be tempted to think of them. “At Hand” means drawing near or approaching... kind of speaks for itself.

Acts 1:3	To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to THE KINGDOM OF GOD:
Acts 8:12	But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and the name of Jesus Christ,

Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

	they were baptized, both men and women.
Acts 14:22	Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into THE KINGDOM OF GOD.
Acts 19:8	And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning THE KINGDOM OF GOD.
Acts 20:25	And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching THE KINGDOM OF GOD , shall see my face no more.
Acts 28:23	And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified THE KINGDOM OF GOD , persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.
Acts 28:31	Preaching THE KINGDOM OF GOD , and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.
1 Corinthians 6:9	Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit THE KINGDOM OF GOD? Be not

Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

	deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
1 Corinthians 6:10	Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit THE KINGDOM OF GOD.
1 Corinthians 15:50	Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit THE KINGDOM OF GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.
Galatians 5:21	Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit THE KINGDOM OF GOD
Ephesians 5:5	For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND OF GOD
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Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

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2 Timothy 4:18	And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his HEAVENLY KINGDOM : to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
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Chapter 11 - Kingdom Come or Kingdom Came?

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Chapter 12 – Hidden in Plain Sight

Matthew 16:19 - “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

I chose this passage because of the many interesting ways I have seen and heard it expounded over the years. These range from the difficult and un-useful to the strange and far-fetched, but typically have in common a study of the kingdom that starts with the teachings of Christ in the gospels without the broader agreement of scripture in the New Testament. I have told our congregation before, you don't have to believe the kingdom as I preach it, but whichever interpretation you choose, it must satisfy and agree with ALL of the mentions of the kingdom of God that are found in scripture.

One of the hallmarks of the True and Faithful Witness is that the witnesses always agree. You won't find Paul, who was clearly a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, teaching things about the kingdom that don't fit with Peter, James, or Luke's inspired writing. That is because the one and selfsame Spirit worked in all of them to speak with clarity and assurance of these things. So, if our understanding falls short in places and it gets difficult to apply consistently, we ought not wrestle too strongly to make the scriptures fit our notions.

2 Peter 3:16 - “As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable

wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

2 Corinthians 2:17 - “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”

With that said, let's look at the passage above more closely:

Matthew 16:19 - “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Now, if you are among those who have read a great deal of commentary, you may not be so easily persuaded that this text is as simple to understand as I am going to present it to be. The deeper, more intellectual approach is certainly more appealing to theologians and professors, but I am unconvinced that helps the rest of us much. Now, if we have a way to understand this verse that speaks to the promise we have by faith, then we likely have something that is EDIFYING, which is also the hallmark of the true doctrines of Christ.

We will notice first, the context, which takes us to a conversation Christ was having with His apostles

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Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

regarding who men thought Him to be. This is still of great value to us as we live in a time when many false Christ's have indeed appeared to many, but when compared to scripture are shown to not be the true Jesus Christ we know from the Word of God. Peter accurately responds to Christ's question "But whom say ye that I am?", by acknowledging the truth of the person of Jesus Christ. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."! Upon this, Christ explains to them that upon this Truth, He would build His church! Amen! Very well-known stuff to all of us, I am sure.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

After which He states:

"And I WILL GIVE unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

So, many may be inclined to disagree with me here, but there appears to me to be a conclusion of the former and a fulfillment afterward in the latter. If we take the ABUNDANCE of evidence that the kingdom was taught as a future promise, which having spent only a brief time I believe we have seen, and apply that understanding to this discussion of the kingdom, what are we left to believe?

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

As painless and theologically simple as it sounds, we are left to believe that Christ would complete the work of building His church (verse 18) and he would then, at some point in the future, give Peter this great power and authority described as having the “the keys of the kingdom of heaven:”. Now if we consider everything we have seen regarding the kingdom of God to this point, having begun later in the New testament by looking at the writing of those enlightened by the Spirit, this makes perfectly clear and sound sense to our thinking as well as making for perfectly clear doctrine. It also sounds just like our God and Savior who would declare great promises to those whom He loved and those who love Him - Like Abraham. God spoke to Him of all the good and great things in store for him - as a promise, just like He did with His disciples very often.

Similarly to the promise Christ made to His apostles regarding the thrones upon which they would sit, this looks to a future kingdom and time when a perfected and glorified Peter, having been redeemed by the power of God through Christ, would reign with Him and act on His behalf in the kingdom inheritance long promised to come.

Now, if you only want interesting and difficult THEOLOGY, this is of little interest perhaps, but if you are looking to expound this passage in a way that is good DOCTRINE for people to understand by FAITH, then this is another example of the Bible shining brightly and profoundly more light upon the commentaries of men than vice versa. Simply believing what God said in His Word by his holy apostles led us to know that. Praise His name!

For those who are unsatisfied with this scripturally consistent view, there are many other creative suggestions from which to choose. Regardless, the future expression of

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

Christ here must still be explained and understood. It clearly is a reference to a future time for Peter from this conversation. If He received the keys at some time future to this, then when? Would he be given the keys to a kingdom that hadn't come yet? If it was at Pentecost, the kingdom must have come, but the scripture says the Spirit is the Earnest of the inheritance and that the inheritance of the kingdom is the future promise. It also says the kingdom is not here yet, so..... not sure why Christ would give Him the keys before it gets here and before Peter has been qualified to wield the authority spoken of here, which is what He is clearly saying to me. In light of God's Word, this clearly looks to be prophetic, just like other promises of the future reign He taught them about, and an attempt to make it fit at an earlier time than it actually applies leads to difficulty, or it becomes theology - knowledge that isn't useful for the faith and doctrine beyond the arguments we get to have over it.

I know some would suggest that this is the church authority that was needed for Christ to perpetuate His work throughout the age. As I said, I am not here to argue with anyone, just to present some thoughts. I do find it difficult to view it in that sense, and not only for all the reasons we have seen so far in this study. Christ's work is perpetuated by His Spirit, and not by fleshly means of the natural order. Kind of a **“think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham”** warning against our natural tendencies and pride.

In addition to those thoughts, the “church” here is spoken of in the singular sense, when typically in view of His work on earth through this age you would have expected Him to speak of a specific “church” when using the

singular sense or of building His “churches” in the plural, as He speaks of them in Revelation. If so, then is this the congregation in Jerusalem? If not Jerusalem, then which congregation is being referenced? If not a singular “assembly”, then why does He not say “churches”, in plural, if the earthly congregations are in view? Likely, to me, because the earthly congregations of this age are REPRESENTATIVE” as shadows of the future promised general assembly of the Firstborn (Christ) of which He is here speaking. Just as the things of the law were shadows for their time. We see this in a few other places in scripture as well, like in Hebrews 12:

Hebrews 12:22 - 23 - “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and CHURCH of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

This is consistent with how the Old Testament congregation was given doctrine and ordinances to be exercised in that were to serve as shadows and examples of the true things that were to come. They pictured the future work of Christ in a shadow, as an example. The use of the singular case here would seem consistent to me that He is speaking of the congregation that He is going to build throughout the age to be gathered together in the fulness of times as that great assembly spoken of by Paul several times in Hebrews, John in Revelation, and David by the Spirit in the Psalms.

Hebrews 2:11 - “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, **IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH** will I sing praise unto thee.”

Psalms 89:7 - “God is greatly to be feared in **THE ASSEMBLY OF THE SAINTS**, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”

Psalms 149:1 - “Praise ye the **LORD**. Sing unto the **LORD** a new song, and his praise in **THE CONGREGATION OF SAINTS**.”

Revelation 5:9 - 10 - “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

This great assembly here spoken of is to be gathered unto Christ at some point future to us as one congregation, just like we do today in our local churches. If He were speaking of the earthly “churches”, which are certainly His work and promise as well, He would likely not use this singular reference. He always speaks particularly.

This body of saints that will be eternally joined to Christ is represented on earth through the churches here today as representative examples or shadows of the heavenly pattern. Churches on earth are comprised of individuals who profess faith in the gospel, are baptized into the assembly, and partake at the Lord’s table in His supper. It is impossible for earthly congregations to adhere perfectly to the heavenly pattern since we do not know the hearts of

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

men as Christ will judge, but we are called to reflect the pattern. The “church” in heaven will be comprised of nothing but SAINTS, which is a world of difference from being a church member.

We know that Christ was Lord over the church of Laodicea, even though there wasn’t a single SAINT among the congregation, and there were only a few SAINTS at Sardis among that entire congregation. Nonetheless, He would be their judge. There is only one judge and lawgiver.

So, just as the nation of Israel didn’t always, or maybe rarely did, uphold the patterns given them as very accurate examples, we might say New Testament churches haven’t always done much better than they did in this attempt. However, that’s the thing about shadows...

This will perhaps not be a popular view among some, but is scripturally consistent with the scriptures we have given to us, as well as consistent with how Christ has worked in ages past through the instructional doctrine He has given to men to serve as examples of future promises. This in no way slackens the requirement of those in the churches to uphold the things of Christ as stewards of His things while He is away - receiving a Kingdom:

Matthew 25:14 - “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.”

That is because once Jesus Christ returns, He will bring the FULFILLMENT of everything we have been exercising as doctrine of the FAITH all through the age. To allow the things of the local church (assembly) to become unimportant due to the fact that the final church (assembly) of saints awaits us in the future would certainly show us to

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

be slothful and like the wicked servant spoken of by Christ for our admonition, given his lot with the unbelieving for such wickedness in our stewardship of His things:

Luke 12:46 - “The lord of THAT SERVANT will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion WITH THE UNBELIEVERS.”

This speaks of one congregation of saints in the heavens to be gathered in the fulness of times, and those others on the earth as representative types throughout the age as a WITNESS to all nations of the true things to come.

**1 Corinthians
15:49 - “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”**

For those of us still bearing the image of the earthy, on earth, to dismiss the importance of the ordinances committed to us while the Master of the house is away, because we know of a congregation of which He has spoken in a future time when we shall bear the image of the heavenly, is a slothful and wicked practice worthy of condemnation for its disobedience and slothful stewardship. There is no shortage of gospel warnings in the doctrine of the kingdom of Christ concerning our stewardship in these things of Christ:

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Luke 21:34 - “And TAKE HEED to yourselves, lest at any time your HEARTS be overcharged with

surfeiting, and drunkenness, and CARES OF THIS LIFE, and so that day come upon you unawares.”

Certainly, those who are unfaithful in that which is least are unfaithful in much. Our job, as those who are on earth living by the faith of the Son of God, is to steward these things while the Master is away – to be a light of HOPE to other men by reason of these ordinances of FAITH. All makes for good doctrine and slays the error of universal church theology. That doctrine and persuasion has wreaked havoc in these last days as well as it continues to spread around – because it destroys the WITNESS and EXAMPLE of the PATTERN of things in heaven that we are to uphold. The same men that typically practice a universal church doctrine on earth, nearly always also teach a kingdom now theology. Both of these bring future PROMISES intended to give HOPE into the present before their time. The result of this practice is always the overthrowing of faith.

2 Timothy 2:18 – “Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”

Pulling future promises into the present destroys the opportunity for faith in the hearts of men. Similarly, clinging to fulfilled promises leaves us blinded to the truth – like the Jews still looking for Christ. Both are very dangerous to the souls of men. Rightly dividing the Word is what is needed and is our prayer for wisdom from Jesus Christ. These errors from men teach the universal church is here on earth already or teach that the kingdom is present with us and persuading men to build it by their efforts – no wonder scripture gives witness to many who will have DONE things IN HIS NAME who are surprised to learn

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

they will be rejected from the inheritance. We are not building His kingdom. We are waiting for it by faith and preaching the hope of it to others also that they might repent and believe.

Matthew 7:22 - “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

This scriptural teaching of our service to Him in the earth as a witness to the true and heavenly things we live in hope of, also allows for clear preaching of a Godly warning to those who take the local church all too lightly, which is more and more common in the great falling away from the faith foretold by scripture.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 - “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a FALLING AWAY first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;”

This apostasy isn't only immorality and the like, although that will accompany it, it is the falling away from the FAITH (the substance of things **hoped for**) in favor of many things such as applying the Word of God to only the natural life to improve everyone's life experience, departing from the observance of the doctrines and ordinances as committed to us in scripture, the watchfulness and expectancy of the Lord's people for His appearing, exchanging faith in His Word for a superstitious belief in His power to “bless” us in ways we choose, the inclination to have an open ear for fables and stories but no appetite for the Word of God, and many other spiritually deceiving hazards of that sort. Kind of like in Jesus day with the

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

Pharisees – just “doing what the Bible says” because it helps us respect the marginalized, care for the poor, tend to the sick, love sacrificially, serve one another, be a good spouse or employee, and many other “wonderful works” such as these. But where is the FAITH? Those are only the works of men. Where is the HOPE? The EXPECTATION of the fulfillment of His Word. Where is the proclamation of the PROMISES? If we are only “looking unto Jesus” as an example of HOW to live as a good person, we have entirely missed His preaching and doctrine.

Jesus didn’t ask if there would be religion and works in His name when He returned. Actually, He taught there would be great deceptions in His name before He comes! What He requires is an expecting people!!! People of FAITH!!! People who have believed His Word and testimony and are walking in the light of it!!!

Mark 13:33 – 35 – “Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For THE SON OF MAN IS AS A MAN TAKING A FAR JOURNEY, who LEFT HIS HOUSE, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. WATCH ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:”

We see here in Mark very plainly that Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, has left His house and committed the things of His work to His servants while He is away. Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, is soon to return and to set His house in order once He concludes His business in Heaven. The Heavens have received Him until the appointed time. When He appears, He is to destroy all those who rejected

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

His gospel and to call all His servants unto Him to judge them as well.

Why did the Son of Man go away? - To receive for Himself a kingdom.

Luke 19:11 - 12 - “And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country TO RECEIVE FOR HIMSELF A KINGDOM, AND TO RETURN.”

Luke 19:15 - “And it came to pass, that WHEN HE WAS RETURNED, HAVING RECEIVED THE KINGDOM, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.”

He is set to return and to reign as King on the throne of His father David at the time appointed of the Father. To gather all things in one, both in heaven and on earth. One God and One King by One Man - Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:10 - “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:”

Matthew 25:31 - 34 - “When the SON OF MAN shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN SHALL HE SIT upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall THE

KING say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

I would like to follow this a bit further, calling upon the work we did in the chapter on *the shadow of things to come*. This doctrine regarding the church Christ was speaking of in Matthew 16, doesn't weaken local church doctrine, it strengthens it! As those who are called to be saints, who have professed faith in Christ, our faithful gathering unto Him each week is to be a picture of the hope we have of **BEING** gathered unto Him when He appears! Also, those not gathered is prophetic as well... There's not a stronger appeal to local church doctrine than this. Our actions are a demonstration of faith and expectation in Him.

The Old Testament congregation was to show forth the coming Redeemer as faithful examples and witnesses of the faith, and the New testament congregation is to show the coming King in like manner. Each congregation had ordinances committed to them to preserve the truth of the doctrine of the congregation of the saints.

Consider these parallels between the shadows of the ordinances of Old Covenant saints and those under the New:

1. Circumcision as an ordinance, given to Abraham as a **“sign of the seal of the faith that he had”**
2. The ordinance of circumcision was a **REQUIREMENT** to be counted a member of the congregation, but not permitted to those outside of the household of faith
3. Once a member of the congregation, the privilege of partaking of Passover was granted

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

Now, we know these things were clearly shadows and examples, intended to convey the meaning of the true things in heaven:

1. Holy Spirit new birth given to those of the household of faith
2. New birth is a requirement to be counted among the congregation
3. Once counted a member of the congregation, the saint was to be forgiven all trespasses by the blood of the Christ

Under that covenant, no one was permitted to become a member of the congregation unless they professed faith in God and then received circumcision. Once they were made a member of the congregation by profession of faith and circumcision, they were then permitted to partake of Passover.

Exodus 12:43 - 48 - “And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall NO STRANGER EAT THEREOF: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. ALL THE CONGREGATION of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males BE CIRCUMCISED, and THE LET HIM come near and keep it; and HE SHALL BE AS ONE that is born in the land: for NO UNCIRCUMCISED PERSON SHALL EAT THEREOF.”

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

There is a good reason God was so particular with them in these things – because they are types and examples of heavenly things. They are His doctrine preserved in fleshly examples. Now, under the New Covenant, we have new ordinances as well, but the pattern is strikingly similar!

1. Baptism as an ordinance, given **as a sign of the seal of the faith that we have**
2. The ordinance of baptism is a requirement to be counted as a member of the congregation
3. Once a member of the congregation, the privilege of partaking of the Lord's supper is granted.

So, these ordinances we have received are clearly shadows, things done in the flesh by men, to preserve in doctrine the reality of the things in heaven which are our hope and expectation:

1. Baptism – the shadow of the things done in Christ for those who come to Him by faith – dead to this world and the flesh with Christ while living in hope of the resurrection promised TO COME.
2. Membership - With the faith necessary for the indwelling of the Spirit, this individual will partake in the resurrection of the just as a member of the congregation of the saints– which is typified in a shadow by baptism.
3. Communion - Once the resurrection of the saints has occurred, this individual will partake of the Lord's table in His kingdom

We see then the prescribed ordinances as we have received them - the baptizing of those who first profess faith in the gospel of Christ, then granting church membership into the congregation, which then permits partaking of the Lord's supper - is intended to preserve in our doctrine the

pattern of the things in heaven which are the true things. The things we do in the flesh are but shadows. Faith, baptism, membership, partaking at the table - the order of the things on earth, is a picture and example of the things in heaven that we preach and believe by faith. See that thou doest all according to

Faith, baptism, membership, partaking at the table – the order of the things on earth, is a picture and example of the things in heaven that we preach and believe by faith. See that thou doest all according to the pattern

the pattern, so Moses was commanded and to which the author of Hebrews alludes. This is why the doctrines of closed communion, regenerate membership, and scriptural baptism are so important to sound doctrine. Without the proper exercise of these, we corrupt the patterns of the true things and are found false witnesses of Christ.

Would we baptize someone without examining their understanding of the gospel and their testimony of faith? No, because one must have faith to have a part in the resurrection, which is the heavenly pattern we are showing through baptism. Is it OK to count someone a member of the congregation without scriptural baptism? No, because it corrupts the pattern. No one will be a member of the congregation of saints in heaven unless they partake in the resurrection, so we likewise require a testimony of faith and administration of scriptural baptism before accepting someone into the congregation - to preserve the truth of the doctrine. Is open communion OK for a congregation to practice? We cannot, because it corrupts the pattern of the things in heaven and violates the pattern of scripture.

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

It no longer serves as a faithful witness to the patterns of the true things in heaven. In the true things of heaven, you won't be at the Lord's table (Lord's Supper) unless you are counted among the congregation of saints and have partaken in the resurrection (baptism), and you won't be resurrected apart from the power of the Holy Spirit which is the earnest of the inheritance and is given to those who believe the gospel.

So, the pattern of the true things in heaven is faith, Holy Spirit, Resurrection, Fellowship, which we have committed to us today in the ordinances of the churches of Christ - Testimony of faith, scriptural baptism, entrance into the congregation, and fellowship at the Lord's table.

All of these persuade me to count the exercise of our faith in our local New Testament church with a keen eye to the scriptural pattern & doctrine because we are to be His witnesses and the pillar and ground of the TRUTH. If we let these slip, we are no longer representing the truth of Christ and His work in the saints.

There are a lot of churches and pastors who are probably willing to argue over closed communion and such, but how many understand the instruction they provide and the reason why these ordinances committed to us to observe in the flesh are so important to the preservation of true doctrine? They are not merely for instigating arguments and taking sides. They show the pattern of things in the heavens. When someone asks why we don't serve communion to those who are not members of our congregation, our answer should instruct them in the doctrine of Christ concerning the true things in heaven and not just the fleshly things - that's what they're for. Teaching. By the end of the conversation, they should know they won't be at

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

the Lord's table unless they've taken part in the resurrection of the congregation of saints who have been sanctified by faith in Christ and that our local congregation is instructed to preserve the integrity of that pattern as a shadow of those things which are to be fulfilled by Christ when He appears.

1 Timothy 3:15 - "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH."

Consider the other ramifications of our time as society and the world continue to force their unbelieving views upon churches across the world. What is made of the pattern if a woman is the pastor? What then is the shadow of the things we have been committed? Is it upholding the truth? One could hardly imagine the bride of Christ instructing Him in anything, yet women teach congregations all over the land. These truths committed to the churches are not a matter of man's opinion of them, but they are a testimony to the truth of the heavenly things in Christ of which we are to bear witness. That is the purpose of creation. To show forth the praise of His glory. Of course, the world is enemy to these things and seeks to continually corrupt the pattern of anything that reflects the truth. Thus, any institution of God's is under attack by the world to so mar His work that it no longer bears witness to the truth. Marriage, clothing, tattoos, language, respect for authority, and a long list of other aspects of God's creation and design concerning man have been corrupted in this way. The examples could go on and on... But it is time to move on from this point.

Chapter 12 - Hidden in Plain Sight

In closing this chapter I would just say, in any of the difficult and strange places where the kingdom of God appears in the gospels, I have found that by applying what is a consistent view that the apostles held after receiving the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, these scriptures may be taught with great clarity, focus, and usefulness to our faith!

Chapter 13 – The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

Acts 2:44 – “And all that believed were together, and had all things common;”

Acts 4:32 – “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”

When we begin to see the gospel that was being preached in the full context of the kingdom of God that was preached, the impact of the FAITH of these early believers in that gospel immediately begins to make perfect sense. We have already seen the example of Zacchaeus and the works that were produced in his life by faith in the gospel of the kingdom. It was more than a sermon on love for their fellow man or compelling religious experience that empowered these believers to act in this way. It was a faith that through Christ there was an eternal inheritance to be had in the kingdom, and that there was a reality to this promise for these believers. They didn't just KNOW it – they BELIEVED it! They believed by faith that Christ was returning to establish His kingdom, and that when He appeared all who believed and were obedient to His gospel would share in the glory of it. It was belief in the warning that Christ would judge those who professed it, but never lived it. That He would be their judge. That He would thoroughly purge His threshing floor as He discerns wheat from chaff.

This is the faith that Christ preached of the kingdom while He was yet on the earth during His ministry.

Chapter 13 - The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

He taught of all the things required to be one of his disciples - to “follow me”.

Luke 14:26 - 27; 33 - “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.....So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

The idea of “forsaking all” is more than just hyperbolic preacher speak. It is a requirement of the man who would enter the kingdom to see beyond this life by faith and to have a hope that means more than anything else this world has to offer. It declares the truth of Christ coming to this earth to fulfill His Father’s will and gives us an example that He Himself lived this way as He was looking forward to a promise before Him.

Hebrews 12:2 - “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

For this reason, He was “about His Father’s business” and was not loving the things of this world. He was a pilgrim and a stranger, as one looking for a promise of things that don’t pertain to this present world. Satan’s offer of the kingdoms of this world was a poor attempt on His part. Christ knows the end of those things is death - He already had a promise from the Father and didn’t need the Devils... ahem.... Uh, promise (lies)...

Chapter 13 - The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

All of this is not without reason. The gospel of the kingdom teaches us by faith that the things of this present world are only for our using, not abusing, because we, as Abraham and Christ both showed, are walking through this world to receive the inheritance laid up for us in the world to come – the kingdom of God. Now, if you had some number of thousands of people who BELIEVED this testimony of Christ, and were PERSUADED of the reality of these promises concerning the kingdom inheritance and the appearing of our Lord, then this type of result spoken of in Acts is the most natural thing in the world for these saints.

Hebrews 10:34 – “For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.”

Especially since these believers EXPECTED the return of Christ to happen anytime, which is a hallmark of the gospel we preach! These believers were patient, but WATCHFUL!

Matthew 24:42 – “WATCH therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.”

Matthew 25:13 – “WATCH therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

Mark 13:35 – “WATCH ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest

coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, **WATCH.**”

What about our generation today? Have we fallen asleep while waiting for our Lord to return?

What about our generation today? Have we fallen asleep while waiting for our Lord to return? It was the same in Noah’s day. Same in Lot’s day as well. Until the master

of the house shut the door, then everything changed in a hurry. It seems this is not a new phenomenon but is a charge to the churches to always be deliberate to **STAY** watchful. IF we aren’t watchful for His coming, we aren’t being obedient to the gospel we profess.

1 Peter 1:13 - 14 - “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and HOPE TO THE END for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:”

We only looked at a few verses concerning this truth. How can a church stay watchful unless it is by the overseers of the work constantly preaching of the hope we have in His promise to keep us in remembrance? The apostles were sure to commend all the saints in the churches of their day to **WATCH!**

1 Peter 4:7 - “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and WATCH unto prayer.”

1 Thessalonians 5:6 - “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us WATCH and be sober.”

Chapter 13 - The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

Colossians 4:2 - “Continue in prayer, and WATCH in the same with thanksgiving;”

1 Corinthians 16:13 - “WATCH ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

Look at what was happening in the churches already by the nearing of the close of the first century when Christ Jesus speaks to the church at Sardis by the apostle John:

Revelation 3:2 - 3 - Be WATCHFUL, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. REMEMBER therefore how thou hast received and HEARD, and hold fast, and REPENT. If therefore thou shalt not WATCH, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

What was ready to die that needed to be strengthened? It had everything to do with watchfulness, which means they had begun to let THE HOPE of His PROMISE to return die as they busied themselves with other things. He even warns them to repent and to be watchful, because the things they had heard were the things of the gospel of the kingdom and they had begun to forget those things concerning His promise and appearing. He warns them there is severe consequences to those not being watchful. Serious business. Repentance was needed then. What about now?

There is a dire warning needing to be sounded today that those professing faith in Christ by the preaching of His gospel be WATCHFUL for His return. It is coming as a snare on all the earth!

Chapter 13 - The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

Luke 18:8 - “I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH, shall he find FAITH on the earth?”

Are we ready?! It seems many today are busied with many “works” done in His name but may not be living in watchfulness of His return. Many are eating. Many are drinking. There is much making merry. Much enjoyment of the pleasures this life affords through every means imaginable.

The return of Christ according to the gospel of the kingdom was prevalent among early New Testament believers, of which the scripture gives ample testimony:

John 21:22 - 23 - “Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”

So, there was a common idea among many that the apostle John would live to see the kingdom of God come. That would be pretty imminent, which is likely why Christ said what He did. He wanted them to be watchful.

James 5:9 - “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.”

Hebrews 10:37 - “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

1 Thessalonians 1:10 - “And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Chapter 13 - The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

We could choose many such scriptures to show the imminence that was in the teaching of the day concerning the return of Christ. It is the flesh that causes us to doubt and lose sight of the hope. This persuasion is not of God.

1 John 3:2 - 3 - “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath THIS HOPE in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

This isn't recorded so often in scripture because the apostles were so interested in “eschatology” as we call it today, they were preaching it as doctrine. That is because it is the event that concludes this age, brings the kingdoms of this world to an end, ushers in the kingdom long promised, and when Christ comes, He is coming to reward His saints in the inheritance of the kingdom mentioned throughout the scriptures. It is a doctrine that builds our faith and combats the allure of the world. Which is the point John is making in his epistle. Yes, we could do with a more expectant faith these days concerning His return.

Now, if we were to have today a sweeping revival of the faith that these early believers had in the gospel as it was delivered to them, we might reasonably expect similar results as we read of in the early churches. The gospel that is preached most often today that is devoid of the kingdom promises of inheritance in Christ, provides no compelling reason for one in faith to live in such a way - other than the preacher says we ought to. The gospel of the kingdom leaves no reason not to! The more fully persuaded a saint becomes of the Word of God concerning these things, the more naturally their faith will work itself out through their

Chapter 13 - The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

lives in Christian charity. This is growing in grace and knowledge as Peter said we are to do:

2 Peter 3:18 - “But GROW in GRACE, and in the KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

As well as having the eyes of our understanding enlightened regarding the hope of our calling and the inheritance we are promised:

Ephesians 1:18 - “The EYES of your UNDERSTANDING being ENLIGHTENED; that ye may KNOW what is the HOPE of his CALLING, and what the riches of the glory of his INHERITANCE in the SAINTS,”

Our being able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height:

Ephesians 3:18 - “May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;”

This is the testimony of the early saints and is not out of reach for the saints in our time today. His promises are still true. His power is not slacked. His Spirit not infirmed. Our iniquity and hardness of heart concerning His promise may be in question, but His part is not. He abides faithful. We see an important admonition from Peter in Acts concerning the preaching that was delivered on Pentecost:

Acts 2:40 - “And with MANY OTHER WORDS did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves FROM THIS untoward GENERATION.”

Chapter 13 - The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

The Lord Jesus Christ makes a statement in Luke 16 concerning the children of this world and their counterparts, the children of light. Same two groups of children as in the parable of the tares told by our Lord in His teaching on the kingdom. Let's read from Luke 16:

I often have told our congregation, for those in Christ, this is NOT our generation. It is not our time, as it were. We are dead and our life is hidden with Christ in God, waiting for the appearing of our Lord when we are to appear also!

Luke 16:8

“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of THIS WORLD are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”

I often have told our congregation, for those in Christ, this is NOT our generation. It is not our time, as it were. We are dead and our life is hidden with Christ in God, waiting for the appearing of our Lord when we are to appear also! For now, this present generation is given the reward of this present time and world. It has been given over to the power of darkness for a season of time. Our hope and promise of the Savior is that we might be delivered from this present evil world, from this generation as Peter says, that we might be translated OUT of this present evil world and the kingdom of darkness, preserved by the power of God through faith until His appearing, and placed into the kingdom of Christ in the world to come – which is exactly what God has promised to those who are in Christ by faith. Paul speaks of these things in Colossians:

Chapter 13 - The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

Colossians 1:12 - 13 - “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath MADE US MEET to be partakers of the INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”

Colossians 3:2 - 4 - “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For YE ARE DEAD, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR with him in glory.”

Paul then goes on in chapter three to encourage the hearts of the saints in the work of the Lord:

Colossians 3:24 - “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that OF THE LORD ye shall receive the REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”

The entire idea of the inheritance of the saints is that Christ, the righteous judge, will reward to every man according to the obedience to His gospel in faith when He appears. For this reason, we are encouraged to humble ourselves, die to the flesh, and serve the Lord Christ - not FOR righteousness, but because of our FAITH in His Promise. These actions won't please Him unless they are done from a heart of faith. Because when He comes to reward the saints with the inheritance, He has promised them, He will faithfully render to every saint according to their labor of faith. You will see this encouragement and admonition all throughout the New Testament to those who had believed the gospel:

Hebrews 6:10 - 12 - “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have

Chapter 13 - The Impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom

shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of HOPE unto THE END: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through FAITH and patience INHERIT the promises.”

Isn't it awesome how the Word of God continues to speak with tremendous clarity as you see the New Testament as an entire book of doctrine and practice concerning the kingdom of God and the promised inheritance of the saints! Look at this passage! We have the righteous reward of God for the labor now in this life to those being faithful to the end as they by faith and patience wait to inherit the promises! It is everything we have been studying. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ - the gospel of the kingdom. It is what the early believers received by faith as the truth and why they gladly forsook their earthly possessions in this world for the sake of Christ and the gospel. Would we do the same? We would if we believed the gospel of the kingdom.

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

Chapter 14 – A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

Isaiah 27:6 - “He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”

What a powerful promise to Israel! I would like to briefly mention the extent of the kingdom that is promised as best as we can attempt to cover here. To do that, we will need to touch on a little bit of prophecy concerning the timing of certain events foretold to happen at the end of the present age. Many have thought of the destruction of the world by fire, that it will happen at the conclusion of the millennium and then we move off into an undefined period called eternity. I will not here be so bold as to say that is incorrect, but I will from scripture show why it seems unlikely.

Much of this persuasion I believe comes from a study of the book of Revelation as a stand-alone prophetic revelation. If you study the book of Revelation in the light of the body of scripture, you will see a much different picture of those events. Of the 404 verses of the book of Revelation, approximately 278 of them directly reference the old testament prophets. That’s significant! The best way to view Revelation is that it is the capstone of all prophetic revelation and it unseals and ties together all the other information we have in scripture concerning the times of the end of this age and the arrival of God’s kingdom. To thoroughly study the book, one must follow each reference back to the Old Testament and gain the piece that is being revealed to John by Christ. The book of Hebrews is much that way as the author continually refers to the old

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

Testament scriptures in a way that requires a working knowledge of the context and body of each passage. Revelation is the same but much more so. Time consuming - yes. Worthwhile - also, yes.

If we go to the last four chapters of the book and read it straight through, it seems to say the order of events will be as follows when read as if it is all chronological order:

1. Judgment of the great whore
2. The return of Christ on a white horse
3. The defeat of the kings of the earth, the beast, and the false prophet
4. The beast and false prophet thrown into the lake of fire
5. The slaying of the remnant by the sword of His mouth
6. Satan bound in the bottomless pit
7. Thrones and judgement given unto "them"
8. The resurrection of tribulation believers
9. Thousand-year millennium reign
10. Thousand years expire
11. Satan deceives the nations of the earth
12. Final destruction of unbelieving rebellion
13. Satan cast into lake of fire
- 14. Earth and heaven flee away**
15. Great white throne judgement
- 16. New heaven and new earth**
17. New Jerusalem descends from heaven
- 18. View and description of the New Jerusalem**

OK. So, you may need to read this closely or maybe a couple of times, but I'll do my best to clear up a few things that are important to our understanding. Most of the book

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

of Revelation is chronological, but there are some instances where it is not. How can we know? By examining scripture.

In this commonly accepted scenario shown above, we have placed the removing of the heaven and earth **AFTER** the millennium. We also tend to usually see the entire description given in chapters 21 and 22 ascribed to the New Jerusalem. However, looking at Revelation as a capstone of prophecy and examining its references to the other scriptures reveals some important differences that will affect our understanding of the passage. I'll first show you how the order of events when viewed within the framework of other prophetic scriptures would appear, and then explain why by looking at a few reasons for this re-ordering. If we view the order of events in this way, it will look like this as we start from chapter 19:

1. Judgment of the great whore
2. The return of Christ on a white horse
3. The defeat of the kings of the earth, the beast, and the false prophet
4. The beast and false prophet thrown into the lake of fire
5. The slaying of the remnant by the sword of His mouth
6. **Earth and heavens burned up**
7. Satan bound in the bottomless pit
8. Thrones and judgement given unto "them"
9. The resurrection of tribulation believers
10. **New Heaven and New Earth**
11. **New Jerusalem descends from heaven**
12. **View and description of the New Jerusalem**
13. **View and description of the New Earth & the Holy City (Jehovah Shammah - Ezekiel 48:35)**

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

14. Thousand-year millennium reign
15. Thousand years expire
16. Satan loosed for a season and deceives the nations of the earth
17. Final destruction of unbelieving rebellion
18. Satan cast into lake of fire
19. Great white throne judgement

The arrival of the new heaven and new earth at the beginning of the millennium rather than after, the sending down of the New Jerusalem before the millennium rather than after, and seeing chapters 21 and 22 as dealing with both the heavenly city as well as the “holy city” on earth are the primary differences.

The reason this is meaningful is because many have thought of our life with Christ in eternity as being only gathered around the throne singing and praising and bowing down endlessly for all eternity. We know from the ordinances delivered to the churches today, that there **MUST** be gatherings of the assembly of saints, and we see from revelation they include singing, worship, and hearing the Word. Pretty cool, right?! That is not, however, the sum total of our eternal existence. What we see in scriptures is quite different than this idea. We see the saints of God reigning with Christ in his eternal kingdom forever. This kingdom will begin with the arrival of Christ after the great tribulation and then continue, well, forever...

Daniel 7:18 - “But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom FOR EVER, even for ever and ever.”

Time would fail us here to thoroughly expound this from scripture, but let’s try to cover some high points. When we look at revelation chapter 20, starting in verse 5,

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

we have a parenthetical insert that carries us all the way to the end of the 1,000-year period to show us the conclusion of Satan's rebellion. When understood this way, the context of verse 5 through verse 15 is a view from John as he described the final judgement of Satan, sin and death. After carrying the conversation to the conclusion of the matters at hand concerning Satan being bound, released and finally defeated, John then takes us back to the description of the things taking place immediately after Christ's return. When chapter 21 begins, we are back at the end of the great tribulation and seeing the things promised to be brought to pass with Christ's return, viewing the heavenly city, New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven.

If you recall from the Olivet discourse, right at the end of the great tribulation the sun, moon, and stars go dark and nothing appears in the sky until they see the sign of the son of man coming in heaven.

Matthew 24:29 - 30 - "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And THEN SHALL APPEAR THE SIGN of the Son of man in heaven: AND THEN shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and THEY SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

We are then told in Revelation that the nations (people of the earth) will walk in the light of the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:23 - 24 - "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the NATIONS OF THEM WHICH ARE SAVED

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

SHALL WALK IN THE LIGHT OF IT: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.”

We then notice after describing this city from verse 10 to verse 27, the description moves from the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, to the holy city on earth, Jehovah-Shammah beginning in chapter 22. This is important and is easily missed if you study Revelation as a stand-alone book. Let me try to explain:

When chapter 22 opens, John says “and he shewed me”. In chapter 21 we have been being shown the holy Jerusalem, which seemingly will be in orbit around the earth so the nations can walk in the light of it – it is roughly 2/3 the size of our moon at approximately 1,500 miles square and high. “Nations” tells us that this is not the body of resurrected saints that are no longer Jew or Greek but is a reference to the surviving remnant of believers brought through the tribulation and granted entrance into the kingdom age as natural bodied believers. The account of this is given by Jesus in Matthew 25. These will be those who are accounted worthy to obtain this world to come but did not attain unto the resurrection of the dead, which is why the blessing falls to those who die in the Lord in Revelation 14.

Revelation 14:13 – “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD FROM HENCEFORTH: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

There is a blessing for those who embrace the promise of God versus the promise of the dragon – even though it requires choosing death that they might live forever. The other choice is to live for a time and perish forever.

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

At the end of the tribulation, some survivors will be accounted worthy to enter and some will be sent to hell as a holding prison for those who are awaiting their final trial at the great white throne. It is these surviving believers who will repopulate the earth after its destruction by fire. Just as in Noah's day, everyone granted entrance into this age will be a believer. All the unbelieving will be cast out as we see in the parables of the ten virgins and so on.

So, we see New Jerusalem described all the way to the end of chapter 21, and then we begin chapter 22 with "and he shewed me", as if now we have moved on to look at something else besides "the city" we have been viewing—which indeed is the case. The next two verses are direct references to Ezekiel 47:1 - 12, which tells us we are now viewing the holy city on earth that has been promised to the nation of Israel. The river and the trees spoken of that are for the "nations" are along the river flowing out of the throne of God in the temple - there is no temple in the New Jerusalem, which is where the Throne of God is according to the vision Ezekiel had.

Ezekiel 43:7 - "And he said unto me, Son of man, the PLACE OF MY THRONE, and the place of the soles of my feet, WHERE I WILL DWELL IN THE MIDST OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL FOR EVER, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places."

John goes on to tell us there shall be no more curse, which doesn't make sense of the New Jerusalem, but does make sense when we see the things on earth in view here. This also agrees with the Old Testament prophets as they foretold of the coming kingdom age:

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

Isaiah 65:18 - 20 - “But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.”

Isaiah 65:25 - “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.”

In the final chapters of Revelation, we have all the promises of God fulfilled to his saints who will dwell in the New Jerusalem, as well as the fulfillment of His promises to Israel which will be planted and no more removed. This will mean that the saints, those who are joined to Christ as one spirit and are the children of the resurrection thus the children of God, will inhabit the New Jerusalem as their dwelling place and, like Christ, can visit earth over which we will reign (the dwelling place of men) and also be able to visit heaven (the dwelling place of the Father). You could literally spend pages and hours looking at all the prophecies concerning these things in the Old Testament. Regardless, the attempt I am making here is to show the promise of God concerning the removal of the things of this present world at the conclusion of the great tribulation rather than after the millennium.

Some will read this next verse and say the heaven and earth cannot be removed until after the millennium:

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

Revelation 20:11 - “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face THE EARTH AND THE HEAVEN FLED AWAY; and there was found no place for them.”

Since this is a reference to the great white throne judgement, many see this as an indication of the timing of the removal of the present world. We can see however, from the larger body of scripture, that this view is at odds with other revelations. You might notice that this verse doesn't say that the earth and heaven flee away **AT THIS TIME**, but rather the phrase is used to **IDENTIFY** the one who is sitting on the throne. It's not a text that is given to show the timing of that event, but rather gives us the identity of the one doing the judging. If the one sitting on the throne is the one from whose face the earth and heaven fled away (past tense), then this is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (which we know it is) who will fulfill that when he returns at the end of the great tribulation. He is now identified as the one sitting on the throne - “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;” - Another reference to the deity of Christ.

John 5:22 - “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:”

Let's look at some other revelations that show the removal of this present world at the end of what Christ calls the great tribulation - the last 3 ½ years of this age. Christ compared the destruction of the world by fire which was to precede His coming to the destruction of the world in Noah's day and the destruction of Sodom.

Luke 17:26 - “And AS IT WAS in the days of Noe, SO SHALL IT BE also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and **DESTROYED THEM ALL.**"

we are told by Jesus that the events of the great tribulation, which include the destruction of the earth by fire, are not to be repeated, so we can be sure another destruction of the earth is not to take place after the restitution of all things and the times of refreshing spoken of by Peter in the book of Acts.

Luke 17:29 - 30 -
"But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even **THUS SHALL IT BE** in the day when the Son of man is revealed"

Also, we are told by Jesus that the events of the great tribulation, which include the destruction of the earth by fire, are not to be repeated, so we can be

sure another destruction of the earth is not to take place after the restitution of all things and the times of refreshing spoken of by Peter in the book of Acts. It doesn't fit scripture to see the restitution of all things when Christ returns only to have them destroyed 1,000 years later. This event spoken of by Christ is not to be repeated.

Matthew 24:21 - "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, NOR EVER SHALL BE."

This agrees with the accounts of Peter in his epistle which clearly places the destruction of the earth at the time of Christ's return:

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

2 Peter 3:10 - 12 - “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; **IN THE WHICH** the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto **THE COMING OF THE DAY OF GOD**, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?”

This also agrees with the witness of Paul:

Hebrews 12:26 - 27 - “Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, **SIGNIFIETH THE REMOVING OF THOSE THINGS** that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

The teachings of Jesus Christ:

Matthew 24:35 - 36 - “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

The prophecies of Isaiah:

Isaiah 24:19 - 23 - “The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the **LORD** shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”

All these passages clearly place the destruction of the world at the end of the great tribulation and before the reign of Christ. In this passage in Isaiah that we just read, we even see the punishment of the kings of the earth and their imprisonment in hell during the millennium and before the great white throne judgement which takes place at the end of that period of time.

Zephaniah 3:8 - “Therefore WAIT ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all THE EARTH SHALL BE DEVoured WITH THE FIRE of my jealousy.”

Here in Zephaniah, the picture is clear as well. We could go on and on with the promises concerning this present world and the timing of its demise at the arrival of the Son of Man at His second coming:

Isaiah 2:19 - “And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when HE ARISETH TO SHAKE TERRIBLY THE EARTH.”

Isaiah 51:5 - 6 - “My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

earth beneath: for the **HEAVENS SHALL VANISH AWAY** like smoke, and the **EARTH SHALL WAX OLD** like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.”

Joel 3:14 - 16 - “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the **LORD** is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The **LORD** also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and **THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH SHALL SHAKE**: but the **LORD** will be the **HOPE** of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.”

I’ve used here some passages that should sound familiar if you have read the book of Revelation recently. These also clearly depict the timing of these things. So, when we see that the arrival of the new heaven and new earth will be after the destruction of the world at the close of the great tribulation, we also see the promise God made to his saints that they will possess a kingdom that is everlasting.

Even in the Psalms we have testimony of the changing of the destruction of the world that it might be changed as a garment that has waxen old:

Psalm 102:25 - 28 - “Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. **THEY SHALL PERISH**, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and **THEY SHALL BE CHANGED**: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.”

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

And we see in Hebrews amidst the opening chapter discussing the things of the kingdom, Christ as the heir of all things, the promise of a world to come, and the eternal throne of the Son, the teaching of the removal of these present things:

Hebrews 1:11 - “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: THEY SHALL PERISH; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and THEY SHALL BE CHANGED: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”

It is true that we don't have a lot of information about what will be taking place on the earth after the final destruction of Satan, sin and death, but we do know that the earth will continue:

Isaiah 45:18 - “For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, HE CREATED IT NOT IN VAIN, HE FORMED IT TO BE INHABITED: I am the LORD; and there is none else.”

That the Lord will cause those that come of Jacob to fill it with fruit:

Isaiah 27:6 - “He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”

That the nation of Israel will be a nation for ever:

Jeremiah 31:36 - “If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me FOR EVER.”

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

That the people of Israel will not be a part of the final rebellion of man and will never forsake their God again:

Isaiah 59:20 - 21 - “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and FOR EVER.”

That the throne of Christ will be established forever:

Isaiah 9:6 - 7 - “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and THE GOVERNMENT shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT and peace THERE SHALL BE NO END, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even FOR EVER. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

Hebrews 1:8 - “But unto THE SON he saith, THY THRONE, O God, is FOR EVER and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.”

So, the throne promised to Christ, that He will sit upon when He returns, is promised to Him forever. We also know then that we will continue to reign with Christ over the creation forever:

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

Hebrews 2:5 - 8 - “For unto the angels hath he not **PUT IN SUBJECTION THE WORLD TO COME**, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put **ALL THINGS** in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see **NOT YET** all things put under him.”

1 Corinthians 6:3 - “Know ye not that **WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS?** how much more things that pertain to this life?”

Revelation 1:6 - “And **HATH MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD** and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Kings over the earth and priests unto God sounds an awful lot like the kingdom doctrine Christ spoke of concerning the world to come that would not function as the current order of things:

Matthew 21:41 - “They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”

God has decreed to destroy the princes of this world (Satan and Co.) who sought to take the inheritance for themselves and to let His vineyard out to other husbandmen who would render Him the fruits of it in their seasons. Rulers over the things of the earth who perform

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

their duties as servants of the Most High God – just like Revelation 1:6 and Matthew 21:43 show.

These truths raise a lot of interesting questions for sure, but I want to stop short of speculation. All in all, we can see from scripture that the kingdom promised to be given to the saints is an eternal one, not a 1,000 year one. Also, the new creation will continue past the 1,000 years under the eternal dominion of Jesus Christ. There will be no end to the increase of His government and peace. We will be busy with our service to Him in this kingdom in some capacity known only to Him and chosen especially for us. We know the apostles were to sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of natural bodied believers that repopulate the earth after the tribulation as part of their inheritance. We can see some of that in the parables in Matthew 25, since those parables teach about the events on earth immediately surrounding the return of Christ. What we don't know is what our part will be, but if we have faith in Christ and have been born again, we will have a part in this eternal kingdom as we serve Him in whatever capacity He chooses for us. The service of the 24 families of priests in their order throughout the year may have some light to shed on this for us, as well as the 24 elders in Revelation, but only God knows.

Matthew 11:11 - “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

This is the kingdom that was promised to Israel, of which many of them will partake, but most fell short of it.

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

Exodus 19:5 - 6 - “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”

Compare this to Peters 1st epistle as He writes concerning these things:

1 Peter 2:9 - “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people”

Clearly Peter is referencing this promise from Christ in the Old Testament and applying it to those who have obtained an eternal inheritance through the promise of Christ. All the promises made to the nation of Israel will also still be kept by God’s power and for His own name’s sake:

Ezekiel 36:20 - 22 - “And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land. But I HAD PITY FOR MINE HOLY NAME, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I DO NOT THIS FOR YOUR SAKES, O house of Israel, BUT FOR MINE HOLY NAME’S SAKE, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.”

Which is why He will preserve a remnant and bring them through the fire to inhabit the land promised to them. However, all those who have lived before that time who were trusting in their natural heritage and not in Christ

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

by faith will not partake of the eternal kingdom He was promising. This promise was not realized by many who came of Jacob. We see this in the New Testament in several places:

Luke 13:28 - “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.”

Matthew 21:43 - “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

This kingdom that was taken from them is both the position of being the repository of His Word for its preaching and witness among the nations in this time as well as the position in the eternal kingdom of which His Word speaks. A real blow to such a proud nation. God has shown His work will be done by His Spirit and for His glory.

Zechariah 4:6 - : Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”

He has further spoken that no flesh will glory in His presence.

Colossians 1:29 - “That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

In the fulness of time, when Israel realizes this, their pride will be broken, they will repent and seek the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will receive them.

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

Luke 13:35 - “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

That name of course, is Jesus Christ, the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And then we see in Revelation the testimony of those saints who have been made that peculiar nation of kings and priest by faith in Christ:

Revelation 1:5 - 6 - “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and WASHED US FROM OUR SINS in his own blood, And HATH MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

As a final word of conclusion, we know the scriptures have spoken of a world to come that will be without end. This world will be created by the power of God through His Son Jesus Christ after the destruction of this present evil world and will be a world wherein dwelleth righteousness. This destruction is promised to be at the conclusion of this age, and there is never to be a destruction like it again. The restitution of all things, to be sent forth from the Lord will be the beginning of a world that is eternally under the dominion of Christ and His saints, being perfected by the work He completed for them on Calvary’s cross, will be reigning with Him forever. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Promises to Israel - Isaiah 45:17 - “But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded WORLD WITHOUT END.”

Chapter 14 - A Millennium Kingdom or An Everlasting Kingdom?

Promises to the Saints - **Ephesians 3:21** - “**Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, WORLD WITHOUT END. Amen.**”

Chapter 15 – Hear Ye, Hear Ye...

I have saved here the primary thrust of the gospel of the Kingdom for last. I suppose it is arguable that this chapter should come first, but I wanted to end with this as it is the most important aspect of the entire kingdom – its King! The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world having a promise of the Father. He was promised to be heir of all things but walked as a son under tutors and governors during the days of His flesh, and then was given the dominion after His resurrection and ascension.

Hebrews 1:2 – “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed HEIR OF ALL THINGS, by whom also he made the worlds;”

Galatians 4:1 – “Now I say, That THE HEIR, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, THOUGH HE BE LORD OF ALL;”

Jesus Christ walked this earth as the appointed heir but did not receive the promise until after the days of His flesh were completed. He has since His resurrection, ascended to the Father and has received all power in heaven and in earth.

1 Peter 3:22 – “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”

This is the aspect of the gospel that teaches us to call upon the name of the Lord – Jesus. Not “calling” in a way that teaches us to pray a special prayer to be saved, but calling upon Him in a way that is the acknowledging

Chapter 15 - Hear Ye, Hear Ye...

of the truth of what God has done in Christ Jesus - made Him Lord of all.

Acts 2:36 - “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Acts 10:36 - “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)”

It was the knowledge that Satan and his princes had concerning Jesus Christ as heir that led them to attempt to take the inheritance from Him by having Him killed. They did not understand the purpose of the coming of Christ as the Lamb of God and thought they would seize the inheritance for themselves by having Christ crucified. We see their intentions carried out by the children of the devil and their motives made clear by Christ.

Luke 20:14 - “But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.”

Certainly, the husbandmen in view were not the Pharisees and Sadducees, but rather Satan and his company. The leaders of the Jews did not acknowledge the Son as Heir, but this parable identifies them as the servants of their master who do his bidding - that is Satan. And all this was done in the name of service to God!!

Remarkably, the priests and scribes perceived that Christ had spoken this parable against them, but they sought only to kill Him rather than repent. However, the Word of God is certain, and the testimony was to be

Chapter 15 - Hear Ye, Hear Ye...

fulfilled according to the counsel of God. The Lamb of God was to be slain, buried, and resurrected with power!

Acts 4:26 - 28 - “The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For TO DO WHATSOEVER thy hand and THY COUNSEL DETERMINED before to be done.”

God the Father had already determined what should be accomplished and used wicked hearts and hands to perform the work. There is good reason to fear the Lord! Through all of this, Jesus Christ obtained the victory!

Colossians 2:13 - 15 - “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

All who have put their faith in this truth concerning the rule of Jesus Christ and have continued on the truth of calling upon the Lord by the name of Jesus, have acknowledged the truth of the work of God without having yet seen the fulfillment of this fact. It is a prayer of faith, an act of obedience, a heart acknowledgement of things yet unseen to us. Whosoever calleth upon Him, shall not be ashamed we are told.

Chapter 15 - Hear Ye, Hear Ye...

Romans 10:11 - “For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

This man, Jesus Christ, is now Lord of all and is waiting for the time appointed of the Father for Him to put down all His enemies. For now, the kingdom of heaven is content to suffer violence for a time while men are given opportunity for repentance and faith, but there is coming a day when all the enemies of Christ are to be overcome. We are called to the ministry of reconciliation in the meantime so that men might believe the truth before it comes to pass. The time that passes until then is the acceptable time of salvation for men to call upon Him, both Jew and Gentile.

Romans 10:12 - “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”

2 Corinthians 6:2 - “(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”

There is no other hope or name given to men whereby they can be saved.

Acts 4:12 - “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is NONE OTHER NAME under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Jesus reigns and has all power given to Him.

Matthew 28:18 - “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Chapter 15 - Hear Ye, Hear Ye...

He is rich towards all those who call upon Him. Let us worship and acknowledge the Son - the one true King of Kings and Lord of lords. Many today are content to talk about God, but we know from scripture that it is the man Jesus Christ that now is Lord of All and we are to come to Him alone for salvation and deliverance. I can't really put it any better or clearer than the Psalmist was able to so long ago....

Psalm 2:12 - "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

In Closing...

As we consider the preaching of the Word of the Lord for this age, it is a prophetic message of a future yet to come. Future return of Christ. Future judgement of men. Future inheritance of the saints. Future redemption of our bodies. Future manifestation of the sons of God. Future salvation to be brought to us at His appearing. Future reign of the saints with Christ. Future creation of a new heavens and earth. All of which is predicated upon the work done by God through the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, who is the author of all these hopes and promises. Those who “believe in Jesus” are those who have received His testimony concerning these things and have heeded His holy call to follow Him and to wait for the fulfillment of the Word they have believed in faith. The faith that overcomes to the end is the hallmark of God’s work in His children.

May we wait for our Lord in peace and faith without wavering, given the glory and certainty of these promises He has made to us. No longer looking unto the world for pleasure, security, peace, hope, safety, joy, satisfaction, or any other thing it may seem to offer, but let our hearts and minds be steadfastly fixed upon Him who is our Peace, Joy, Hope, Salvation, Deliverer, Redeemer, Savior, and coming King. Let us seek first His kingdom by faith and His righteousness which is by faith and be content with the things He provides along the way in this life as He sees fit and necessary to us. Let us use all that He may give us as an opportunity to share the hope we have in Him – finances, strengths, weaknesses, disease, family, friends, and every other gift received in this life is to be used as an opportunity to shine the light of this hope we have. Whether

In Closing...

they be glorious or distasteful, learning how to be abased and how to abound, to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. As the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering,

by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

That's good kingdom doctrine.

The world is alluring many back into its clutches, and many are being taken in an evil net looking for God's blessings only in the natural life with no FAITH in His promised kingdom, promised inheritance, or promised reign of righteousness in the world to come. Holding fast in the FAITH isn't fulfilled in us, unless it carries the full expectation and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ's Word of

The world is alluring many back into its clutches, and many are being taken in an evil net looking for God's blessings only in the natural life with no FAITH in His promised kingdom, promised inheritance, or promised reign of righteousness in the world to come.

In Closing...

Promise and testimony of prophecy concerning the things to come that He has revealed by His Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:9 - 10 - “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which **GOD HATH PREPARED FOR THEM THAT LOVE HIM**. But God hath **REVEALED THEM UNTO US BY HIS SPIRIT**: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

Hebrews 3:6 - “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we **HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE AND THE REJOICING OF THE HOPE** firm unto the end.”

Hebrews 4:14 - “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us **HOLD FAST OUR PROFESSION**.”

Hebrews 10:23 - “Let us **HOLD FAST THE PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH WITHOUT WAVERING**; (for he is faithful that promised;)”

Revelation 3:3 - “**REMEMBER** therefore how thou hast received and **HEARD**, and **HOLD FAST**, and **REPENT**. If therefore thou shalt not **WATCH**, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

The call of Christ to the churches today is to hold fast the **FAITH** and **EXPECTATION** of the fulfillment of everything He has promised by His Word. To uphold the doctrines, ordinances, promises, and examples of the faith we profess and in which we hope. No man is likely to ask of the **HOPE** you have, if they can't see a testimony of it in your life. And what is our Hope? Only going to heaven when we die?! (this is when I decided to add a chapter on

In Closing...

Hope...) Not according to the gospel of Jesus Christ which commands us to be watchful in faith for Him to come to us. The question we have for the world is less about what will happen to them when they die as much as it is are they prepared for Christ to return and judge them with a final decree for all eternity? Scriptural faith and preaching has everything to do with preparing people to be in expectation of His appearing and kingdom! His PROMISE is not “that when you die, you may come and be with me” it is **“I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”** - which is why he COMMANDS watchfulness. Subtle isn't it? That's how deception creeps in - through subtlety. Just a different interpretation, I suppose, of what He said.

Knowing and being persuaded of the truth of these things we have studied as it pertains to the preaching of the kingdom since John - the teaching of the apostles of a promised kingdom inheritance, the shadow of things to come, the prophetic Word of God to man so that He can justify them by faith, the covenants of promise, the inheritance, the calling of the saints, the hope of His appearing and our resurrection, the promised world to come, the judgment of this world and its promised end, the reign of God by His Son Jesus Christ over all things, and the good will of the Father to make Abraham the heir of the world and all those who are his children of promise by faith in Christ, and of His good will to give us the kingdom - knowing now all of these things, go read the book of Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, Romans, and through every New Testament book to see the glory of the riches of Christ as the kingdom is preached and taught in faith. To the household of faith, it is a promise. To the unbelieving, it serves as a warning. For those who have already believed the Word concerning these things, there is instruction for how

In Closing...

we ought to now live by the faith of Christ in the days of our flesh while we wait for the hope of His promise. We can now see afar off and know the end from the beginning, which begs the question of faith:

2 Peter 3:11 - 12 - “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?”

The world loves churches that have chosen to participate with them to make the world here and now a better place as agents of society – as long as they don’t share the witness of Christ concerning the works of the world; that they are carnal, earthly, devoid of faith, and will be judged as evil. Seemingly, many churches love being a part of it as well. The world is not hesitant to make use of their time, people, and resources as they join in this work of improving man’s natural state and waging warfare on political causes, social issues, humanitarian issues, and all the rest. The testimony of Christ concerning this world is clear.

John 7:7 - “The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I TESTIFY OF IT, THAT THE WORKS THEREOF ARE EVIL.”

If we are preaching a gospel that declares the Lord has determined to destroy this earth with all of its works of which we are so proud, that will not be popular with the world, just as it was not with the Jewish leaders of Jesus day.

Luke 6:26 - “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

In Closing...

It will, however, give them the truth and hope for repentance and faith. This is the true testimony of Jesus Christ concerning this world. Many Christians today believe the testimony of the world that this earth is our “common home”. For those who are in Christ by faith, we are pilgrims and strangers here. Jesus offers promises of salvation, deliverance, forgiveness, redemption, and eternal life in the world to come for those who will receive His testimony. Once we receive His testimony, the world will not welcome our view. His gospel was not sent to the world to reform its’ ways, influence its politics, increase its moral stature, or any other carnal idea that causes men to trust more & hope more in the things of this life, but to warn men of the destruction this world faces that they might believe and be saved from this world and not share in its fate.

John 15:29 – “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

The caution against the allure of riches, pleasures, and cares of this life in our hearts are more than hyperbolic, exaggerated preacher speak that we expect to hear from the pulpit now and then.

1 John 2:15 – “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

The gospel isn’t arguing over whether you can “lose” “your” salvation, what kind of sin you can commit and still “go to heaven”, how “long” is long hair, how “much” is not much wine, how “immodest” can I be and still be modest, or any of the other deeply theological debates of that sort. The testimony of Christ is clear – those

In Closing...

who believe His testimony receive His Spirit. I've yet to meet anyone who had a meaningful encounter with the truth of the gospel that didn't begin to seek Him in these things rather than justify themselves. Ask yourself this question, "What law or commandment was Zacchaeus given that taught him to give half his wealth away and repay those he had wronged?". Answer – it wasn't a law. He was instructed by the power of God through His Spirit after having been persuaded of the truth of Christ's testimony concerning things to come. A better gospel question is are we proudly justifying ourselves with His Word or humbly following the Savior who is able to justify according to His Word?

The gospel speaks of a promise of entrance, of life, of inheritance, and we are then required to examine ourselves to see if we are "in the FAITH". Knowing that Christ will be our judge (He is not a receptionist that asks you where you belong so He can put you down in the right category. He will TELL you which camp you are in as your JUDGE- and His ruling will be final. Therefore, the sober plea for men to examine themselves), are we prepared to stand before Him and hear His decree concerning us? We are if we have UNDERSTOOD and BELIEVED His WORD of PROMISE – That is called in the scriptures, HOPE.

His commandment is to believe His testimony, to hope to the end, to be steadfast in the faith, and to be watchful as obedient children for His return – because the reward of the inheritance will be received then, which is His promise to those who believe.

Ephesians 3:6 - "That the Gentiles should be FELLOWHEIRS, and of the same body, and

PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST BY THE GOSPEL:”

If you’ve believed the Word of the kingdom, are you being a doer of it as James asks? Every other saint in scripture **ACTED** upon the Word given to them by **FAITH** – like Abraham and Rahab in James examples. We have been given the Word of the Kingdom of God and its’ soon arrival. What fruit is there to give an answer of a good conscience towards God in this matter? Can we assure ourselves before Him? Are we running as those who desire and expect to obtain? Are we striving for the mastery and disciplining ourselves accordingly? Are we walking humbly in His sight as we seek His grace? Are we acting in faith and not out of other motives? Are we still striving over the trivial affairs of this life or waiting in patience and contentment for the world to come and the life promised to us there?

Hebrews 13:5 – “Let your conversation be **WITHOUT COVETEOUSNESS**; and **BE CONTENT** with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

1 John 3:1 – “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore **THE WORLD KNOWETH US NOT**, because it knew him not.”

He has declared by His Word the good will of the Father to give the kingdom to those who will believe His testimony and heed His call to follow in **FAITH**. He has already paid the price for redemption with His own life and blood.

In Closing...

Luke 12:43 - 44 - “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find SO DOING [watching from verse 37 shown below]. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.”

Luke 12:37 - “Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find WATCHING...”

The work the Lord expects from the servants in that passage from Luke is watchfulness - a work in our heart and not of the flesh. He testifies, the servant who is faithfully “doing” that will be made ruler over all that He has - sounds like good kingdom doctrine.

Revelation 2:26 - “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:”

Many Old Testament passages also declare the truth of these things that we have only begun to show. May the Lord bless you in your study as you seek Him by faith.

Joel 2:10 - 12 - “The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for HE IS STRONG THAT EX-ECUTETH HIS WORD: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return

In Closing...

and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?”

Let's conclude with one last word of admonition from our Lord Jesus Himself which is dear and precious encouragement in these last days:

Revelation 2:25 - “hold fast till I come.”