A Cup of Water

a condensed version of Mark with comments
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Bible Teachings

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"Believe and Be Baptized"

A Study Guide To

Learn Christ from the Apostles and Prophets

Volume 3: 14 letters of the Apostle Paul

SunGrist
The nations of the whole world stand before Jesus at the End of the Age, and what does Jesus use as a basis to separate the sheep from the goats, a cup of water. It is certainly scary enough to think that our eternal welfare, can depend on a single act of kindness like a drink of water, or a free meal, or visitation of the sick and needy; and that it is our treatment of the “least” in the kingdom of God that is most important; but beyond the significance of our eternal welfare in hell or heaven, is the respect and treatment of kingdom members, Christ’s brethren, that He demands of us. You will find in this study of “A Condensed Version of Mark with Comments” that Jesus fervently sought out the least in the kingdom in order to do them acts of kindness. Certainly among the least were the fisherman He chose to be His Apostles, a tax collector like Matthew had little respect in the kingdom, then there were the Gentiles where He healed their children, and the woman of Samaria at Jacob’s well that He engaged in a conversation about the welfare of her soul. It was the little children, of whom He said “don’t stand in their way of getting to Him”, and who He made examples of the simple faith necessary for kingdom membership; it was the blind man along the road, the leper that was shunned by society, and we can go on and on; and we will go on and on in the chapters to follow from Mark, always using Mark as only a condensed guide to the rest of the Bible, taking from the whole counsel of God in the Book, what will help in the understanding of the Giant Parable called the Bible.

And we are also surprised that it takes so little to get into the kingdom of heaven—a cup of water, a meal, or a single visit or act of kindness for the less important person in the kingdom. Surprised that the great wisdom of the universe could find nothing more as a criterion for final judgment, and separation of the goats from the sheep, as simply a cup of water. Like Naaham, the leper, we would look for some famous body of water to cleanse in instead of the muddy waters of the Jordan. But there we are: It is from Jesus Himself, and we dare not neglect what He is teaching us!

Although the parable of the tares has been alive and well since Jesus taught it over two thousand years ago, there are implications of it for today that are not comprehended. For example, the tares in the kingdom and churches have leaders, and those Bible
teaching and preaching leaders are to be treated with the same distant respect as the tares themselves. When the Apostle John tried to stop some disciples from work for Christ, those who had been disciples of John the Baptist, the bottom line of what Jesus told them was, “let them alone”. Increasingly we are seeing more and more heaping up of weird and unusual Bible teachers and preachers, which we do not wish to label as false prophets and teachers; and in an effort to treat them with the toleration demanded in an American Democratic Society, we have hit on the “itching ear” label of II Timothy 4 in order to explain what is happening in this time of the Falling Away.

The distant respect of “Leave them alone” might be considered in the same category of the “forget about them” that I heard from one southwest seminary professor in reference to the fundamentalists like James Robinson. {I will explain later the differences between a fundamentalists and conservatives on the Bible; however, may it suffice for the moment to say that they are not the same.} This was approximately 20 years ago at the climax of the period in which the Bible church fundamentalists took control of the Southern Baptist Convention led by men like Adrian Rogers, Charles Stanley, W.A. Criswell, and from a distance, Jerry Falwell. It was a majority movement, very similar to the moral majority, where certain community traditions took precedence over real Bible. It must remind one of how the religious leaders of scribes, Pharisees, and Saducees of Jesus’ day were labeled as “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”. In the nature of church and denominational history it had to happen, but the shock of seeing it happen in the once most conservative and evangelistic denomination up to that point in history, made us seek explanations of the fundamentalists takeover in other terms. {See some of the books written in the last 20 years with multiple attempts to explain what happened.}

However, I would maintain that the distant respect of “leave them alone” for these fundamentalists and other leaders of the tares is more like the “don’t associate with them” of II Timothy 3, the roll call of bad church behaviour, or the “do not keep company with such who are believers” of I Corinthians. I hope you recall, or will check, these two Bible references on “non-associate” and “non-companionship” in II Timothy 3:1-9 and I Corinthians 5:9-11.
“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone name a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.” (I Corinthians 5:9-11)

A few explanations about these Bible verses which may or may not be obvious: (1) the policy of Paul and John, which by the way they got from Jesus and the Holy Spirit can be generalized as “in the world, but not of the world”. Paul said when I said “not to keep company” with certain people, I meant not to keep company with certain believers who are churchmembers. There had been so misunderstanding of what Paul wrote in a previous letter: some people thought Paul meant not to keep company with the people of the world who were sexually immoral as a habit of life, or who were covetous, extortioners, or idolaters. No, Paul is writing now: if were to not keep company with such people in the world, you would have to get out of the world. So you see a summary is “in the world, but not of the world”. {What the Apostle John means in the “not of the world” of I John will be discussed in a later chapter, or perhaps you can read of it in SOME MORE SOUNDS....Snatching, Stumbling, and the Falling Away.} (2) Here is the bottom line according to the Spirit through Paul, if you know any believer or church member who practices as a habit of life these bad behaviours, which by the way is much like the bad behaviour characteristics of church members of II Timothy 3, then you are not to even eat out with them or eat in their homes and have them over to eat in your home. (3). Stop right here, I am not calling these fundamentalists, or even the heaped up itching ear weirdos on television, things like “sexual immorals”, or “drunkards”; but in the getting around the toleration of the tares in favor of a A CUP OF WATER for the least brethren in the kingdom, we will find that they do fall into the category of “covetous” for money, disciples, and status—much like the bad church member characteristic of “lovers of money” and “lovers of self”, also the “extortioners” as they do seek and get extorted money under the disguise of more noble ends, and later in this book we will even make a case for idolatry for them.
The sad reality, according to Jesus in the parable of the tares and the wheat is that Satan has put the tares into that part of the kingdom called the local church, even beyond that to the church and denominations; and Satan has done that in order to cause offences against the least in the kingdom. We must persever against this most determinital of all influencec in order to get past these that take the first places in the kingdom in order to serve the least in the kingdom with at least a cup of water.

You see in itching ears Bible teachers what we are addressing is the kind of bible preachers who talk a great deal about Christ, God, and the Bible. You do not wish to call false prophets and teachers anyone you hear talking a lot about God, Christ, and the Bible. And those are the people that Jesus told John to "leave alone". Jesus elaborated, "For no one can speak lightly of me that is active as one of my disciples." You see, it is not those who speak against Christ that is the subject of a cup of water versus toleration of the tares, it is those who are constrained to guard carefully their words about Christ because in order to create the very impression that they know they are creating.

Conservative, Not Fundamentalist

Fundamentalists will not admit that it is possible to be conservative on the Bible without being a fundamentalists. Like so many people in the world who operate more on appearance than reality, they claim to be the only conservatives; yet with their "pick and chose" Bible interpretation method, they are only conservative on what they "pick", quite liberal in what they chose to ignore, especially on the current realities of the Falling Away. Since it is difficult to simultaneously claim to have all the answers, as the fundamentalists do, they ignore the parts of the Bible that teach that the Falling Away must happen before the Second Coming. Listen, do you not hear them on the Second Coming, and you do not hear them on the Falling Away. This silence on the Falling Away is within itself proof of the Falling Away. If you think about it for a while, you will realize that one of the most outstanding characteristics of the Falling Away, besides as sin abounds the love of many waxes cold from Jesus, is the intolerance toward sound doctrine. There is no more intolerance of sound doctrine than to leave it out completely as if it were not part of the Bible.
itself. You see, what they do is to pick what is convenient for them to preach, and ignore what does not serve their purpose. A case could be made that this kind of pick and chose method of interpretation is worse than liberalism.

Here I should remind fundamentalists that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable”; and to ignore part of is to cheat church members and to overlook “every Word that comes out of the mouth of God.” The time has already “come when they {the “they” in II Timothy 4 is obviously church members and other believers, but in the “tares” category} will not endure sound doctrine”, yet any Bible teacher can not ignore certain sound doctrines because they are not profitable to him or her personally or not profitable to the organization that he or she represents. YOU JUST CAN NOT IGNORE ANY PART OF THE SOUND DOCTRINES OF SCRIPTURES. {By the way the soundest doctrine of all is the kind of respect for all persons that must include the least in the kingdom, and the sound doctrine of giving them a drink of water. What is truly being said by the example of the life of Jesus, and the teachings of Jesus, is that our treatment and graciousness toward the least brethren in the kingdom really is the evidence of our right to be among the sheep at the Final Gathering.}

Even the “proof text” method of Bible interpretation and teaching that they often practice is fraught with the “pick and chose” method when a verse or passage is not considered in the total context of the text. This is the age old principle of hermeneutics called “exogesis” versus “isogesis”: exegesis is to read the meaning out of the Bible, while isogesis is to come to the passage with some pre-conceived meaning or motivation to read meaning into it. A case in point is the pastor of a large fundamentalist church and seminary in Memphis, Tennessee who wanted to preach an applicable message on the first Sunday of the year 2000, and he wanted that message to have some sense of urgency about end time. So in his passage from one of the Gospels was the simple sentence that “after six days Jesus and the disciples went” some certain place. Yes, you got it this fundamentalists spun and spiritualized the six days to be the equivalent of the last days on this earth. There was no need for this: there is Matthew 24 on eschatology, the book of Revelation, the teachings of Peter on the earth will melt with fervent heat,
and Paul’s book of II Thessalonians with the end time teachings that include the Falling Away, revelation of the man of sin, and the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from the earth, with the clarity that these things must happen before Christ comes again. Is he worse than a liberal? I think so, because he is preaching and teaching something under the guise of from the scripture, it is not in that passage at all.

Can a person talk about Christ, God, and the Bible, be in the church or be a church leader, and still not be “wheat”? Yes, that is the gist of the Parable of Tares that was told by Jesus. You see we have isolated our concepts of church membership from the realities of the Bible. The Bible, time and again, faces up to the reality that many can be in the churches, denominations, or even claim kingdom membership, who have not learned Christ. Paul looked at the Gentiles in Ephesus and the church members at the Ephesus church; then he noted that he did not see any differences. The behavior of the church members was the same as other Gentiles in Ephesus. Paul wrote in Ephesians, “This is not the way you learned Christ, if indeed you heard Him and were taught of Him.”

Wow, did you miss that in reading the book of Ephesians. I am sure that you did not hear it from your fundamentalists preacher; for in this time of the Falling Away, the preachers that survive in their positions do so primarily by: (1) convincing their congregation or audience that they are the elect of God; (2) that by joining in with them you are engaged in the real work of God; and (3) that they have “THE SOLUTION”, and that if you join them, with or without the new birth, you are part of the solution. Later in the book we will deal with what it means “to hear Jesus” and “be taught by Him”. Let me say now, however, that it is the opposite of the famous instantaneous new birth {or born again} concept of the fundamentalists. It is amazing how these evangelists can take the analogy of Jesus between physical and spiritual birth with the obvious statement “you must be born again”; then fail to realize that the new birth may take the same 9 months or longer as does physical birth. Does that make sense to you? That is it takes at least 9 months to be physical born, or in that ball park for a normal birth, then it must take some period of time for the spiritual birth, eliminating many who claim to experience an instantaneous new birth. {You see another case of
pick and choice from the fundamentalists.) In the parable of the seed and the farmer that was told by Jesus, the individuals who were compared to the seed sown among thorns instantly received it with joy, but later as time passed the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and other things choked it out. Now, you know in most churches during revival and in any assembly if a person were noted to instantly received the Word of God with joy, that person would be labeled as “saved" without waiting to see if the 9 month new birth would be completed. There actually are some very large churches who would assist the new convert with their examples and messages to accept the “things" of the cares of this world to the extent that their messages actually serve to choke out the Word. This in the old fashion jargon was called “putting a live bitty under a dead hen". What has changed now is that while the “dead hen" generally in the past was considered to be some lithurgic church members, now in this time of the Falling Away it is the Bible teachers and preachers that are the dead hens. And they are very good at it. They talk about Christ, God, and the Bible so how can they be a bad example. Remember it is what is not said that is as important as what is said; and it is the thrust of the message more than key words. Does their influence exert itself in the direction of the cares of this world for personal gain and prosperity, for the deceitfulness of riches, or other things?

The American Democratic Faith

At first I thought it strange that an authority on the history of American Thought would call his book THE MAIN DOCTRINES OF THE AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC FAITH. However though the years as I have pondered what Bible teachers and believers substitute for the faith of the Bible and of Jesus, it has dawned on me that the substitute is an American Democratic Faith. I use to gainsay what former prime minister of Israel said about Americans and Jews. What he said was that “we in Israel are born Jews just like you Americans are born Christians.” At first it sounded ridiculous, but that the two kinds of faith have been mixed should be obvious. I think there are some overlaps because it is obvious that during this time of the Fulness of the Gentiles, the period during which the Jews are blind to the Gospel, the United States has been the undisputed leader in the spread of the Gospel to every nation. This is another way of saying that
God has indeed used the United States to help in the spread of the Gospel to every nation. Some of us also reluctantly accept the observation by a foreign student of the US who said “to be an American is more a religion and a character than a set of beliefs or a matter of citizenship.” More often you will hear from mister average citizen what I heard as a young pastor visiting with a man up the valley in Arkansas when I asked him if he was a believer. “Yes”, the indignant reply was, “I was born in this country!” And, “Did you think I am a heathen?”

Quickly I would mention five obvious differences between the American Democratic Faith and the Faith of the Bible and Jesus. (1) The majority is king in the American Democratic Faith while it is the minority in the Bible that goes the narrow way that leads to life eternal. You will note that the schools as the chief custodians of American culture, government, and society do most of their work in terms of the priority for the majority. Always, in the Old Testament, and in any movement or country in history, there has been a “remnant” of real believers, definitely a minority type word and concept. Quite often in the Old Testament, God preferred a dedicated minority to a majority. Jesus taught the parable of the broad and narrow way, clarifying that the many that go the broad way to destruction are the majority and the few that go the narrow way that leads to eternal life are the minority. One might contend that the United States is completely different from the world in which Jesus taught in that now in our country and in our time, the majority of US citizens go the narrow and right way and the minority of US citizens go the broad and wrong way. Perhaps, if it were ever true of this country, in this time in which our country has also become part of the world wide Falling Away movement, it is no longer true. As far as real faith in God, Christ, and the Bible there is little difference between citizens of America and citizens of any other nation, and you can make a much better case for that conclusion.

We might put it this way for simplicity and agreement: While the emphasis in America is on the priority for the majority, the emphasis in the Bible is on priority for the minority.

What difference does it make? Well, without this Bible concept of priority of the minority, you will be more influenced by the world. Satan, the prince of this world, runs this world whether
it is in the United States or elsewhere, and consequently he uses the majority of this world in order to deter and destroy faith in Jesus and the Bible. {By the way if you claimed that the majority in American go the narrow way that leads to life, then maybe you would be inclined to think that Satan only works in other countries. You could have the simplistic concept that all evil is in Korea, Iraqi, and I forget what the other country is.} What difference does it make? Well, without this Biblical majority-minority concept for now and in this country, you will have trouble accepting the Scripture, “all that will godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”, and this is not limited by any means to physical persecution. The politically correct in churches, government, and society can separate you as a member of that Jesus minority.

The greatest danger of all is that you can subject yourself to Bible teachers and believers that have already become victims of the Falling Away. You will tend to become like them, and you will listen to what they do teach and preach even though long ago they came to the point where they would not endure sound doctrine, “they out of their own desires heaped up teachers with itching ears”, turned away from the truth and turned into fables. {One word of caution, look for Bible teachers and believers that are preaching (1) the Falling Away and (2) A 9 month of so new birth, and shun the progenitors of silence on the Falling Away.}

(2) A second major difference between the American Democratic Faith and the faith of the Bible and Jesus is on the concept of “toleration”. So much that believers know to be true they will not even speak, for the fear that they will seem non-tolerant and therefore non-American. An extreme example is that the Presbyterian Church a few years ago voted whether to decree that a stop should be made on the claim that Jesus is the only way of salvation, because it seems too intolerant. I don’t know how the vote came out, but the very fact that a so-called Bible believing denomination would have to vote on such a fundamentals Bible belief about Jesus and salvation is within itself intolerable.

A Condensed Version of Mark?

As you read this book, you may think there is a lot of other Bible to be simply a condensed version of Mark. Yes, there is; and
that is the point. What we can understand of Mark, in the very nature of revelation and illumination, is "profitable for doctrine, etc" only as it is kept in the total context of the Bible; and what we truly understand of Mark is true only to the extent that it is consistent with the Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation of the Bible. The same God put the truth in Moses and John, Ezekiel and Revelation, Daniel and Mark. The Bible when you come down to it is a reflection of the consistent mind and character of God; and above all in the characteristics of God we must see stability, consistency in God who is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." What you will find as you spend more and more time in the Bible is that you come to understand more as you also understand more the Great Author of the Bible. It is like living with a loved one here on earth, the more you listen to them and see and hear the consistency of their character, the more you can even predict what they are going to say on other occasions. For example what God had to say in Daniel, and what God has to say in the many explanations of Old Testament quotes in Mark and other books of the Bible, lead to more understanding of the Christ and God we serve.

It will become more clear to you as you get away from the "kingdom" concepts of Darby and the 1000 year temporary reign of Christ on earth concepts of Scofield, those concepts effectively propagated by the Scofield Reference Bible and Tim LeHaye, that with Jesus, Paul, and the first century Christians, we have seen most of what we are going to see in a spiritual movement from the Jews. God gave them one year and the Messiah was cut off, as recorded in Daniel, to make things right with Him through faith-salvation in Christ, then the abomination of desolation was complete. "What profit is it then to be a Jew?" Paul asks and explains in Romans. And the answer comes back, "because to them were committed the oracles of God." Wow, what a marvelous job, sometimes in spite of the majority movement among the Hebrews, did the Jewish people do in protecting and promoting the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, also a Roman citizen, and formerly a persecutor of the church, before the Ascended Christ decided that He needed a dedicated scholar and lawyer of the Jewish nation to write 14 book so the New Testament and sponsor with his influence and manuscripts three more, setting the pattern which Jesus gave to him in Saudi Arabia of quoting with an interpretation in the New Testament of the
Old Testament truth. So much of where fundamentalists (today's incarnation of Darby and Scofield, their hunt and peck method of Bible interpretation with superficiality of Bible more dangerous, with their fighting spirit, than even their concepts from Darby and Scofield) see in the Old Testament a period of peace and prosperity with a material kingdom in Israel is the “consummation” of Daniel. It is the time, at the end of time, when the kingdoms of this world become really the kingdom of Christ; it is the time when the new Jerusalem is lowered down from heaven and all government is established there over all the multitudes which no man can number of every nation, tribe, and people; and it is the time when the new heaven and new earth are established by God for ever and ever, as the old heaven and old earth pass away, and there is no more sea. It is going to be difficult for you to break free if you have been a victim of such fundamentalist teachings. One thing you will notice is that you are not hearing about the Falling Away from such fundamentalists that have taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention. There are two reasons for that: (1) it is difficult to stake a claim on having all the answers like Jerry Falwell, Tim LeHaye, and Charles Stanley—co-founders of the Moral Majority, and still admit that the Falling Away has come to fulfillment under their watch; and (2) they remain in power my convincing their audience that they are the chosen of God, therefore it is hard for them to say to the other Tares, you are Falling Away from God, Christ, and the Bible. Indeed, Falwell believes as he says that Rick Warren's heresies in the name of church unity, LeHaye's fictions, along with his political and social power are waves of spiritual revival, while indeed these efforts, including the takeover of the SBC by his group, are the very unsoundness in doctrine and spirit that has precipitated if not induced the Falling Away. Certainly they have enhanced the Falling Away. Why are they so silent on it. That within itself is proof! Won't it be amazing if these who have made themselves “first” in the kingdom of God, taking by force the prime seats at the feasts, are found to be the “last” when we come to the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. And if they are among the tares, we will not see them at all! Like the Jewish people of the first century, and about whom Paul wrote in Romans 1, they have tried to take and maintain the moral high ground. While they would present themselves as teachers of the law, they need some one to teach them again what are the first principles of Bible and a proper spirit.
Although as we look for the two things to be fulfilled before the Second Coming as Paul laid out in II Thessalonians—the falling away and the man of sin; and while many times based on Daniel, we may lean toward Osama Bin Laden as the man of sin and of perdition; though sometimes we lean toward the Pope as the final anti-Christ which will be the man of sin, sometimes it seems that the fundamentalists have been the most dominant influence in the Falling Away. I am sure it is our lack of understanding that forces us to speculate between men like Falwell, men like Osama Bin Laden, and men like the Pope for fulfillment of the man of sin. And the fact, as Daniel was told, that our complete understanding of the last events is still somewhat sealed up, leads us to believe that we are still major steps from the Falling Away. Just remember, that like Satan himself, who was an angel of light, the man of sin and perdition must appear to be very right and righteous to be a wolf in sheep's clothing and in order to deceive many. As sin abounds, he must be a leader in the waxing cold of love. The love must diminish under his leadership, and the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ will have to be replaced with something else, like maybe the Gospel of the Moral Majority.

Book Bottom Line: Spiritual Terrorism

“He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’” (Matthew 13:28)

Can You buy those words from Jesus Himself? That there is spiritual terrorism within the churches. We are concerned about physical terrorism in our country when we should be more concerned about the spiritual terrorism in our churches and the kingdom at large. Our problem is that we can not tell the difference between wheat and tares even when they come out from being underground: we do not know the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian, between a false Bible teacher and a true Bible teacher; and even when we do suspect a church member, a church, or a denomination, or their leaders we are so indoctrinated in the American Democratic Faith as to put tolerance ahead of dis-association from them as recommended by the Bible. Do you get what Jesus is saying, “the enemy is within” the kingdom and the churches. Satan has put many tares in our local churches in order to subvert the real work of the kingdom of God, and many of those tares are leaders with itching ears.
Chapter 1  PARABLES

“All Things Come in Parables”  (Mark 4:11)

Jesus in these words of Mark 4, “all things come in parables” establishes an important guideline for understanding the Bible. Perhaps, you never realized that parables go beyond the approximately 12 parables that we considered in SOUND MORE SOUNDS, or even beyond the approximately 52 total parables from the four Gospels. Also perhaps you have never realized that the “come” in Mark 4:11 is a word carefully chosen by Jesus. Why did He not say “all things are spoken in parables“? Or why did He not say, “all things are delivered in parables? The reason is that Jesus is talking about a method that God uses to communicate to His Creation in the revelations of the Bible. In short, “come” is the equivalent of “are inspired“. The phrase is easily the equivalent of “all things are inspired in parables.” And what that means is also in the verse context of Mark 4:11.

“And He {Jesus} said to them (the 12 apostles} to you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables....”

Below is a little exegesis of this verse.

(1). Disciples {the 12 were unique disciples much like 500 more, but who later except for Judas became apostles} are allowed to understand all the hidden mysteries of God.

(2). These mysteries are also hidden to disciples until they are revealed by Jesus, the Prophets, or Apostles.

(3). This very process of spiritual understanding or not spiritual understanding is a process of parables.

(4). You see this as you realize that all outsiders to the kingdom of God hear all spiritual matters in parables, the “all things” of Jesus words.

Paul wrote much more on the subject after his revelations from the Ascended Jesus in Saudi Arabia, and later recorded the same in I Corinthians 2. First Paul recorded how disciples understand the Bible of spiritual things and then how the natural man {not born again, and the same as “outsider”} can not understand spiritual things.

(1). How disciples understand the Bible of spiritual
things.

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.” (I Corinthians 2:12)

The contrast is between the spirit of this world, the spirit of the natural man, and the Spirit of God, shown with a capital letter for Holy Spirit. The difference between the natural man and the believer is that God can work internally on the human spirit that has been born again. It is His Spirit internally working on our spirit.

(2). The non-born again, natural man-outsider does not have this internal advantage.

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Corinthians 2:14)

It is like in the Ephesians introduction of learning Christ to the three answers of Jesus in John 14-16 of the three questions from three Apostles. The introduction of Ephesians to the “how” to Learn Christ is given in the words of Ephesians 4:20,21.

“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus...” (Ephesians 4:20,21)

In short the process of Learning Christ, the same as being a disciple, is (1) to hear Jesus and (2) to have been taught by Jesus and (3) as the truth is in Jesus. Jesus had explained that internal process of new birth and salvation to the apostles as John recorded it in John 14-16. The answer of the new birth or how to learn Christ is very practical as our approach needs to be today to prevent more tares in the kingdom. This Jesus-taught approach to the new birth required for spiritual understanding is far from the contemporary instant new birth concept that has accumulated so many tares in churches generating the Falling Away. Here is a summary of the three questions from the disciples and the three answers from Jesus. (1a). First Thomas asked Jesus where He
was going and what was the “way”. (1b) Jesus answered that He was “the way, the truth, and the life”; and further that there was no way anyone could come to God the Father except through Him. God is just not approachable except through Jesus Christ! But how approachable God is, beyond human ability to know, see, and hear, if a person only comes through Jesus. Did you notice how Jesus referred to Himself as “the truth”, reminding you of Paul’s reference in how to learn Christ of “as the truth is in Jesus.” (2a) The second question is from Philip, echoing the age long question of “Show us God the Father.” (2b) The answer of Jesus is “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). (3a) And the third question completes the specifics of how to learn Christ, what is really required in the new birth. Judas, not Iscariot, asked this question; and no doubt, the same Judas or Jude who wrote the book of Jude with his tremendous defence of the “faith once delivered to the saints”. In short I think he learned very well and personally this answer of Jesus the third question. “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world.” (John 14:22) That is a good question. How do we see Jesus like Paul specified as necessary in order to really learn Christ, since we know that Jesus ascended back to the right hand of God the Father. Is it that only those alive during Jesus short life of approximately 33 years are able to see Him? Or how can we be taught by the Ascended Christ? (3b) The answer of Jesus can open our eyes on how to learn Christ, how to really be born again, and how to pass from being an outsider to the kingdom of Christ to being a citizen of the kingdom of Christ. Here it is: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’” (John 14:23)

You don’t have to make the trip to heaven in order to see Jesus. You don’t even have to have a special hearing device in order to hear God the Father and Jesus. All you have to do is to love God and Jesus, then He and the Father do the rest. They take up residence in your heart. Jesus uses the very comforting words, “we will come and make our home with you.” Wow, you become a residence of the eternal God the Father and of His only begotten Son. That is the new birth. That is salvation. That is the only, real way to learn Christ and to be a disciple of Christ. That is the only way to start the process of a spiritual understanding of the Giant Parable called the Bible.
Daniel is Full of Parables

I would like to illustrate from Daniel how the Old Testament Prophets are also full of parables. What we often like to call double or triple meaning in the Prophets is really one parable with two or three applications. Take for example, the story of the king of the north versus the king of the south in the last few chapters of Daniel. There are no names given. And yet we can easily apply the same parable to three distinct periods of history, as God intended for us to do in the ASI, one during the Greek Empire, one during the Roman Empire when General Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and one near the end of the time as applied to the man of sin, the son of perdition. Remember that even the names of the Empires are not given as in the nature of parables. Recall how “a man” owned a vineyard and when going into a foreign country, let it out to tenant farmers. The owner and farmers have not names. No doubt, as God observes from heaven, the same event happens many times; and so true is the story and the pattern that God so often sees from heaven about His creatures, that why should He put names. God Himself is no respecter of persons anyway. He hardly stands in awe of a General Titus that later became a Caesar, nor of an Alexander the Great that conquers the world and cries for more territory to conquer even as His disposition of the Pharaoh of Egypt was simple for Him. It fulfilled His purpose of bringing the children of Israel back to the promised land for the birth of Jesus. It also fulfilled His purpose of using the Jews as custodians of the oracles of God in the Bible, and thus God as the Great Maker of history just did it. {So much of what goes on in this world is determined by the Great Maker of history in world history, in the acts of nature, in the works of the Bible and of the Spirit, yet we hardly stop to think about His control of human history.}

The same in the book of Joel where there parables about a plague of locusts. We know such plagues did and do happen as a course of history. Well, there are at least three applications of this one parable of locusts in Joel: a actual seemingly natural plague of locusts which ravished the land and under the control of God in an effort to bring the people back to Him; the invasion of an army against the land once again under the control of God, an army that can be compared to locusts; and then at least a third
in the Final Day of the Lord.  {A day of the LORD in the Old Testament is a day of true justice and judgment which can refer to punishment by nature, by an invading army, or the wrapping up of events on earth with the disintegration of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the elements melting with fervent heat. Make no mistake, however, that the great final DAY of the LORD and Lord is easily distinguished from the others as there will always be some reference to the destruction of the sun, the moon, the stars, and of the consequences to the earth.}

The problem is that we have heard so much malarkey on eschatology and the book of Revelation based on Darby and Scofield, that we have become confused about what is actually in the Scripture and what is not. How easy it is to mix up the Scofield notes in the Bible with the actual Scripture! And since so few fundamentalist actually quote Scripture when they dogmatically tell you of the end times, it becomes hard to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Daniel among the Prophets best illustrates both God’s foreknowledge of and control over the history of the world. When you read and study the book of Daniel, you begin to appreciate more fully the statement of Pastor James at the Great Jerusalem Conference. “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning.” This tells us that God both has plans for this world, and universe, which He has ordained to happen from the beginning of time until the end of time; and further that He makes sure those plans will happen. The plans involve nations, kings, kingdoms, the angels of nations, pharaohs, governments, and all kinds of social and political organizations where men think they are exercising the real control. What you will also find in Daniel is that the events here on earth, and in particular between nations, is very closely related to the spiritual warfare that goes on at a much higher level between good and bad angels of nations, between Christ and Satan, and between God and the dominant opposition to His will. {“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth” will not come quickly or easily until the very end of time.}

The three cycles of Daniel {three that we can identify, remembering that a parable can have unlimited applications} are much like the repetitive cycles of the book of Revelation and the repetitive cycles of Matthew 24 from Jesus on which they
are based. What you will find in Daniel, Revelation, and Matthew 24 is much like the scan of a radar trace where from a distance the preliminary scan only picks up the peaks, then on a second and closer scan more detail is filled in, and then finally with a closeness much detail is filled in.

The First Great Sweep in Daniel starts in Daniel 7:9 and ends in 7:13, not many verses so this is like a distant sweep that hits only the peaks. The first sweep starts where it should with God, “the Ancient of Days” seated on the great white throne above the clouds where a thousand times thousands ministered to Him and ten thousands times ten thousands stood before Him. The vision we should get here as Daniel did is of real power. Oh, by the way, the court to decide on the fate of nations and kings was in session at that point to make a ruling. Daniel wondered what all that power around the throne would do as they listened to the pompous words from the “horn”. What Daniel saw was the beast slain with his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. Recall that the vision of Daniel in a dream, during the first year of the reign of the Belshazzar, king of Babylon, was of four beasts: and the last of the four more terrible than the others with 10 horns, and then a little horn coming out from among them. It is this little horn, the man of sin and perdition of the final days who speaks the pompous words. {You see once again the nature of parables in Daniel where the four beasts are the successive kings of four conquering kingdoms—Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and that the ten horns are 10 Caesars of the most powerful of the beastly kings.} Here we can allow secular history to help us in the interpretation since the details of each of the four kingdoms help us to identify them from what really happened in secular history. Never forget, however, that these four beasts except for a detailed description remain in Daniel as unnamed parables like the owner with the vineyard.

In the first sweep of Daniel 7:9-13, we know the little pompous horn to be man of sin and perdition of II Thessalonians because: (1) God and the great judgment court are seated for final judgment; (2) The books are opened, mentioned also in Revelation as the books of final judgment; (3) the thousands and millions are surrounded around the throne of God for execution of the will of God; (4) the pompous words from the little horn remind us of how the final anti-Christ in the form of the man of sin will stand
in the temple claiming to be God, which we learn from the last sweep of the five sweeps or cycles; (5) the description of the immediate slaying of the pompous little horn as its body is given to “the burning flame” which is obviously the equivalent of Satan, the beast, and the man of sin, the little horn, being cast into the lake of fire and brimstone of the book of Revelation.

With this for background, we can see how rapid and short is the sweep of the first cycle of Daniel 7:9-13, in only four verses going from the Court of God in session through four beasts, and then another beast and a little horn, and then in one long verse, the verse 13, we have the establishment of Christ’s Eternal kingdom.

1. Daniel 7:9a. The Subject of the first sweep as “THRONE WERE PUT IN PLACE.”

2. Daniel 7:9b-10a. The Ancient of Days take the throne of judgment seat, a God of white garments, hair of wool, a throne of fiery flame, and the wheels of mobility were a burning fire, and a fiery stream runs out from the throne to the universe. {It is easy to see final judgment in all this since we know from the Apostle Peter that the elements of the universe will melt with a fervent heat.}

3. Daniel 7:10b. Court was in session and seated for the final work, a court of ministers of a thousand thousands and a multitude to do His will of ten thousand times ten thousand.

4. Daniel 7:10c. Judgment starts as the books of judgment of Revelation are opened.

5. Daniel 7:11. Pompous words from the man of sin with an immediate slaying and casting of the horn and Satan into the lake of fire and brimstone.

6. Daniel 7:12. The rest of the beasts last longer than the little horn, and then their dominions are also taken away. God does and will reign supreme is the message here.

7. Daniel 7:13-14. The Son of Man appears before the Ancient of Days, and is given by God an everlasting kingdom. (1) This is obviously the Second Coming of Christ as He is coming with “the clouds of heaven”.

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(2). This is obviously Christ since He is “given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.”

(3). This is obviously Christ and the Second Coming of Christ since “His dominion is an everlasting dominion” {Daniel 7:14}.

(4). This is obviously the kingdom of Christ established by Jesus on earth during His first coming and now made complete, which “shall not pass away” like the other kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome to be mentioned {of course, not by name} in the last four cycles.

(5). Christ’s kingdom is “THE ONE WHICH SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED”.

Oh yes, we know the 10 Caesar’s of Rome will try to destroy that kingdom; we know the man of sin and Satan during the final half time will try to destroy it; but God has ordained that the kingdom of Christ is indestructible.

But you see how we go only the peaks in our first sweep. God on His throne in judgment, jumping to an emphasis on the judgment on the little horn and his beast with a brief mention of the short lives of the rest of the beasts, then many words on the final kingdom of Christ which can not be destroyed. We look for more details in the second sweep, even more in third—some the same and some different; and even more in the fourth; and finally in the fifth it is clear that we are definitely address the Falling Away, the man of sin, with the abomination of desolation that Jesus quotes from Daniel. And I believe that with this parabolic method in mind of Daniel and the rest of the Bible, especially the teachings of Jesus, I think we can proceed more quickly through the next four cycles or sweeps. Even as the first cycle or sweep is the actual vision that Daniel saw as recorded in Daniel 7:9-13, the second cycle is the interpretation of that vision in Daniel 7:15-27 for 13 verses, over three times the number of words as in the first cycle and, of course, with much more detail. The third cycle starts with a second vision, one about a Ram and a Goat, that came to Daniel during the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar; and it runs from 8:1 through 8:27, this time over twice the description as in the third cycle. While at the end of the second cycle about the first vision Daniel {first of Daniel’s
own personal visions of the future} was so affected that, though silent, his countenance changed, at the end of the third cycle in his second vision Daniel fainted and was sick for days {Daniel 8:27}.

The fourth sweep runs from Daniel 9:1-27, starting with a period of fasting and prayer by Daniel during the first year of the reign of King Darius. {Darius was the Persian-Medes King that took over the kingdom from Babylon.} Much of this chapter 9 is a record of the prayer of Daniel, of confession and intercession for his people. Like the disciples of Jesus wanted to know, as recorded in Matthew 24, what would be the signs of His Second Coming, Daniel prayed to know exactly what would happen to his people. And you will see this theme of “what will happen to my people” repeated in the last cycles, especially in the fifth where Daniel is told to rest and then arise to his inheritance at the Resurrection. {the last words of Daniel, Daniel 12:13}

You guessed it the fifth and last cycle has so many more details in the sweep that it takes several chapters to cover, starting with Daniel 10:1 and ending with Daniel 12:13. So many more of the valleys and detail topography will be filled in during this last and lengthy cycle as compared to the peaks of the first cycle. The fifth cycle was a vision of the Glorious Man which happened, once again while Daniel was in prayer and fasting for the fate of his people, and during the third year of the reign of king Cyrus of Persia. {Daniel 10:1-9}

A Preliminary Outline of Daniel 7-12 in order to pick up the peaks, sub-peaks, and even some of the details.

I. Thrones are Put in Place in the First Sweep, Daniel 7:9-14.
   2. The pompous words of the Man of Sin judged with his sponsor the beast, and the execution of justice in the flaming fire.
   3. The other beasts given a short dominion.
   4. The Second Coming of Christ and His everlasting kingdom that has been given dominion over all kingdoms.
II. The Four Great Beasts versus the Saints of God and their kingdom, Daniel 7:15-27.
1. The four great beasts are the four Kings. {Remember that this is the interpretation of the previous vision, so here even like Jesus identifies the actors in the parable of the seed and the sower, so one of those standing near during the vision explains to Daniel that the four great beasts are four Kings.}

2. What Daniel asked to understand the most about: the fourth awesome beast and the 10 horns, and especially the little horn that came up whose appearance was greater than the others and who spoke pompous words. {You see consistently, we have in the five cycles information about the man of sin and perdition of II Thessalonians.}

3. This little pompous horn was making war against the saints of the kingdom, and he was “prevailing against them”. {You know this is the final great Falling Away of II Thessalonians during which Satan is released as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the earth.}

4. The Ancient of Days comes, judges in favor of the saints, a theme repeated from the first cycle, and the time comes that the saints wholly possess the kingdom, as the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Jesus and God.

5. Okay, an explanation about the fourth beast, the 10 horns, and the little horn.
   (1). The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom—different, devouring, and trampling all other kingdoms on the earth {Daniel 7:23}.
   (2). The ten horns are ten kings (actually Caesars as we see from later history in the Bible and in secular history).
   (3). “Another shall rise after them”, different from the first ones who will speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints, who will try to “change times and law”; and the saints will be given into his hand for “a time, times, and half a time”. {Daniel 7:24b-25}

6. The court of God is seated and takes away his dominion, destroying it forever.

7. The greatness of all the kingdoms on the earth shall be given over to the kingdom of the saints, the kingdom of the Most High who has an everlasting kingdom. He will
have dominion over the saints and they will serve and obey Him {this is a partial answer to Daniel’s repeated prayer and question, what is going to happen to my people?}

{Note that while you get some detail on the major peaks from the first cycle, in this second sweep you primarily get details on the four beasts, the 10 horns, and even more on the little horn. This little horn is undeniably the final man of sin of the Falling Away who under the supervision of Satan will try to change all history and all law, although it can like any parable also include more men before the final man of sin.}

III. The Second Vision of the Third Sweep, “the Time of the End” {Daniel 8:17} the Ram with two horns interpreted by Gabriel as kings of Media and Persia, and “the male goat is the kingdom of Greece.” (Daniel 8:21)

   (1). The ram with two high horns, the second one higher than the first that came up, pushed north, south and west conquering until a male goat with a very large horn from the West attached the ram, breaking the horns of the ram.
   (2). The male goat grew large and strong, the large horn broke off and four notable horns came in its place from the four winds
   (3). Out of one of the four notable horns came a little horn which great exceeding great and spread toward the south, east, and toward the Glorious Land. {Little have doubt that this is the Promised land of Palestine, whatever name it was called throughout history.}
   (4). “And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.” (Daniel 8:10) {Obviously we have a reference to the war in heaven against Satan as Satan and his angels, the fallen stars, are cast out of heaven, and already we begin to see what we will see more and more of in Daniel where the spiritual warfare above becomes one with the spiritual warfare here on earth.}
   (5). “He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; {the reference here is of the man of sin
exalting himself to the Prince of the power of the air and this earth, since the host would refer back in the last verse to the host that is cast down out of heaven) and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.”

(6). An army is given, obviously by Satan, to this horn; and with this army, he opposes the daily sacrifices, cast truth down to the ground, and while he did all this, he prospered. {God let it happen!}

(7). How Long between the taking away of the daily sacrifices and the “abomination of desolation”, destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem? The answer comes, “for two thousand three hundred days”.

2. The Interpretation by Gabriel in Daniel 8:15-26.

(1). The vision refers to the “time of the end”, what shall happen in the later time of “the indignation”. It shall be at a definite time that God has appointed with echoes again of “known unto God are all His works from the beginning” of James and the book of Acts, help from the ASI if you would.

(2). The ram with two horns are the kings of Media and Persia, the male goat is the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king of Greece.

(3). Four kingdoms shall arise out of Greece, but not with that power.

(4). In the latter time of the Grecian kingdom, another king shall arise of fierce features, sinister schemes, welding the power of Satan, destroying, prospering, and thriving, destroying the mighty and the people of God {8:23-24—here you almost have a parable within a parable as this latter Grecian king is a prototype of the last man of sin. His characteristics of Satan sponsorship, the abounding of sin and transgression, and of himself as a man of sin carry all the way through a Grecian, a Roman, and then a final days son of perdition.}

(5). A long verse is given over to a detailed description of what this preliminary, parable like man of sin will do: (a) with cunning cause deceit to prosper as he rules; (b) exalt himself like a god in his own heart; (c) destroy many that prosper; (d) rise against the Prince of princes, obviously Christ, and we have another anti-
Christ; and (e) he and his kingdom are broken by God without human help like war and politics.

(6). Seal up the vision because it has references to "many days in the future" {Daniel 8:26b}

3. The fainting and sickness for days of Daniel, 8:27.

{Once again you see a lot of focus on the atypical man of sin, or anti-Christ, which will be a final fulfillment with the last man of sin. Again it is like a parable, without names, that is a general-type story that applies to at least three kings—one of Greece, another of Rome, and then the last at the final days.}

IV. The fourth cycle or sweep as Daniel starts his quest for understanding and prayer again for "what will happen to my people" with Jeremiah's 70 years of Jerusalem desolation, and Gabriel comes with an answer to his prayers.

1. The history of Daniel's people, a history of disobedience and rebellion, from the wilderness to the destruction of Jerusalem, Daniel 9:1-19.

2. The intercessory prayer of Daniel, Daniel 9:1-20: "Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God...." (Daniel 9:20)

3. Gabriel started his trip from heaven to earth when at the start of Daniel's prayer, God commanded him to move swifly. Gabriel came to give Daniel "skill to understand", something that we must have in the ASI and in parable, often called in the Bible and by Jesus as "eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand". Gabriel told Daniel that he was greatly beloved.

4. God has determined that the period of time will be 70 weeks for Daniel's people and the holy city of Jerusalem as that amount of time is required by God in order to: (a) to let the transgression runs its course; (b) to make an end to the sins; (c) to make reconciliation to God for their iniquity; (d) to bring in an everlasting righteousness, which we know clearly know from Daniel and all the Prophets and the New Testament to be the plan of salvation brought to earth in fulness by Jesus Christ in His life and death; (e) to seal up vision and prophesy, in the life and teachings of Jesus and the
Apostles the seal is put on all Old Testament visions and prophesy as we come to understand what was forecast; and (f) to anoint the MOST HOLY.

5. From the Restoration {the return from exile and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple} until the time the Messiah comes will be 7 weeks and 62 weeks, for a total of 69 weeks which leaves us one short of the 70 weeks.
   (1). The end of the 69 weeks is identified clearly as the Messiah being killed, not for his own sins, but for the people.
   (2). Then the city and the sanctuary will again be destroyed by the people of the prince to come, which we now know to be Titus and the Roman Empire.
   (3). A short description of the desolations and the war that ends Jerusalem and the Temple.

6. The one week after the 69 to complete the 70 weeks, Daniel 9:27.
   (1). For this one week, the last of the 40 years, and a one week or really one year after the crucifixion of Christ, God allows the covenant of the New Testament to be confirmed with “many for one week”, and we know that approximately 100,000 Jews were saved during this one year after the crucifixion of Christ, many on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension.
   (2). In the middle of that year after the Crucifixion of Christ, God brings an end to “sacrifice and offering”. {In other words an end to Temple worship.}
   (3). On the wing of these abominations of desolation caused by no more temple sacrifice and offering shall be “one who makes desolate”. Satan and men of sin will thrive on the wings of the desolation.
   (4). The end of the abomination that makes desolate is the “consummation”, and God has determined a precise time; and the consummation is poured out on the desolate, obviously a judgment on the desolate.

{Daniel got what he was asking for, what would happen to his people. We see that they will not fair so well even though the Temple and Jerusalem will be rebuilt. From the restoration to the Messiah comes will be 69 weeks; and there will be a temporary respite from the abomination of desolation for the
Jews of one year, until here we see no hope for them at all as the abomination of desolation is consummated at the end of time and in judgment. Of course, we suspect from Paul and Romans that something must happen among the Jews after the fulness of the Gentiles is complete. We must allow, however, that this happening of Paul could simply be the eternal reward with the Gentile multitude of every Jew who believed right up to the last week of Daniel.}

Chapter 2  THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

“Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.” (II Timothy 4:11)

Before we use the 12 parables of Mark for focus on the book of Mark, we should consider the influence of the Apostle Paul in the life of John Mark, specifically what role Mark played in the Ministry as mentioned in the chapter-title verse from II Timothy 4:11.

“Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.” (II Timothy 4:11)

It sounds like Paul is talking about the Ministry as if possessive of Christ’s ministry; and so it is, no doubt, that Apostles chosen and appointed by the Ascended Christ will tend to be that way. They take an authority given to them by none the less than the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men’ (Psalm 68:18)....And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastor and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ....”

Of course since we now Christ to be the "He" who ascended, then we automatically know that it was Christ who gave gifts to the total body of Christ in order to do “the work of the ministry”. We need to return to this often as to Who really calls and appoints contemporary pastors, Bible teachers, and evangelists. When a
church of a particular denomination ordains a minister to teach or preach, they are really seeking the group leadership from Christ to acknowledge whom Christ has already called. Since the Falling Away of this present time is greatly characterized by a “heaping up” of Bible teachers, you will have to admit that as more and more church members out of their own desires, out of a lack of endurance of sound doctrine, and motivated by protecting themselves with a fortress of itching ear teachers, the number of self-called and self-appointed ministers will be heaped up almost infinitely. Watching the infinite flow of self-appointed Bible teachers on television last week, I asked my wife why they all look so weird. Is that because so many of them come out of California. Then I asked if perhaps in this the beginning of their ministry if perhaps they were three steps from their skid row conversion. Then we wondered about the three steps and the conversion. I am sure there is a big element of personal gain in being on television, the personal gain of fame if not monetary; and we can not help but notice their messages on prosperity, and how they seek to identify giving to them as the real work of the ministry. {I hope you have also noticed that these so-called ministers also “scatter the flock” in that they take away loyalty from local churches.}

Paul’s Ministry

Before we get into the general aspects of the ministry as Paul laid it out in Titus, I Timothy, and II Timothy—the pastoral epistles as Bible scholars have come to call them, we should briefly consider what Paul specifically considered as His unique ministry. You would say, of course, we know he was an Apostle, also a missionary—the first great missionary of the Christian movement started by Christ, and a writer of 14 out of 27 books of the New Testament. Ah, the last is the greatest as we look back on the history of the Bible and the kingdom of Christ during the last approximately two thousand years. By far the greatest expanding influence of the Apostle Paul has been through the books He wrote with instruction from the Ascended Christ and from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. {Recall that one function of the Holy Spirit is to remind as well as to teach.} And to think that this influence of Paul and the Bible was an accident of history or a coincidence not planned by God, the Great Maker of History; and not mediated by the Ascended Christ and implemented by the
Holy Spirit would take far more imagination than simply admitting that the primary ministry of Paul was as Chief Editor of the New Testament. Indeed when you think of why another Apostle was needed beyond the original 11 left after Judas deflection, and you look at the capabilities of a Paul versus the capabilities of men like Peter, James, and Matthew, what you see is a Bible scholar, a lawyer of the religious law of the Old Testament, who simply needed his heart in the right place in order to expedite the collection of 27 books for the New Testament. What I am saying is that when Paul stated that “Mark is profitable to me for the ministry” that: (1) THE MINISTRY of Paul was primarily as Chief Editor of the New Testament; and (2) Paul considered Mark to be profitable in that he could write the Gospel of Mark. By the way, the Dr. Luke mentioned also in II Timothy 4:11 was profitable in the writing of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts; and Luke and Mark continued the editing ministry of the Apostle Paul in that they took the books and the parchments Paul had written during the so-called seven silent years at Tarsus. Paul knew the end of his life was eminent; that he would not have time to complete his writing ministry of all 17 planned books; so Paul left with John Mark and Dr. Luke the research for the books of Mark, Luke, and Acts.

“Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.” (II Timothy 4:13)

{I will not repeat now the arguments for what was in the books and parchments except how they included the recorded testimonies to Jesus of Peter and James for Mark and Luke to use in writing the gospels, a log of the missionary journeys for Luke to use in the writing of Acts, and a parchment each for Luke and Mark of Old Testament quotes necessary to include in their Gospels, a sub-list of the many quotes that Paul recorded at Tarsus and did not have the opportunity to utilize in the 14 books he wrote. However, the reader is referred to the Bible commentaries of the LEARN CHRIST series for thorough treatment of the subject, especially in REMEMBER MY BONDS, The Life and 14 Books of Paul and CHRIST, PAUL, AND THE FALLING AWAY. You will also find some of it in SOME SOUNDS OF SOUND FAITH and the sequel of SOME MORE SOUNDS.}
The Ministry

What we really wish to do in this chapter before launching into a condensed version of Mark with comments centered around the parables, is to provide specifics of the influence that Paul had on John Mark for ministry. Now, this is ministry in the largest sense of the word as the Ministry of Christ, in keeping with what Paul wrote in Ephesians as the “equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry”, and in keeping with how the work of the minister as entrusted to the total body of Christ as contrasted to the exclusive work of pastors and teachers and evangelists. Granted that the pastors, teachers, and evangelists are to be leaders in that ministry; and therefore what Paul writes in Titus, I and II Timothy is to the total body of Christ, the total kingdom of Christ if you would, by way of the leadership. In the name of true scholarship, we will try to complete an outline of all three of these books in this chapter, starting with II Timothy and working backwards.

II Timothy

Although like any book of the Bible where you can find many emphasis, I have come through years of Bible study to see the book of II Timothy as primarily a theme on “How All Scripture, Given By Inspiration of God, is to be profitable to isolate bad church behavior; and how to survive during the Falling Away as the intolerance toward sound doctrine grows”. (You might call the book of II Timothy “A Manual for Survival During the Falling Away”. Yes, that is a lot; however it is based on the three passages below, and you can easily see it for yourself.

1. The Focal Point Itself: “All Scripture is Given By Inspiration of God”.

Recently I read a sermon by B. H. Carroll on “inspiration” in which he stated that certainly the words of the Scripture were inspired in the original books; for without words the instructions would have no meaning. I think this sort of takes the wind out of the fundamentalists who think they have the corner on verbal inspiration, although they tend to confuse the original manuscripts with the 1611 King James English with incorporation of the
Scofield Reference notes. Also I recently read the biographies of C.I. Scofield and the Irish lawyer turned Anglican minister from whom Scofield stole his dispensationalism. Scofield, once himself a lawyer in Kansas and member of the legislature, when later converted while serving a six month sentence in jail, became a minister with guidance from another dispensationalists named Brookes, was lead to take the pastorate of the First Congregationalists church in Dallas, and while there started a Bible correspondence course built around his dispensationalism that later he published with the Bible as the Scofield Reference Bible. Unfortunately the fundamentalists still see allegiance to these notes as a primary test of sound doctrine. And I am afraid the “Good Ole Gospel” of the Moral Majority founded by Falwell, Stanley, and LeHaye is more in the tradition of Darby, Brookes, and the Scofield notes than of the Gospel of Mark and Paul. A disciple of Scofield was first President of Dallas Theological Seminary; and you know the rest of the story, how W. A. Criswell, like Stanley and Adrian Rogers, not originally a Southern Baptist rather among those Bible Baptists who like to identify themselves as fundamentalists also became President of DTS while pastor of the First Baptist Church, and how with Stanley, Rogers, and Falwell lead the fight to take over the SBC. Criswell expressed the spirit of fundamentalists over 20 years ago, just before their takeover of control the SBC, in the words spoken on television to Bill Moyers, “We are going to keep on fighting until one side or the other wins”, the sides of course being the fundamentalists and the moderates. The moderates like Winfred Moore are still around and in control of the Texas Baptists (BGCT), but the fundamentalists control Southwestern Baptist Seminary and the SBC. Bottom line on this while it begs one of the prime thesis of the whole book expressed in the title TOLERATION OF THE TARES, is that if these fundamentalists had even considered such Bible conservatives as Moore to be tares, and that is really the way they thought and still thing—they consider any not in their group as liberals, not subscribing to the Scofield Bible notes on which they were trained as Scripture, then they would have done as Jesus advised, waiting until the Second Coming to weed moderates out of the kingdom. {Surely this is what Jesus included when He said that “the violent take the kingdom by force”.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable
Now this would exclude as a recipient of this “every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” those who do not need sound doctrine {those who will not endure sound doctrine exclude themselves}. It would exclude those who do not need reproof, although Paul has already given a horrible list in II Timothy 3:1-9 of bad church behavior that was in need to reproof. It would not include the bad church members above who would not stand to be “corrected” because they had a “form of godliness that denied the power thereof.” If a person were not “hungering and thirsting after righteousness” more than seeking bread and things, they also would not be inclined to come to the rest of Scriptures of “instruction in righteousness.” And certainly any member of the groups in such a church as identified in II Timothy 3:16, which I would identify as typical of churches today in the Falling Away, such a church member would not care for the maturity in Christ of “complete”; and rather than be concerned for equipment in every good work, would rather have the status and control of a Jannes and Jambres.

2. Bad Church Behavior and Attitudes of the Perilous Times.

If you go up in II Timothy from the “All Scripture” verse of 3:16, you will find in 3:1-9 the perilous times of bad church behavior. There are so many of these bad characteristics, that like the roll call of downward evolution of those who will not retain God in their thinking of Romans 1, you quickly tire of them and even desire not to talk about them in public as most preachers are doing now in this time of the Falling Away.

An Outline of II Timothy

Once we understand the three aspects of this primary thrust of II Timothy, the outline of II Timothy comes easy as follows. (1) The Holy Calling, 1:1-12; (2) “The Pattern of Sound Words”, 1:13-2:26; (3) Perilous Times for the Pattern of Sound Words, 3:1-9; (4) Sound Doctrine, the basis of the Sound Words, 3:10-4:4; and (5) Commissions and Cautions, 4:3-22. We will put a little meat on this outline from II Timothy before we proceed
to I Timothy and Titus, outlining them and forcing the outline of II Timothy on I Timothy and Titus. We can do this without any injustice toward exegesis, because we still stand corrected step by step in our exegesis of I Timothy and Titus, and we are imposing an inspired outline on Scripture, only looking for the summarized influence of the Apostle Paul on the ministry of John Mark. {Books of the Bible can be outlined many different ways in order to communicate the truth in them.}

I. The Ministry as Starting with The Holy Calling, II Timothy 1:1-12.

1. This calling for Paul as an apostle and Timothy as a beloved Son in the faith are both according to the will of God.
   (1). Paul is an Apostle by the will of God.
   (2). Paul starts a repeating theme of the whole epistle, that of his own ministry from beginning to end, that he starts with of how he served “God with a pure conscience” like his forefathers. Paul has elaborated in other epistles like Galatians how the thrust of that pure conscience had to change from before conversion where he was a lawyer of the Jewish religion and after conversion where he became a servant of Jesus Christ.
   (3). Paul attests to the “genuine faith” of Timothy like that of his grandmother and mother, and of the ordination by Paul.
   (4). Paul gives credit to the work of the Holy Spirit both in his ministry and that of Timothy, working on our own human spirit, to promote courage, power, and a sound mind that Timothy is going to need for the pattern of sound words to follow, also the sound doctrine which most will not endure.
   (5). This holy calling is righteousness by faith, given to us from before the foundation of the earth, and according to the purpose and grace of God in Jesus.
   (6). Jesus revealed the holy calling with His appearance on earth, who abolished death at the same time bringing “life and immortality to light through the Gospel”.
   (7). Jesus appointed Paul a preacher, an Apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.
II. The Ministry as Holding Fast to a "Pattern of Sound Words".

{The Pattern of Sound Words goes beyond behavior to include a Pattern of Sound Attitudes and Behavior as you will notice by the context in which the phrase is used. And so immediately we see that "sound" speaks of ATTITUDES and BEHAVIORS. As sound words flow in sound doctrine, it is the same. Sound doctrines, almost synonymous with sound faith, is a matter of beliefs, actions, and attitudes. The argument might be discussed: is it the intolerance toward sound doctrine of chapter 4, certainly an attitude leading toward an action, that causes the bad church behavior and attitudes of chapter 3; or is it vice verse. Does the continued practice of bad attitudes and behavior in church membership bring on the intolerance toward sound doctrine? I would think that this latter is true; since for one reason the intolerance is easily identifiable with the Great and Final Falling Away, while the "perilous times" of bad church members are periodic in history, starting even at Ephesus in the lifetime of Paul and having come to dominant 6 out of 7 of the churches of Asia Minor, including Ephesus, by the time John wrote the book of Revelation.}

It is not enough to hold to sound doctrine, alias All Scriptures, the example of Paul, Jesus, and the other apostles is to be followed with a certain "pattern of sound words". Yes, you can even get your pattern of outline from the Apostle Paul.

1. The pattern of sound words has a basis in "faith and love" of Jesus. When you hear of a "faith" in Jesus without a noted absence of the love of Jesus; for example as in a fighting spirit, then you must question the very foundation of the pattern of sound words that you are hearing.

2. Keep the good pattern by the power of the Holy Spirit which dwells in us.

3. Do not be swayed by those of Asia, and others, who have turned away from the lack of popularity of Paul caused by his imprisonment.

4. Keep these teachings of the pattern of sound words going, from me to you to other men.

5. Since the pattern of sound words, and the identification with the unpopularity of Paul, will inevitably bring persecutions, learn to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ". You
know what it is to get soft mentally, often promoted by too much comfort and ease, and therefore the proper mental attitude that goes with the pattern of sound words is a “hardness” for the battle.

(1). This pattern of hardness prohibits entanglements with the world.
(2). This pattern of hardness demands competing with the correct rules of sound doctrine.
(3). This pattern of hardness demands continuing personal experience like a farmer eats the same food he farms.

6. Remember in the pattern of sound words you heard from me how Jesus, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to the Gospel which I preached, and this preaching of the Gospel is the reason that I am currently in prison like a common evil doer.

7. The Word of God is not in prison, a subtle hint that near the end of the letter Paul is going to enlist John Mark, Luke, and of course Timothy and others in the continued spread of the Word of God. He knows about his work as the Chief Editor of the New Testament; he knows about the epistles he has already published and the others of the 14 to follow from prison; and he knows of the three that Luke and John Mark will write.

8. Paul endures imprisonment like the rest of his life in order to “shine like the sun by turning many to righteousness”, the elect, and in order that they too may obtain eternal glory and salvation.

9. A Faithful Saying as Part of the Pattern of Sound Words.

(1). If we die with Christ, we shall also live with Christ.
(2). If we endure with Christ in our walk of life, we shall reign with Christ at the end.
(3). If we deny Christ before men, Christ will also deny us.
(4). If we are faithless, since Christ can not deny Himself in us, He remains faithful.

10. Repeat these words and remind others of this pattern of words, rather than many words which are not profitable; and many pattern of words that are not profitable follow in II Timothy 2:14-26.
(1). Words to no profit are a pattern of words which cause destruction to the hearers.
(2). If you are to have this pattern of sound words then you must diligently work with the Bible to do good sound Bible exegesis called nothing less than “rightly dividing the word of God”. You see, this is more of your pattern of sound words in the way you outline the Bible. Hermeneutics or the science of Bible interpretation is nothing less than the method here advocated by the Apostle Paul as “rightly dividing”. There is a right way to divide the pattern of sound word called exegesis for reading out the meaning, and there is a wrong way to divide the word called isogesis for reading meaning into it. God help the man or woman at the end who does not divide the Word rightly.
(3). The Bible is wrongly divided when it includes in the message a pattern of words about “profane and idle babblings”. Just talk, and a big talker or wind bag, is not enough for the pattern of sound words; for this kind of cloud without water can be like those Jude contended with for the “faith”. The Hymenaeus and Philetus, the same as or in the same group of those mentioned in 1:15, so that while some may have only deserted Paul since he looked like a criminal, some had deserted the message of Paul given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ. {It should not be thought a strange thing to you that in this Day of the Falling Away, as Jesus and His sound teachings are rejected, that also ministers faithful to the Word are also rejected. The ones who are not rejected, alias the popular ones on television, radio, and in the largest of churches are the ones that you should be worried about. Look at their patterns of words! Do they include a lot of “profane and idle babblings”?
(4). Details of profane and babbling patterns of sound words like from Hymenaeus and Philetus. {You see you may be listening to some like Hymenaeus and Philetus right now!}
   a. These kind of messages lead to an increase in ungodliness like message promoting prosperity,
the cares for the things of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches. This can happen if the Seed of the Word is sown in a church where the pastor himself promotes the choking out of the seed with cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and other things. I would lay before you the recent book by such a pastor of 10,000 people, with a book on the best seller list, that is a book largely about “things”.

b. A “straying from the truth” is a departure from the pattern of sound words, like those aforementioned, who say that the resurrection is already past. Can they do it in this day and time? YES! What these men were doing was preaching that the resurrection of Jesus, alias full salvation at the Second Coming of Jesus, had already happened in the lives of early Christians. In other words, then like today some were preaching that they were completely saved with initial salvation instead of waiting for the sanctification of maturing in Christ and waiting for glorification at the Second Coming. They wanted instant and complete salvation without waiting for Jesus to come back, and they claimed it!

c. This kind of pattern of words, alias preaching or ministry, “overthrows the faith of some”. You might include in that an inadequate concept of salvation as made synonymous with the real “baptism” of the Bible, not the washing of the filth of the flesh but of the answer of a good conscience toward God, like Paul had and Timothy, and that recognizes in baptism, not water baptism but spiritual baptism, the completion of salvation at the coming of Christ. Any and all inadequate concepts and ministries of salvation not consistent with that delivered to Paul and made clear in the book of Romans is an instrument of the overthrow of the faith of some. Here we would also include those of instantaneous new birth, who see the seed sown on stony ground, receive it with great gladness,
calling this complete salvation, and for the sake of numbers and show in evangelism, add another number to their local church roll.

d. Futile, futile, futile; for the foundation of the pattern of sound words comes from God, having this twofold seal: God and Christ know their own in whose hearts they have taken up residence; and let every one who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity, that departure from iniquity being evidence the lives of Christians of a pattern of sound words.

5. All of these that do not depart from iniquity in the house of the church, like vessels of honor and dishonor in a great house, are not “tares”, some are only stumbling like in the parable of the seed and sower, without root and falling down because of persecutions and tribulations for the Word, and some are only on the way to the full stature of Christ, passing from ten-fold fruit to the one hundred-fold.

a. How to be among the vessels of honor: by cleansing from the patterns of dishonor, by participating actively in the process of sanctification—that is, the process of becoming more like Christ, by always being subservient to the Lordship of Jesus as Master rather than the world, those of the world, or aspects of the mammon of men, and by making preparations continually for every good work that the All Scripture of the Bible and the right attitudes toward its corrections will promote.

b. Flee youthful lusts as contrary to the pattern of sound words, rather pursuing things that promote the pattern of sound words as righteousness, faith, love, peace, and the examples of which you see from servants of the Lord that have a pure heart. {You can also summarize the pattern of sound words with these words: righteousness, faith, love, peace, and peacemaking.}

c. Avoid foolish and ignorant disputes which generate strife, divisions in the churches, and in the kingdom.
d. A serving minister of Christ must be: gentle, able to teach, patient, and humbling correcting with the Word the opposition.

III. Perilous Times for the Pattern of Sound Words, II Timothy 3:1-9, a pattern that leads to bad local church behavior.

1. What are Perilous Times? Well, they can not be equated with the Falling Away that will come in chapter 4 as church members will no longer endure sound doctrine; for students of the Bible know all too well of what happened in the first century churches of Asia Minor, and of how 6 out of 7 departed partially from sound doctrine. We would have to say that perilous times existed in Asia at the time of the writing of II Timothy by Paul, they grew worse during the church ministry of the Apostle John in Ephesus, and that they can be considered in the light of the ups and downs of local church history, or even of the total body of Christ, and that they would be the opposite of the revival times that come to churches. If the revivals are the mountain tops of church experience, then the perilous times are the valleys.

2. Why are we so sure that these characteristics of bad behavior refer to church members since we recognize in some of them the list of heathen characteristics of Romans 1?

   (1). The internal evidence of II Timothy 4:1-9, in particular the “have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof” indicates a form of worship and membership like of a church, but where the member does not have anything going for them internally of the power of God.

Chapter 3 The Pattern of Sound Words & Works.

“These are not my words, but are the words that I heard from God the Father.”

The pattern of sound words that Paul relayed in the pastoral epistles for “The Work of the Ministry” was based on what He learned from the Ascended Jesus in Saudi Arabia. Paul would not have been one to learn it any other way as a former leader.
of leaders of the Jewish religious law and movement. Of course, later as Paul records in Galatians, he did confer with Peter and James; and I think having received his instructions from Jesus in Saudi Arabia to be the chief editor of the New Testament, Paul during the so-called seven silent years at Tarsus recorded these testimonies to Jesus of Peter and James. You perhaps have never thought that while you were reading Mark and Luke that you were also reading the Gospel according to Peter and James. Then Paul had put in his fifteen cents to those two Gospels with manuscripts of the Old Testament quotations he did not have time to put in the 14 books he wrote. Lastly, do not forget the personal experiences of the young man John Mark. He was a young man who knew these disciples personally, especially Peter, and the young man who tagged along with Jesus and the disciples as for example when they went to the Garden of Gethsemane. {I am sure that Mark was not proud of being the young man who fled from the Garden naked rather than be taken captive with Jesus; and although his intellectual honesty demands a complete record of his personal experience in the matter, he like the Apostle John in his Gospel, uses a “certain young man” rather than his own name of Mark.}

I hope that you are not trying of looking at our books of the Bible in preparation for a condensed version of Mark with comments, because this is pattern of sound words is best summarized in the Sermon on the Mount as given in the book of Matthew. Mark does have a shorter version of Jesus’ Sermon in Mark 4, the great introduction to parables and a dominant action-oriented theme of Mark. Matthew records three chapters of the Sermon, and Luke records parts of several chapters. Subsequently in this book, although our intention is not to re-create Robertson’s harmony of the Gospels, or go beyond it, it will be helpful to consider why four biographies of the life of Jesus were needed; and in particular what was the distinct emphasis of each. To see the distinct emphasis of John Mark in Mark as guided by what Paul left for him and his own personal experience, will also help us later in a condensed version of Mark. Why did Mark write after the record from the Apostle Matthew already existed, a very thorough rendition of the life and teachings of Jesus with many Old Testament quotations. Matthew almost exceeded the Apostle Paul in basing his book so much on Old Testament quotations. Of course, Matthew had to in order to
record the conversations and teachings of Jesus since Jesus always and ever quoted from the Old Testament. In fact, we would have to say that this pattern of sound words by quotations was gleaned by Paul, Matthew, and all the Apostles; and the Holy Spirit naturally as the implementor of Scriptures, Old and New, would remind Apostles of the Spirit of Christ and His teachings in terms of what He had inspired the others to reveal.

Let me smell out what we are after in the detailed look at the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7 in this chapter! Since we know now that the pattern of sound words of the Work of the Ministry is our attitudes and behaviors, we want to go back to the Chief Source, the author and finisher of our Faith, Jesus Himself, for His original teachings {for His original patterns of sound words, if you would}. I recall the famous book of Charles Allen of the First Methodist Church of Houston entitled, GOD’S PSYCHIATRY, in which he wrote about the Sermon on the Mount as well as about the Ten Commandments. Of course, much of Jesus’ clarification about Moses and the Prophets directed toward the mis-understandings of the religious leaders in the Sermon on the Mount dealt with the Ten Commandments. The contributions I think that Allen made to us {and I would hope that would include the Bush family who were members during the preaching of those messages} was to re-emphasize the difference between thoughts and a pattern of thinking versus a legal behavioral violation of the laws of God. Jesus taught that you are guilty if you think adultery as well as commit it; if you think anger as well as commit murder; and so on through all of the Ten Commandments, the respect for God as God really is, the subject of the first 3 commandments, coming through stronger than any of the 10. Or on the more positive side, if you think God the master over mammon and think a priority of His righteousness over the things of this world; and you think going to extra mile with a extra cloak, then you commit love for God and fellow man. What Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount can be summarized as Allen did with a quote of the Old Testament verse, “For as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.”

We would desire to build on this Bible learning of the past in order to illustrate from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 how Jesus was communicating the thoughts of God and how His goal was to teach what God was like.
THE MIRACLES.

“God works and I work....The works that I saw God do, I do.”

Well, we are getting closer to a condensed version of Mark with comments in the same manner that the Holy Spirit made preparation for the writing of Mark, then later the Gospel of John, after Matthew and the letters of the Apostle Paul. Even as we close to look at the pattern of sound words in the teachings of Jesus as recorded in Matthew, so now we chose to look at the pattern of sound works as recorded by the Apostle John. You might also look at it this way: in the three chapters of Matthew on the Sermon on the Mount, we have a condensed version of the thinking of Jesus that He received from God, and in the book of John, we have a condensed version of the works of Jesus as He saw God do before He stepped a foot on this earth. The emphasis of the Gospel of John helps us here as John carefully selected only seven miracles from the many miracles of Jesus, and He wove around these seven signs the teachings and actions of Jesus. If John is the Gospel of Miracles and Matthew is the Gospel of Teachings, we might say that Mark is the Gospel of Action. You will notice in Mark both organization and plan. For one things, it took planning on Mark’s part, with help from Paul and later I will also discuss with possible help from John, to write a condensed Gospel of only 16 chapters. You see Mark, at his sat with Dr. Luke at the home of the Apostle John and Mary in Ephesus, surrounded by his own memories, the manuscripts from Paul, like John knew that “there are many other things {signs} which Jesus did, which if they had been written every one, even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” If Peter had written a Gospel, if James had written a Gospel, if Paul had lived longer to write on all the Old Testament quotations, if over five hundred that saw the Risen Christ had written books, if every person every a Christian had written books, then the books would be larger than the libraries.

CHOICE OF CONTENT IN MARK

While all of the Gospel writers tell the same story of the life of Jesus, you are beginning, I hope, to see that the choice of content for each of the four is different. The outstanding example, of
course, is with the last Gospel to be written, the Gospel of John, and how John carefully chose only seven miracles around which to weave the whole life of Jesus. John carefully relates to the miracles, the teachings and other works of Jesus. He uses “signs” to summarize all of these words, works, and actions of Jesus. You have began to notice how thorough Matthew is on the teachings of Jesus, especially in the inclusion of Old Testament quotes used by Jesus. Well, what is the choice of content in Mark? We will begin to explore that in this chapter, not for the sake of scholarship or exploration per se, but in order to increase the influence of the life of Jesus in own lives. We should consider that the 11 of 52 parables chosen by Mark with a close look at the subjects of those parables may offer a clue; and since some claim that John Mark wrote a Gospel for the Romans, we will want to explore a “kingdom of God” emphasis that might allow the citizens of the mighty Roman Empire kingdom to consider the differences between the “gospel of the kingdom” and a physical and material kingdom. If the Romans had a perchance for organization and planning, and certainly they had that in their government, army, and their international policies, they would find such planning and organization in the book of Mark. For example, how Jesus planned ahead for the press of the crowds where He taught by having the disciples prepare a ship by the seashore to utilize for escape. Also how God, Jesus, and the Old Testament prophets in forecasting it, prepared for the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem that percepitated His crucifixion when the popularity was noted by those in religious power.  

*The religious establishment, if you would, in contrast to the citizens of the kingdom of God who can not be established since they are poor, meek, and pure in heart as well as deeply blessed and happy.*  

Mark tells us how the disciples found the young burro on which never a man had ridden, tied to a hitching post, exactly as Jesus told them; and we must pause momentarily to consider why not a triumphant entry into Jerusalem on a chariot like David and Solomon would do, or why not on a massive white charger like a Greek or Roman conqueror might do. The humility of Jesus on the burro as contrasted to a large white charger or chariot symbolizes what Jesus and God wanted to communicate on the differences between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world.

We do not ever, ever forget the work of the Holy Spirit in the
writing of the books of the Bible, nor do we forget the work of God as the Great Maker of History preserving and promoting His book. Those simple words from Jesus to Satan, recorded for our benefit, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”, has several assumptions that we also need.

First, it tells us that Scriptures are words that come out of the very mouth of God. It is God speaking and man recording, and in between is the work of the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit.

Second, it tells us of the respect we are to have for Scriptures, a practical respect which demands that we put it on the same level as making a living. Hardly any citizen would deny the demand of work in order to make a living, and yet how many overlook the demands that the Great Creator of the universe makes on the lives of His creatures.

Third, every word “proceeds” out of the mouth of God. It proceeded in the Old Testament through the law and the Prophets, and it continue to proceed to the end of the century out of the mouth of God in the New Testament through Jesus and the Apostles.

Fourth, the emphasis on “every word” tells us that we must honor every chapter, verse, and book of the Bible as the every word of God. This eliminates isogesis and demands exegesis even when that isogesis uses the “hunt and peck” method of biblical interpretation.

Fifth, also it bespeaks of the sufficiency of the word of God in that the “every” speaks of the thoroughness of the Word of God. God started speaking in the Garden of Eden at the beginning, God spoke many ways and in diverse manners in the Old Testament, and God has supremely spoken through His Son, Jesus Christ, and has designed the plan whereby those words in the Canon would be collected, preserved, and promoted. If you do not see God at work in history through angels, through the “signs in the heavens above and the earth beneath”, then surely you see God making history in the history of the Bible.

I. Choice of Content In Mark in Verses Found Only in Mark.

1. It is Mark that begins the actual ministry of Jesus after baptism and temptation in the wilderness, with Jesus’ preaching of “the gospel of the kingdom of God.” How often today from
pulpits are on TV did you hear about the gospel of the kingdom? Well, it was important to Mark and the Holy Spirit. Matthew does have a similar message for Jesus at the beginning of the Galilean ministry, after baptism and temptation in the "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17). This is similar to the repentance message from Mark, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel." However considering the abbreviated nature of Mark of 16 chapters as compared to the 24 chapters of Matthew, Jesus' message is much longer in Mark than in Matthew: (1). In Mark, it is repent and believe; (2) the message of Jesus begins with "the time is fulfilled"; (3) the message continues with "the kingdom of God is at hand", much like Matthew except with "of God" instead of "of heaven" {no problem, here we see the two to be the equivalent as we carefully study Matthew 5-7; however we find in one complete sentence of two verses in Mark 1:14-15 that the "kingdom of God" is mentioned twice, once in a description of the Gospel that Jesus Himself preached and the second time in a description of specifically what that message was. {Granted that Jesus said all those words of the message content as recorded in Mark, Matthew and the Spirit did not include all of it at that moment in the writing. Somebody after reading what Matthew wrote in his gospel thought it important to record the whole message. Was it the Apostle Paul, Peter, James, or the Holy Spirit? No matter, as long as we see that all this preparation was at work in the writing, and as long as we get the complete message.}

1. What do you get out of adding "believe" to "repent" in the original message of Jesus Himself? Actually since there is a measure of belief in repentance and a measure of repentance in believe, to exclusively use one of the words is not to leave out the total process by which individual salvation comes. Of course, Matthew had no intention of leaving out what was necessary in order to inherit the kingdom of heaven. "Believe" is not a common word in Matthew. It is far more common in Luke and John. (Luke 8:13;24:25; John 1:12; 11:42; and 20:31) Also it is far more common in the books from Paul Himself (Romans 10:9; Philemon 1:29; and Hebrews 11:6), and from the Apostle James (James 2:19 twice).

2. What do you get out of an emphasis of the "kingdom of God" over the "kingdom of heaven"?

3. What do you get out of an emphasis of "the time is
fulfilled”? It is obviously a consciousness of history, and a particular time in history for the at hand-ness of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. One recalls a writing from the Apostle Paul as Mark would do also, “For in the fullness of time, God was born of a virgin...” The time was ripe where, in history and in the Roman Empire. The land of Jesus was strategically located between the North and the South of the vast Roman Empire which provided peace in their time. The policy of the conquering was to adopt the Greek culture for those conquered, and thus Greek customs, culture, and language formed a vehicle for communication of the Gospel. The roads helped. Paul and the other Apostles could easily travel from Palestine to Asia Minor even to Rome and Greece in order to establish churches and preach the Gospel.

IT WAS THE TIME AND PLACE CHOSEN BY GOD FROM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD FOR JESUS TO BE BORN, LIVE AND DIE ON THE CROSS FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD; AND FOR THAT GOSPEL TO SPREAD OVER THE WORLD. In that case, I would think that the Gospel of Mark was more written for “among the Romans with the kingdom of God” than for the Romans.

We have yet to see how Dr. Luke and the Apostle John describe the beginning of the Galilean ministry. First, Luke who behind Jesus’ baptism and temptation puts the beginning verses of the Galilean ministry as follows.

“Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being gloried of all.” (Luke 4:14-15)

Luke does sound in content like Matthew when in the next verse and following, he gets to Nazareth in Galilee, and how when Jesus in the synagogue was handed the book of Isaiah from which to read, as was the custom for any teacher in the synagogue, how Jesus choice to read Isaiah 61:1,2. Of course, what started the people of Nazareth, many of whom he had grown up with, was when He said, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21) We need some appreciation for this context in order to proceed.

(1). What was in Isaiah 61:1,2 from which Jesus read.
It said that “The Spirit of the LORD \{God the Father\} is upon Me” \{Jesus applied this to Himself, just as He originally wrote it in Old Testament times through the Prophet Isaiah.\} Isaiah then presented a summary of the ministry and message of Jesus Himself as originally given by Jesus through Isaiah: (a) God anointed Christ to preach the Gospel to the poor \{this should give second thought to the rich of the well-to-do: the middle class American is in the same position today as the wealthy of great possessions because of mortgages and the installment plan\}; (b) God sent Jesus to perform miracles of healing on the brokenhearted, the spiritual healing being given an emphasis on the physical miracles; and (c) Two ways to explain His ministry of salvation—the proclamation of liberty to captives and the recover of sight to the blind; and (d) lastly to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD \{God the Father\}. This “acceptable year of the LORD” in Jesus message of Luke should remind one of the “time is fulfilled” of Jesus' message in Mark.

(2). What did Jesus say about Isaiah 61:1,2?
"And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'" (Luke 4:21)

(3). What was the Reaction and Response of the people at the synagogue in Nazareth?
They marveled at the gracious words that came out of His mouth.
They said, "Is this really the son of Joseph and Mary who live here?"

(4). Jesus catching the response and reaction, continued His message with a proverb about the physician healing himself: (a) Do here in Nazareth while we heard you did in Capernaum, after all this is your home town; (b) A Prophet is not accepted in his own country; (c) While there were many widows in the country when Elijah was sent to the Gentile woman in Sidon to help during the three and a half years of famine, God sent Elijah only to this one \{you see, parenthetically what Jesus meant when He said that he performed miracles like He saw God do, as God did a miracle here through Elijah\}; and (d). In spite of the many lepers in Israel during the life and ministry of Elisha, the successor to Elijah, God sent him only to a Gentile Syrian named Naaman.

(5). How did the citizens of Nazareth in the synagogue worship react to this? As they listened to these things, they were filled with anger.
They got up out of their seats quickly and with one accord forced him out of Nazareth, to a cliff on the edge of the city. Their goal was to kill Jesus by throwing Him over the cliff. Some reaction, and so soon in His ministry! You would wonder that the triumphant entry could come much longer after the beginning of Jesus ministry in Galilee. It was obvious that Jesus did not know his place in the community, they no doubt thought, and His place in the kingdom of God, they thought. How were they most grievously insulted? Was it by the refusal to do miracles in his hometown, or because God rejected Israel in favor of certain Gentiles as recipients of His miracles. Wow, either one was insulting for a people who would not recognize Jesus of Nazareth as THE SON OF GOD. Does this mean that later in the life of Jesus, after His extensive ministry in all of Palestine, that they and others came to recognize Him as the Son of God? No rather as the son of David, and as the King who would established a kingdom of God like when Israel ran the world. Notice what the crowd said in Jerusalem during the triumphant entry as Jesus rode in on the young burro.

“Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mark 11:10)

Not only could they not comprehend, since they did not have eyes to see and ears to hear, Jesus as the Son of God; but farther than that, they could not comprehend a kingdom that would not immediately restore the Kingdom Israel enjoyed under Saul, David, and Solomon. We are inclined to think that understanding on Jesus as Son and the nature of the kingdom of God, or a lack of understanding from the Old Testament, would go hand in hand. Those, though small in number, who accepted Jesus as the Son of God also accepted the kingdom of God as a spiritual kingdom that would grow until the Second Coming, then become a physical and spiritual kingdom with the new heaven and the new earth.

Now however, with an exegesis of what happened in Nazareth at the beginning of the Galilean ministry as given by Luke, we can see the similarities and differences to what is in Matthew. {Remember, it is exactly the same events: it only the choice of content under inspiration that is different.} The similarity is that they both quote from Isaiah, Matthew from Isaiah 9:1,2; but different in that in Luke Jesus is quoting from Isaiah, in
Matthew he is quoting under inspiration from the Prophet directly without any reference to what Jesus said.

“Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying....” (Matthew 4:12-14)

Then Matthew himself quotes Isaiah 9:1,2. While Mark started the Galilean ministry with Nazareth, Matthew briefly mentions Nazareth without any detail, passing on to the next stop on the tour, Capernaum, by the Sea of Galilee and in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali. This region was that part of Galilee which was for Gentiles, so that in Isaiah 9:1,2 we have the prediction of the ministry of Jesus to the Gentiles: (1) The Gentiles seating in darkness saw in Jesus and His message a great light; and (2) Those Gentiles who sat in the very shadow and region of death saw the dawn of light. To see how enraged Jews still get over the blessings of God on Gentiles, I briefly relate to you a story about the famous Jewish Evangelist, Hyman Appleman, who was preaching at age 9 in the Queensboro Baptist Church of Shreveport, Louisana who I made my confession of faith. After being a lawyer and a medical assistant, Hyman when converted wrote a letter back to his family in the East, telling of the blessings of being a Christian. His father wrote back, “When you are so hungry that your belly is touching your backbone, I will throw only crumbs to you like I do for the dogs.” However, Hyman Appleman, while small in stature, only 5 foot 5 inches but with big jumps behind the pulpit, became a giant in spiritual work as one of the select few Evangelists of Texas back in the days when revivals could still happen, developed methods in evangelism and messages that were examples for Billy Graham, and who with D.L. Moody, B.H. Carroll, Truett, and others is considered in the Christian workers Hall of Fame.

How do the quotes from Isaiah in Matthew and Luke differ. They both speak of the ministry of Jesus, in the Isaiah 9:1,2 of Matthew, it is the ministry of Jesus as “the great light” seen by the Gentiles, while in the Isaiah 61:1,2, it is the ministry of Jesus in more general terms, preaching to all the poor, healing
all the broken hearted, all the captives, blind, and oppressed. Surprised, that Matthew, a Jewish tax collector, would provide at little more content on the Gentiles, than Luke, a Gentile and companion of the missionary to the Gentiles. On the other hand Mark, which is truly our focal Gospel for study in this book, tries to summarize all that Luke and Matthew have written of Jesus in the words: “Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,” AND “the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.”

Gospel is a summarizing concept, so much more so is the “gospel of the kingdom of God”; the time is fulfilled is a summary of the fulfillment of many quotes in the Old Testament like Isaiah 9 and 61 where predictions are now coming to pass in the life and the kingdom that Jesus established; and repent and believe are summaries of the specifics of how to pass from liberty into light, from darkness into light, from captivity into freedom, for broken heartedness into healing; and the poor you will recognize as citizens of the kingdom as given in the Sermon on the Mount. And what we really glean from this in terms of the content of Mark is that even as Mark being only 16 chapters is a condensed version of the life of Jesus even as the content of the Galilean ministry is a condensed version of the beginning of the Ministry of Jesus in Galilee.

Chapter 4 THE MINISTRY OF JESUS the Galilean.

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” (Luke 4:18,19 and Isaiah 61:1,2)

It may seem strange to begin the chapter on “The Ministry of Jesus” from the Gospel of Mark with a quote from Luke; but I think that if Paul had lived long enough to complete all of his ministry as Chief Editor of the New Testament, he would have chosen just such a quote from Isaiah with which to outline the
life and ministry of Jesus. At least the ministry of Jesus, if not the life; and indeed we will find that the whole life of Jesus was dominated by His ministry. When you think of what we know of Jesus besides the 3 and 1/2 years of active ministry which started with the baptism by John and the temptation in the wilderness, and shortly thereafter with the Galilean ministry, there is nothing except the incident at the Temple in Jerusalem as a 12 year old, temporarily lost to his parents and reprimanded by them as they found him talking with the doctors of the law in the temple, even there He said, “Don’t you know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

Mary and Joseph were startled as they had almost forgotten that while He was the virgin born Son of Mary, born as the power of God overshadowed her, He was only the adopted son of Joseph; and the shock was to be strongly reminded that His Father’s business was the business of God Himself. However, for you parents and children, the Scripture adds that from that moment until the turning of water into wine at Cana in Galilee, He went home to subject Himself in obedience to His parents. {It is Dr. Luke who also gives us the incident of the boy Jesus at the Temple with the teachers as well as almost all the details of the birth of Jesus, as you might expect in the emphasis of a medical doctor.} Luke records how that for three days, Jesus marveled the best of Jewish teachers with His questions and answers, and also tells us of how Mary and Joseph puzzled over all of the aspects of this temple incident.

Let us see why Paul might have given this quote to Luke and Mark as an outline of the life and ministry of Jesus, with a quick look at the aspects of this Ministry. Remember as we look at the aspects of how while many of the Prophets foretold details of the future Ministry of Jesus, it is the Prophet Isaiah who gives most details about this Messiah, which is Hebrew interpreted in Greek as Christ; and it is the Prophet Isaiah as perhaps the most respected Prophet of all Old Testament history, then and now. Indeed among the major prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, Isaiah is considered the Queen of Prophets, sort of like a preacher’s preacher as Dr. R.G. Lee and George W. Truett were called, and as Joel Gregory, Charles Swindall, Criswell, and Adrian Rogers tried to imitate, rather proving the thesis of Dr. Lee in his famous sermon, “The Menace of Mediocrity”, where
The Ministry of Jesus as the Christ Outline by Paul and Isaiah 61:1,2. 

1. “the Spirit of the LORD is upon Me” \{always the capital letters mean God the Father as contrasted to the Lord Jesus Christ\}. You must notice that Jesus Himself is talking in Isaiah 61:1,2, at least four hundred years before His actual birth, as recently proven by the carbon dating of Isaiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Jesus read to His hometown synagogue and afterward said that today “I fulfill this verse in your audience”; and what did He fulfill. Well, the outline follows. First, “the Spirit of the LORD is upon ME”, Jesus refers to Himself as performing the work of the Messiah-Christ, starting with the acknowledgment from God Himself during the baptism by John \{“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”\}, and then as after 40 days of fasting and prayer in preparation for the beginning of His ministry in Galilee, the Holy Spirit of God came on Jesus in a special way in order for Isaiah and Jesus to use the word “anointed”. This was not the commission or ordination of Jesus for the ministry, He came knowing that; but rather it is a special empowerment for the Ministry which does come in the New Testament to some, like Paul laying the hands on Timothy, Titus, and perhaps John Mark. Jesus simply in preparation for the Ministry accepted the baptism and witness of John the Baptist as to Himself as the light of the world, the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and the One to come behind Him who sandals he was not worthy to unlatch; and to further make preparation, He spent time with the Father for 40 days in the wilderness.

2. “because He has anointed Me to preach”. The Spirit of God, remember initial at baptism which came in the form of a dove, was not given just because Jesus was the Son of God; although that would be a necessary pre-requisite, but it was given from God the Father... \{the Father is always the real source of the giving of the Holy Spirit in special ways\}...in order that Jesus might PREACH. How about that, the primary beginning ministry of Jesus was as a Preacher to the Poor—though we often think of Him as a Teacher, as the Crucified Christ, as a Personality of such character as to reveal what God is like. \{What better way to know what God is like than by looking at His only begotten Son.\}
The Galilean

Look at the maps in the back of your Bible for the province Galilee, sort of like our small states or counties, in the Palestine of Jesus' day, and you will find it far north, in terms of walking distance, from Jerusalem and the province of Judea. Galilee is famous for encompassing the Sea of Galilee which in turn dominated the lives of many of Jesus' fisherman-disciples, and well known for such villages as Nazareth—Jesus' hometown after birth, Cana—where Jesus and His mother were at the wedding feast and He turned the water into wine, Capernaum by the Sea where many events of the ministry of Jesus took place, Tiberias also by the Sea—where I have had the privilege at the contemporary boat ramp of eating cheese and bread in an open air pub, and on the other side of the Sea—Bethesaida, Gergesa, and Gadara. The regions of Galilee and Samaria, which is in between Galilee and Judea you will notice, formed most of the northern kingdom of Israel when the united kingdom of Israel under Saul, David, and Solomon became the Divided Kingdoms, the north kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. {It can be confusing as you read your Bible where it writes of how “they went up to Jerusalem”, but this is because the altitude of Jerusalem is higher. You do literally drive up or walk up to Jerusalem from any direction. Remember that “a city built on a hill, or a mountain, can not be hid.} Of course, the citizens of Jerusalem and Judea looked on citizens of Galilee as the country bunkins and looked on Samaria as half-breeds. In the time of Jesus, a lot of extra effort was put into bypassing Samaria in order to go from Judea to Samaria, and you will recall from the Gospel account of John of how surprised the disciples were that Jesus went into the village of Samaria, and even talked to a Samaritan woman.

What you will find is that the Galilean Ministry content of Mark for Jesus is one of the very unique characteristics of the Gospel of Mark as compared to Matthew, Luke, and John. Previously we looked at Matthew and Luke. You will recall how that Matthew, starting the Galilean Ministry in 4:12,13 mentions first Nazareth then Capernaum “by the sea”, and only briefly, rather focusing on Isaiah 9:1,2 as a foundation for the Galilean Ministry to be covered up through Matthew 15:21 where He and His disciples go north into the Gentile regions of Tyre and Sidon. Why does
Matthew cover so much detail on the Galilean Ministry? Because for one thing he definitely has a bent for the Sermon on the Mount and the other teachings of Jesus, but also he himself was a tax collector in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth of Galilee. This brief mention by Matthew of Nazareth on the way to Capernaum is not the same as the incident where Jesus was rejected by His hometown with an effort to kill Him. It takes Matthew until the end of chapter 13 to come to this incident.

The Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation

Have you heard of the ASI, the Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation of the Bible. No, that makes one other Bible doctrine that you are not hearing about from the pulpits in the land. The ASI would be the API, based on “no Scripture is of any private interpretation” since Public is the opposite of private; however it is obvious from the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles that only a small portion of the Public is allowed to know and understand the Bible, hence the Semi-Public in ASI. Learn Christ from the ASI would be the same as the Learn Christ from the Apostles and Prophets, and this chapter is an attempt on just one book of the Bible, the book of Mark, to make clear what that ASI approach really is. We could beg the issue based on all the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament as listed and presented in the LEARN CHRIST commentaries; however, it might be more clear to present the ASI method for just Mark and the 18 Old Testament quotes in Mark.

Actually the 18 quotes in Mark from the Old Testament jumps to 25 when you consider that a verse or a few verses of Mark refers to more than one place in the Old Testament as a location for that quote. In the second and third verses of chapter 1 of Mark, there are actually two Old Testament quotes run together as if to say, “This is an Old Testament quote, and that is enough to say without telling you which of the 66 books or the chapter and verse.” Well, the chapters and verses did not exist when Mark wrote his gospel based on the books and the parchments that Paul left him, and it is rather difficult to tell if the 66 books as such were in the same format as we have them today.

Perhaps it would be wise before we go on in this chapter, to look at this example in Mark 1:2-3; and for thoroughness
in order to progress the argument of this chapter, I will also add below what goes before as a lead-in to the quotes and then also add the authorized interpretation of the quotes as recorded in the verses of Mark after the quotes.

a. Lead-in to the quotes, Mark 1:1-2a. {The 2a is for the first part of the second verse.}

“*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets:*”

{You see that instead of saying like we do in this day and time, the quote if from Isaiah and Malachi, Mark simply wrote that the quotes are from the Prophets in general. Remember during the time of Christ and Mark, the Old Testament Scriptures had the two major divisions of the Prophets and the Law. Today we have the Prophets divided into the 4 Major Prophets and the 12 Minor Prophets, so called simply because they are smaller and harder-to-find books than the majors like Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and for the Law we have all five books by Moses, often called the Pentateuch, given separate as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.}

{Another thing you might notice is how the quotes are introduced. Mark does not say, “This is a quote from the Prophets”, rather he writes, “As it is written in the Prophets”. This is a method of teaching and introduction that he, Paul, and Matthew learned from listening to Jesus. Later we will look at the style of introductory words to all of the 25 quotes; and also how Jesus did it when He was often making quotes from the Old Testament, and those by the way, are a large part of the 25 quotes in Mark.}

b. The first quote from Malachi 3:1a in Mark 2b.

“*Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.*” *(Mark 2:b and Malachi 3:1a)*

{It is important to note that this is not all of Malachi 3:1 that is being quoted, and we will discuss that next as we look at the total context of Malachi and Malachi 3:1.}
c. A quick look at what is actually in the Old Testament in Malachi 1.

{Now, do not expect all the words to always be the same in the Old and New Testaments. Remember the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew at the time the Prophets spoke, later as the Scriptures were translated an effort in the Roman Empire at Alexandria, Egypt translated the Old Testament Scriptures into Greek, the total Old Testament being called the Septuagint. Now, I am not saying that you need Hebrew and Greek to understand the Old Testament. Many Greek and Hebrew scholars do not understand the Old Testament because they do not have access to the ASI method of interpretation, or because there larger goal of academic acceptance by way of historical criticism clouds just looking at the internal context in English, letting the Bible say what it wants to say. You must realize that a careful reading of the whole context in English has priority over the Greek and Hebrew language since the Greek language itself cannot contain the new truths that were revealed in the Bible. For example, the Greek of the market place would not have a truly equivalent word for the salvation of God, a truth that comes only from God. The context makes clear what that is!}

“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,’ says the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 3:1, the whole verse)

You see how this helps in the understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. With the Mark 1a, the ministry of John the Baptist is introduced, which will later be elaborated on with the ASI in the rest of Mark 1. Also in the context of Malachi 3:1 we see that another “Lord” is coming besides the LORD of hosts that is speaking, in other words the Lord Jesus Christ is coming and the announcement is coming from the LORD God the Father. This Lord Jesus Christ is the “messenger” of the New Covenant, the new testament if you would based on the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. “in whom you delight” helps to understand the anticipation of the people as they went out into the wilderness to hear John the Baptist preach, and then as they listened to and
followed the Lord Jesus Christ.

d. The rest of the quote from the Prophets in Mark 1:3, from Isaiah 40:3.

(1). Isaiah 40:3 as recorded in Mark 1:3.

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.’”

(2). Isaiah 40:3 ad recorded in Isaiah 40:3.

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness; ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

You see some difference in the wording, but what is communicated is the same: John the Baptist is doing and John the Baptist is shouting with emotion in the wilderness to make preparation for the coming of the Prophet Messiah, make His paths straight or prepare a highway in the desert for Him are equivalent. And if you read the rest of Isaiah 40, especially the first five verses, it further predicts what Mark is going to write in chapter 1 of John the Baptist with his introduction to Israel of the Messiah, the One Who “will baptize with the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 1:8) {Later we will want to look at all of Isaiah 40 in more detail for what is to come in Mark 1 and the rest of Mark; however, now we need to look at all of the quotes in Mark as an outline for the life of Jesus. The way we will start is by looking at the manner Mark chose to introduce the 18 quotes.}

Chapter 5: Preface to the 18 quotes of Mark

I. “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets...” (Mark 1:1 and an introduction to Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3).

{The next Old Testament quote does not come until Mark 4:12 so that we suspect that either all of the first three chapters or some where in between, say about 2 ½ chapters is the first subject heading developed. Let us see what a good
II. “But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, ‘To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that “seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.”’ (Mark 4:10-12 and Isaiah 6:9,10)

{Jesus slides unto this quote from Isaiah smoothly with only “so that”. AND I SUSPECT IN LOOKING AT THIS INSIGHT TO PARABLES AS REVELATIONS OF THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND CHRIST, WE ARE LOOKING AT THE VERY CHOSEN BY PAUL AND JOHN MARK GIST OF WHAT MAKES THE GOSPEL OF MARK UNIQUE FROM THE OTHER GOSPELS! However, we will see about that as we progress through this whole book as a condensed version of the book of Mark. You will see also how this quote and subsequent teachings from Jesus on parables advances the ASI argument. By the way “argument” here is not used in an argumentative sense, that province is reserved for the practices and spirit of the fundamentalists. It is used in the sense of developed a logical “prima facie case. But where do you think the next quote is? Yes, approximately 3 chapters later, in Mark 7:6,7, and it is still a third quote from the book of Isaiah. Since two quotes come in rapid succession, the next from Exodus and Deuteronomy on the Ten Commandments only three verses later, we will outline them together.}

III. “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written... (Mark 7:6,7 and Isaiah 29:13) and “For Moses said...” (Mark 7:10 and Exodus 21:17, also Deuteronomy 5:15 so that Jesus explains a class of people who can not understand parables or any spiritual matters correctly—He calls them hypocrites—and then Jesus based on the commandment about honor for mother and father gives an example of how the people of Isaiah’s day and of Jesus’ day
were: (1) honoring God with their lips, not their hearts; (2) participating in worship that was worthless; and (3) substituting teachings of men in the place of a spiritual understanding of the Word of God.

{You see how once again Mark, and Paul through Mark, and the Prophet Isaiah and Moses with the Semi-Public understanding and interpretation of the total Bible advance the arguments of the ASI, and understanding of such. I am sure that you have never stopped to think of this as a primary theme in your reading of the Gospel of Mark. It helps to answer the question as to how the whole nation of Israel could be wrong and reject Jesus, except for a few like the twelve apostles and the thousands saved on the first day of Pentecost after the Resurrection and Ascension. What you are going to find as we add more understanding on Daniel when we come to exchatalogy and the day of desolation of Mark 13, is that Israel only had one year from the time they crucified Jesus until their desolation of understanding became full; and because of God’s punishment of spiritual blindness on them, they will not see again until the Fulness of Gentiles is complete, and often in the Scripture it looks not even then, except for those in eternity.}

IV. “The worm does not die and the fire is not quenched”, three times Jesus extends this quote from Isaiah 66:24 in respectively Mark 9:44, 46, and 47; and no less an authority than Jesus labels this “hell”, so awful that it would be better to lose an eye on earth rather than find hell over the kingdom of God. Once again, it is a choice of priority: do you need to give up something here on earth that is as pleasurably to you as your right hand, then give it up, Jesus says, rather than go into hell. {And that is all the warning you need!}

{For progress on our outline notice that while chapter 9 of Mark is only two chapters from the last quote, it is almost three with the position of verses 44, 46, and 47. Also recall that the King James and New King James translators added the chapters and the verses, not John Mark.}

Does this quote and the interpretation by Jesus advance our
GIST on spiritual understanding? Well, to answer this look at the incidents in Mark 9 that brought up this hell-fire quote from Jesus: (1) since in chapter 9, it is half the life and teachings of Jesus, Jesus as He does in the other gospels, brings us the reality of His coming crucifixion, which by the way “they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him”, so a lot of teaching and spiritual understanding remained to be done with His own inner-circle; (2) the need arose for Jesus to teach understanding of how greatest in the kingdom of God comes, from service and child-likeness because the disciples showed a lack of spiritual understanding in their disputes between themselves of who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven; (3) the toleration of the tares of Mark 9:38-41 that we will consider later, but of which is still a teaching of spiritual understanding of status in the future kingdom; and (4) the discussion about hell actually is introduced by Jesus in Mark 9:42 on the basis on anyone who causes the stumbling of little children, a prohibition of which is similar to the cutting off of the hand. In short, all of these teachings from Jesus and based on the Old Testament, require a spiritual understanding of the mysteries of this new kingdom of God and of Christ. It is not like the kingdom of David or of Solomon. It is not like any earthly kingdom of which we know, or nation. It is so very, very different; but so very, very worth the attainment since it is forever. {Even Isaiah 40 in the total context has a low to say about the shortness of life and nations in preparation for the eternal kingdom to be established by the Lord Jesus Christ, a kingdom that is spiritual until it becomes material with the new heaven and he new earth. How much so have we lost perspective with our pre-occupation with churches, denominations, and other organizations; and not a priority in thinking, speech, and spiritual understanding on the kingdom of God and Christ. It was not so for Jesus and the teachings of Jesus, and much of the gap which not is widening between Jesus and churches is lack of an adequate Bible-based, Jesus-based sound doctrine on the “kingdom”. Look at the ones today who are making themselves “first” with positions in large churches, on television, and with authoritative statements as if the kingdom of God belonged to them. Well, those are the persons who will be last, if they make it at all; and herein is much of the Gist of the TOLERATION OF THE TARES, and of the spiritual understanding of the nature of the kingdom of God.}
By the way, we need to join the next quote in Mark 10:6-9 and from Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24 with the subject heading of IV. Jesus in Mark 10:1-12 gives a lengthy discourse on marriage and divorce, once again when confronted by the Pharisees with a lack of spiritual understanding of what God had written on marriage in the beginning and how that is the way it still is: one man and one woman with children for life. They showed their spiritual ignorance with a reference to how Moses how allowed a write of divorcements which Jesus instantly accounted as because of their hardness of heart. You see the hearts far from God are also the hearts that are hard with the eyes that can not see and the ears which can not hear. You would think that Mark and with Paul’s backing had carefully chosen from Isaiah, Genesis, and other places in the Old Testament to present a thesis on “Spiritual Understanding versus Blindness”. And we are not saying that there is any conspiracy on the part of Mark and Paul to distort the life and teachings of Jesus. What we are saying is that the life and teachings of Jesus as they actually happened contain a large body of events and words, like a large bucket, from which each Gospel writer chose a distinct cup in order to make it clear. And if they had a certain axe to grind in their gospel presentation, it was an axe to grind given by the Holy Spirit. So we might re-word IV as following.

“IV. Priority of the kingdom over the alternative of hell, and priority of spiritual understanding over a hardness of heart.”

Further we must also modify it to include the Old Testament quote from Exodus 20:12-17 and Deuteronomy 5:16-20, which most of you recognize as more of the Ten Commandments, in fact a summary of all of the Ten Commandments, from which Jesus quoted in order to answer the question of the rich young ruler, “What must I do in order to inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17) Now, you see that indeed the subject of Mark as carefully chosen from the teachings of Jesus that happened at this juncture of His life, and they were many more than the select few of Mark as you can see by looking at a Harmony of the Gospels, ...that is, the subject is centered around the priority of life that puts eternal life in a priority position over hell. Unfortunately, the rich young ruler did not want to cut his right arm off, which in this case was the great number of possessions that he owned. The record (Mark
10:22) says that the rich young ruler became sad, and that he went away sorrowful because he could not give up his great possessions.

This is the peak of the public teachings of Jesus in Mark 10. You will see that from an introduction to parables and spiritual understanding in Mark 4 to interpretations from Jesus peaking here in Mark 10, for 12 of the 16 chapters of Mark, and about half the quotes, the deliberate choices of Paul, Mark, and the Holy Spirit, bring us to characteristics and choices of the kingdom compared to the world. From now on, two things will happen: (1) Jesus will teach more on the impending Crucifixion, (Mark 10:32-34, adding to that teachings on His resurrection, and (2) the teachings of Jesus will become more Semi-Public, directed only to the twelve, also in Mark 10:32-34. So not only is Mark 10 a peak on quotes and on spiritual understanding, but also an introduction to the final theme of the last part of the book of Mark, and by the way also of the main theme of the other half of the Old Testament, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and crowned with the Ascension. (Mark 16:19,209)

IV. Mark 9b,10: Priority of the kingdom over the alternative of hell, and priority of spiritual understanding over a hardness of heart."

We have naturally come to outline our fourth major heading, IV, as Mark 10 with the generalized subject as you read it above. And then we would add several subheads as follows.

1. Spiritual understanding requires an understanding of offences against the kingdom that cause you or a little child to stumble on the way to the kingdom and which should be cut off in the light of the nature of eternity in hell.

2. A concept of marriage and divorce which rebels against the will and plan of God is one example of a hardness of heart which prevents spiritual understanding.

3. A priority for possessions is another diversion from spiritual understanding and eternal life.
4. An understanding of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus is necessary for spiritual understanding and eternal life.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus as Predicted in the Old Testament

I think it would be far better to have two major headings of the Gospel of Mark as follows.

I. The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God with teachings on spiritual understanding of the mysteries of that gospel of the kingdom. (Mark 1-10a)

II. The Foundation for entrance into the kingdom of God by a spiritual understanding of the Gospel as based on the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Mark 9b-16)

You know the divisions that would be under the I from Mark 1-10a as outlined by the quotes from the Old Testament, and summarized below.

1. Mark 1-3 with Isaiah 40 and Malachi: actions of the gospel and the life of Jesus as baptism, temptation, miracles, calling of the disciples, and some preliminary teaching where there was little spiritual understanding.

2. Mark 4-6, the teachings of Jesus in Parables and for spiritual understanding with Isaiah 6:9,10.

3. Mark 7-10a (with Isaiah 29:13), how a lack of spiritual understanding substitutes the teachings of men for the commandments of God, with the presentation of examples from Exodus 20:12, 21:17, Deuteronomy 5:16, and Isaiah 66:24 on hell, and all of the Ten Commandments.

V. The Crucifixion and Resurrection part of the Gospel of
1. Jesus takes the twelve aside on the road to Jerusalem in order to explain how the Jew will kill Him and how He will rise again on the third day.

"Now [this is where the chapter division needed to be with the "now".] They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. [They were amazed because he was going up to Jerusalem where many were trying to kill Him.] And as they followed they were afraid. [They anticipated that they also would be taken captive.] Then He took the twelve aside again [a little side-panel for Semi-Public interpretation of the crucifixion and resurrection] and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him [Began to Tell and Show the things that would happen from Jesus and as predicted in the Old Testament, therefore not an accident but in the plan of God, would be a good summary of all the rest of Mark, from Mark 10 be to the last chapter of Mark 16, and you already now that the last two verses of chapter 16, 19 and 20, are a short summary of the Ascension.]"

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man [incidentally a favorite reference to Jesus, the Prophet Messiah, as found in the Prophet Isaiah, Jesus starting to teach them fervently now of the nature of salvation through the Crucifixion with Isaiah as the background which all of them had heard and studied in the synagogues since a child]...will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." (Mark 10:32-34)

There the rest of Mark, 10b-16 is in outline form, except for some of the details that sat it up and attract the attention of these chief priests, scribes, and Gentiles that are to kill Jesus: (1) the Son of Man as predicted in Isaiah will be betrayed into the hands of the chief priests, scribes, and Roman rulers, the details of the Garden and Judas' betrayal come later (Mark 14); (2) the condemnation to death by the priests and Sanhedrin
(Mark 14:53-72 with the denial by Peter); (3) the deliverance up to the Gentiles since under Roman rule the Jews could not put anyone to death (Mark 15); and (4) the Resurrection, the appearances, the great commission, and the Ascension (Mark 16). {Unless we miss our guess, there will be at least one major Old Testament quote and perhaps some supporting ones for each of these four sub-divisions of the Roman numeral II, on the Death and Resurrection. So here we will allow Jesus Himself to outline the last of His life even as He and God the Father did in the aeons of eternity while they planned this salvation program.}

The Crucifixion and Resurrection part of the Gospel of the Kingdom. (Mark 10b-16)

The Outline of Subsequent Events and Old Testmaent quotes Laid Out By Jesus Himself: Jesus takes the twelve aside on the road to Jerusalem in order to explain how the Jew will kill Him and how He will rise again on the third day.

Triumphant Entry and Curse on the Fig Tree and Temple: The triumphant entry into Jerusalem where the people finally notice that the kingdom is different from the kingdom of David, as Jesus comes in not on a white stallion but only a lowly donkey, and as predicted in Psalm 118:27. Jesus curses the fig tree, imparting spiritual understanding on the curse on Israel which will be consummated one year after the crucifixion of the Messiah. Jesus come to His temple as predicted in the total context of Isaiah 40, and further cleanses the temple according to the prediction in Jeremiah 7:11 and Isaiah 56:7, calling it a den of thieves where the outlaws have come to hide after living in all manner of unrighteousness the week before. Like in Jeremiah, the people of Israel were saying “We Are Safe” because they were in the temple of God and in the city of God, but the sins they committed all week made it impossible for them to be safe, and after one year from the Crucifixion, and as predicted in Daniel, they would become completely desolate of spiritual understanding and salvation.

Preparation for the betrayal and arrest in the questioning of Jesus’ authority: You see they really in Mark 11:27-33 were questioning the very authority of the Son of God, the co-creator of the Universe, and therefore of God Himself. Jesus told the
parable of the wicked vinedressers, yes another parable to the public at large, to explain the beginning of what they were doing that would lead to an absolute rejection of the Son of God in His crucifixion. And you guessed it at the end of the parable of the wicked vinedressers, alias the leaders and nation of Israel, is another quote, this time on the builders rejecting the chief cornerstone selected by God from Psalm 118:22,23.

“Have you not even read this Scripture: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’S doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’” (Psalm 118:22,23)

The movers and the shakers of the parable of the vineyard beat and mis-treated all the servants sent to the tenant farmers for some of the fruits of vintage-time, and the third servant was killed. Some messengers of payment were bet and others killed; and finally with only one son left, the owner sent his son, expecting respect from the tenant farmers. They killed the son. What will the owner do, Jesus asked of the religious leaders who questioned his authority. He will destroy the tenants, Jesus answers, and give the vineyard to others, which is exactly what happened after the Jews delivered the Messiah to be crucified: at least, a year later, and Israel, except for the approximately 100,000 saved in that year, remain desolate until this day. These religious leaders, who thought themselves to be movers and shakers, and in possession of the land rejected the very One whom God Himself had chosen to be the chief cornerstone of the new spiritual temple. And in the tradition of the great Maker of History, the one of whom Pastor James spoke as he said “known unto God are all His works from the beginning”, the God who sent Gabriel to make known what shall be in the end times, now tells the world through His Son that His life, death, and resurrection are “the LORD’S doing”, that it is “marvelous in our eyes.” And by the way, this is the only time that a parable, normally very general in nature, is sealed with an Old Testament quote, not at all general in nature; and indisputably applying to the rejection of Jesus by the builders of Israel, yet a historical plan and movement from God Himself. Thus the very parable itself, and this is also a notable development, passes from a general nature without names, to a more specific nature with the names of Jesus, Israel, and God the Father. This quote becomes an interpretation of the parable
of Jesus about the wicked vinedressers, and the act of quoting itself from Jesus makes Jesus the interpreter of what He, God, and the nation of Israel is about to do in the crucifixion.

Jesus, still in the temple—all from Mark 11:11, after the triumphant entry thru Mark 12 happens in the temple, though not on the same day—is questioned by the Sadducees about the Resurrection: He quotes from the book of Moses, Exodus 3:6,15, to explain that the living God is not the God of the dead. And when challenged again, this time by a scribe, and after a summary of the Ten Commandments which has been in the Old Testament all along, Jesus tells the scribe how close he is to the “kingdom of God”, which unfortunately means that he is not there already like the rich young ruler who walked away sorrowful. His summary of love for God and for fellow man of the Ten Commandments is quoted by Jesus from Deuteronomy 6:4,5.

Jesus mentioned the scribe in His teachings in the temple, and how that some of them say that Christ is the Son of David. You see, this is something that Jesus needed to straighten out about His kingdom and about who He is. At the triumphant entry the crowd chanted about the kingdom of David. Jesus quotes from Psalm 110:1, then asks if David calls Him Lord how in the world could Jesus be the son of David, referring to the words, “The LORD said to my lord”, or to LORD God the Father saying to the Lord Jesus Christ to sit on my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. Jesus after the Resurrection and Ascension, according to the Bible record, sat down on the right hand of God the Father where He ever lives to make intercession for our sins; and at the end, the real consummation of Daniel and the end times, those of Israel and of Gentiles that have made themselves the enemies of Jesus will become His footstool.

It is when Jesus goes out of the temple, and as the disciples remark on the manner of the large stones, that Jesus gives in Mark 13 the great discourse on the destruction of the temple and of the end times (eschatology). Much of it centers around the “abomination of desolation” spoken by Daniel the prophet (Mark 13:14 and Daniel 11:31,12:11) By the way, this teaching on eschatology, covering the same teaching event as Matthew 25, includes a parable about the fig tree, so that even as we had an Old Testament quote from Psalm to seal a parable about the
wicked winchedressers, so here we have a parable about the fig tree to seal a quote from Daniel and the explanations of the end times. THESE PARABLES CERTAINLY HAVE MANY APPLICATIONS AND FORMS, showing once again the very parabolic nature of all spiritual things. {I can not resist adding, although perhaps a little pre-mature in the development of this book, that one way to identify TARES from WHEAT is by which can understand parables and other spiritual matters. Be careful, however, they are not likely to admit a lack of understanding on purpose.}

The betrayal and arrest of Jesus as Jesus foretold in Mark 10:32-34: takes place in Mark 14, at least the record by Mark of that betrayal by Judas, the chapter starting with the plot by the chief priest and scribes to put Jesus to death. Should we wonder what was Mark’s source for such inside information, we need only look to Joseph of Arimathea in whose tomb Jesus was buried, and who himself was a member of the Sanhedrin council. What is our quote, Zechariah 13:7, “I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep are scattered.” Jesus is arrested in Gethsemane, a certain young man, of course John Mark himself, flees naked when they grab the linen cloth that is around his body.

“...the chief priests and the scribes...will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles”: in Mark 14:53-65 is the mock trial under the leadership of the high priest; in Mark 14:66-72 is the denial of Christ by Peter and the crow of the rooster; and in Mark 15:1-15 is the trial before the Roman judge Pilate to seek death and the choice of Pilate before the multitude between Jesus and Barabbas. The only quote here is from Jesus Himself as earlier he had predicted at the last Lord’s Supper that in Mark 14:30, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” Thus the habit that Jesus started in the Old Testament as the Spirit of Christ in making predictions through the Holy Prophets as He moved them, now is a prediction not only of Peter’s denial three times before the rooster crows twice, but also of the betrayal, arrest, death, and resurrection. You see, this was all in His plan and the plan of God given to Jesus for the salvation of the world.

“...and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him”: in Mark 15:16-20, the Roman soldiers mock
Jesus; in Mark 15:21-32, the Roman soldiers crucify Jesus with a robber to the left and right and in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12; and in Mark 15:33-41 they kill Him, at the ninth hour He cries out according to the saying of Psalm 22:1; and in Mark 15:42-47 Jesus is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

“And the third day He will rise again” (Jesus in Mark 10:34): and so He did as recorded in Mark 16 with the Great Commission given to the remaining eleven apostles and then the Ascension. No quote from this one unless it is from Dr. Luke, his companion with Mary and the Apostle John at Ephesus, and from the book of Acts.

Chapter 6: Mark 4 and Exegesis in Context

“And with many such parables {the many parables recorded in the events of Mark 4} He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it. But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.” (Mark 4:33-34)

There is only one way to properly do Bible exegesis. That is by keeping a verse in the total context of the chapter, a chapter in the total context of the book, and the book in the total context of all 66 books of the Bible. Part of God’s assurance that each generation would get to the truth as He made it known was in motivating so many holy men of God, prophets and apostles, to write down the truth. This is an aspect of the ASI that we have not discussed thoroughly enough, but which I anticipate will be focused in this chapter as we look at the detailed exegesis of Mark 4. You must remember that no Bible author, like Mark or Paul, came to the task of writing an individual book of the Bible without certain common experiences, training, and assumptions. The Jews like John Mark and Paul, especially Paul as a lawyer of the religious laws of his country, were perhaps the most literate generation on the Bible in history. You can bet that Mark had read Daniel, and Paul also; and indeed you see the quotes of Daniel and the Prophets in their writings. You can be assured that Christ had the dominant influence in their lives, and that within itself gives the most important influence on consistency in the Bible.
Parables

We find four major parables in Mark 4, that we are able to readily recognize as parables. According to the exegesis of the chapter text above, from Mark 4:33,34, we see that in parables was about the only way that Jesus ever taught: (1) with parables Jesus “spoke the word to them” so that parables were the methodology or means Jesus used to communicate the Word; (2) The number and nature of the parables were proportional to what the Public was able to understand—if they knew a little they were given a little number and magnitude of parables and if they knew a lot there were given more; (3) there just was hardly any teaching from Jesus without a parable; and (4) alone with His disciples, Jesus gave the Semi-Public interpretation which only disciples are allowed to understand. You see understanding also comes with being with Jesus. Paul stated it this way. First, you have not so learned Christ if you are still living like the other Gentiles around you; and second “if you indeed heard Him and were taught by Him”. {We should discuss this in more detail later along with the real 9 month new birth of John 3, and the how to hear and be taught by Jesus now as given in John 14-16.}

Have you ever stopped to think what is there in a parable that prevents the understanding of non-disciples, and which simultaneously promotes the understanding of disciples? Well, it is not that simple. The key is in the explanations that Jesus gave His disciples later, which by the way, we must find something comparable today in our experiences with God, Christ, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit in order to have the understanding of a disciple. However, there are certain characteristics of parables that we can consider.

1. They are so simple and life based that the world, apart from Christ, refuses to believe them as true. A Ph.D. or the scientific and educated when never talk in such simple terms, so that I think it is the wisdom of this world and the dominant concept in the American Democratic Faith of what is “wise” that keeps many from understanding the eternal truth in the parables. You recall that it was the Apostle Paul who said to Christians, “you see your calling, brethren, how many wise and noble and wealthy are not called.” And we read also that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”. Further when the world by wisdom
knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching {by the way, first preaching like by Jesus was also preaching by parables} to save those who believe.

2. Second, having no confidence in God and in the wisdom of God, and confidence that God can reveal his truth to us efficiently and effectively in the Bible and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we are likewise not able to believe that eternal truth can come through such simple means. Like Naaman, we want to wash in some great and clean river of the world rather than the dirty Jordan. You remember the book by J.B. Phillips, YOUR GOD IS TOO SMALL”, where he asks questions like “do you think God understands radar”, and the answers generally come back, “No”. Today, we would ask, “do you think God understands computers and physics?” What would you answer be; and if you can not understand that how can you understand that God can deliver truth in such simple things as parables. In fact parables is the way that God and Christ chose to deliver truth. {Always remember that the book God wrote and the world God made will not contradict each other. The problem is in our understanding of both the world God made and the book God wrote. As the nobel prize winning physicist, R.A. Millikan wrote in the book form of his famous lectures on science and religion, scientist can be more prejudiced than people of religion since they are still human and have pride and a certain prejudice against eternal truth.}

What are the parables in Mark 4, how does Jesus introduce the parables, and what approach does Paul make in the written presentation of these parables? What the parables are is the easiest of the questions to answer. (1). The parable of the seed and the sower which really helps us to understand the mechanism in the local churches toward whereby so many have not experienced the new birth, the tares have outgrown the wheat in numbers, there is a large gap between Christ and church membership, and the challenge of the Falling Away has overwhelmed the work of Christ as well as the love which has waxed cold {by the way, also explains the difference between the instantaneous new birth of the fundamentalists which seldom takes place anyway and the more like 9 month new birth which Jesus explained by comparing it to the 9 month physical birth}; (2) the explanation of the parable of the seed and the sower, without which we would never come to understand why our
churches are like they are today in this time of the Falling Away; (3) the parable of the light under a bushel, where Jesus goes back to the only theme of hearing and understanding, the subject of parables itself if you would; (4) the parable of the growing seed where Jesus explains some more things about the way the kingdom of God is; (5) the parable of the mustard seed, more understanding on the kingdom; (5) an observation with which we started this chapter from Mark himself, no doubt originally from the Ascended Christ through Paul, about parables (Mark 4:33-34); and (6) the parable of the wind and the sea obeying Jesus, and how that is a parable will expand our concept of the parable.

The Gospel of the Boat

As far as the introduction to Mark 1, the first two verses do that, as long as we remember the larger context of how Jesus is in Galilee and the sea is the Sea of Galilee.

“And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. Then He taught {sometime we must consider the individualistic style of John Mark in his use of such words as “so” and “then”, which is okay as we primarily look for the style of the Holy Spirit and Jesus in the writing also} many things by parables {taught many things and the method is parables, “by parables}, and said to them in His teaching {the Teaching of Jesus}.” (Mark 4:1,2)

You have noticed that Jesus was teaching by the Sea of Galilee; and how the press of the multitude caused Him again to take position just off shore in a boat He had instructed the disciples to make ready for such occasions. There is a certain nautical jargon about the boat as Jesus “sat in on the sea” which implies a proper launching and anchoring just off the shore, and leads one to think that John Mark might have fished some with Simon Peter. We know that Peter called him his “son in the faith” (I Peter 5:13); we know that Peter went to the home of Mark’s mother, Mary, when miraculously delivered from prison by the angel (Acts 12:11-17); and speculation has it that the last Lord’s Supper was in an upper room in the house of Mary, also that perhaps Mary
owned the Garden called Gethsemane, and the reason as Mark was awakened from sleep by Jesus and the disciples on the way to the Garden followed them with only a cloth about his naked body, knowing something important was about to happen. {Only the Gospel of Mark records the young man who fled naked at the captivity of Jesus, Mark willing to tell on himself in order to authenticate his personal knowledge of what happened to Jesus.} It is also possible that Mark learned much from the fishermen disciples with which he kept company, and you do find the word "boat" mentioned most often in the Gospel of Mark as compared to the other three Gospels. Actually the word in the King James Version is "ship", to distinguish as a boat that you sail as well as row; and this is better than the New King James Version of "boat". Well, if you look at the number of times the Greek word for "ship", the word "ploion" for sailing vessel, it is found 13 times in Matthew, 8 times in Luke, 6 times in John; but a dominant 16 times in Mark. {It might even be possible to outline the first 8 chapters of Mark around "ship" as in the King James Version or "boat" as in the New King James Version, since it has a good spread in the first 8 chapters: Mark 1:19; 1:20; 4:1 (notice that jump of 3 chapters that we are use to from Old Testament quotes with sometimes clusters of sub-quotes for support, and we do find a cluster in Mark 4) ; 4:36 and 37; 5:2; 5:18; 5:21; 6:32; 6:45; 6:47; 6:51; 6:54; 8:10; 8:13; and 8:14.} Of course with further study on boats or ships in the Bible and on John Mark, we may decide that it was just the fascination of a city boy from Jerusalem with the fishing and fishermen of Galilee.

Since most of our study of Mark is a condensed version of Mark based on the New King James Version, we will first look briefly at the times "boat" in prominent in Mark, remembering as I was instructed in the Navy that a boat is something you row. {A few years ago as I was out on the Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier, a ship which supports a crew of 5,000 as well as aircraft, the aviators would call it a "boat"; but I think that was in order to irritate those there of the sea-going Navy.} I will start with the place Mark records Jesus instruction to the disciples to make a boat ready by the Sea for such teaching use during the press of the multitude. {It reminds me how that the Son of God who with God Himself made preparation for His life and death from before the beginning of time, also planned
ahead while on earth in preparations of things like making a boat ready and also of telling the disciples where the get the young colt for His triumphant entry.

“But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea {this is a prior occasion by the sea and recorded in chapter 3 which makes Mark in chapter 4, as we read above, refer to the “And again He began to teach by the sea.”} And a great multitude from Galilee {you see this was a prior time in His home province of Galilee} followed Him, and from Jude and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan {the Jordan River feeds out of the Sea of Galilee southward}; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing {how many things Jesus was doing and how many of those Mark records and which one is also something that we wish to discuss in this condensed version of Mark}, came to Him.”

“So He told His disciples {Jesus instructs the disciples, the professional fisherman by trade and living before they met Jesus; and they knew to listen because of how He told them where to catch the most fish, and of how He could walk on water—remember when Mark was written all the life and Ascension of Jesus had taken place, and the faith of John Mark had become very large: and by the way, you will find often certain hind-sight conclusions which were made after the event in the life of Jesus, but it is far more important to operate with the assumption that the earth is round instead of flat if I might use somewhat of a parallel parable.} that small boat {really a small ship if you wish to be nautically correct} should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him.” (Mark 3:7-9)

The reason was very practical to keep this multitude that came from all Palestine and the surrounding Gentile areas from crushing Him. And when it says Jesus told them to “keep ready for Him” I would imagine that it was manned by a competent fisherman every time Jesus and the disciples got close to the Sea, knowing that many fishermen of Galilee would be honored for that closeness to Jesus, and perhaps even a city boy like John Mark would volunteer after instructions from Simon Peter. But in progressing on this
condensed version of the Gospel of the Mark as a possible Gospel of the Boat, let us look at some instances of the word usage in Mark.

First in chapter sequence, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee when first beginning His Galilean Ministry, and as recorded in Mark 1:16-20, where He chose 4 of His apostles from the fishing boats, the word "boat" been mentioned twice. Once, when He saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee in the boat with their father mending nets. You see that the boat was quite larger than a rowing boat as the record says that when James and John immediately heeded the call of Jesus to be fishers of men, they left behind in the “boat” the father Zebedee with a certain number of hired servants. Of course, before James and Son was the similar call to Simon and Andrew who were casting their nets into the Sea of Galilee.

Second, we looked at previously in chapter 3, and from another incident along the Sea with His disciples and the vast multitude, where Jesus passed the instruction to keep a ship in the standby mode (Mark 3:7-9).

Third, we also looked at previously in the introduction to Mark 4, where the prepared boat had to be used because of the press of the multitude (Mark 4:1,2). And what a pleasure it must have been for those people to have the view of the Sea of Galilee, as they faced it, and of the ship and of Jesus as He taught them in parables. {You would almost think that there would be more parables on the sea, but there is when you are willing to consider the quieting of the wind and sea in Mark 4 by Jesus as a parable, and we must come to that in proper order.}

And the fourth is that very occasion, recorded in Mark 4:35-41, where the same day as the teaching of the other parables, Jesus recommended to the disciples that they would cross over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, and “they took Him along in the boat as He was.” (Mark 4:36) {I really don’t know what this means except perhaps Jesus had on His Sunday best instead of clothes for fishing.} And the record said that other “little boats” went along with them, once again re-inforcing what we thought about the boat prepared for Jesus being more a sailing ship. A great windstorm came along, and the waves beat into the boat to the extent that the ship was filling up with water; but Jesus, overcome by His human frailties of
tiredness ("in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin") was asleep in the "stern". The stern is the rear of the boat for you landlubbers, and even enough preparation had been made that He had a pillow, or perhaps that was the normal gear aboard for this kind of fishing vessel of the Sea of Galilee.

They woke Jesus up, saying to Him, "Teacher {isn't that significant that after a day of teaching by the Sea, the disciples called Him "Teacher" although Jesus came to Galilee first "preaching" the Gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14)…Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing." These fisherman knew that with that wind and the waves and the filling up of the ship, they were about to go down; and the probability of survival in the waves of such a storm was minimal. How many stories through the generations in Galilee must have been told of many storms although not necessarily the "perfect storm". It may not have been a perfect storm, but it was the perfect time for Jesus to present a real life parable on faith. Jesus stood up in the ship. He "rebuked" the wind like He might rebuke a Pharisee. He said to the sea with authority, "Peace be still": the wind ceased and there was a great calm. What do you think was the response of the disciple fisherman to this parable of life?

“And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!” (Mark 4:41) {How do you think Mark knew about this? Probably because he had tagged along with the twelve, was in one of the little boats, or got it firsthand from Simon Peter.}

What was the moral of the story, to use our current jargon? Or in the context of Mark 4 and parables, what was the gist of this life parable? {and don't forget that all parables are very life based} Well, here it is from Jesus Himself. Just like later He would seal the meaning of a parable with an Old Testament quote, and sometimes seal an Old Testament quote with explanation with a parable, even know He seals the parable of faith testing with a teaching from the Master Teaching, a challenge if you would to faith in Him and in His authority.

“But He said to them, ‘Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?’” (Mark 4:40)
Jesus knew what they had not yet come to know, or understand. That He was the original co-creator of the universe with God the Father and the Holy Spirit; and even when He accepted certain limitations of human existence by being born of a certain virgin Mary, He had not given up His godhead of power over the works of nature. You will find this very evidence of power over nature in 7 signs that is the prime theme of the Gospel of John in order “that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” Could that be what Jesus was after, having laid the foundation of the new kingdom teachings that day? Certainly, He was after faith in Himself and in His authority as the Son of God. {Shortly after this and in Caesarea Philippi as recorded in Mark 8:27-30, Jesus will call for a confession of faith on the part of the twelve apostles. Would it not be interesting to hear what Judas Iscariot said as Peter replied, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mark 8:29 with a little addition from the other Gospels). We know don’t we: like the tares in the churches today and the victims of the Falling Away, he would make that confession of faith in the words of his lips while his heart was far away from Jesus.}

Many of the other incidents, the going about to do work and good, of Jesus center around this very “boat”. At the end of this incident above on the Sea, and with the assistance of the calm sea to get them there, they came to the other side of the Sea in Mark 5 where Jesus, even immediately as He came out of the boat, was met by a crazy, wild, and strong man that was Demon possessed. {Wow, was it every demon possession as the record says that about 2,000 evil spirits went out of him. No wonder that it made him so strong, so wild, and so noisy in the mountains.} You recall the famous story of how Jesus gave the evil spirits permission to go into a herd of swine; and how when the swine could not stand the evil spirits, the swine ran off a cliff into the sea and drowned. The boat immediately after this, in Mark 5:18, is mentioned again as Jesus “got into the boat” and as the former demon possessee begged to go with Jesus. Jesus told him to go home to his own friends, tell them “what great things the Lord has done for you”, and how the Lord had compassion on you. If this is another life parable; and it is, what is the moral. Well obviously, the moral is that Jesus has power over the devils, the devil, and the illnesses of men.
Likewise, the moral is that Jesus generated another witness to Himself and His authority, for the record said that as the man began to proclaim what Jesus had done for him, all the people of Decapolis marvelled—the region on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

After the rejection at Nazareth in Galilee of Mark 6:1-6, and the sending out of the twelve to practice what they had learned from Him {of course, as the record says only He had given them the power to do so, and this power to do so coming from Jesus is so important as we would consider the validity of the many faith healers today}. And after the report from the disciples, Jesus advised a “boat” trip to a desert place across the sea where they could rest. (Mark 6:32) We might briefly mention in passing how this first faith healers did it.

“So they went out and preached that people should repent. {do you hear that from today’s faith healers, hardly a popular thing for a crowd to be hearing that has their mind only on their own sickness} And they cast out many demons {first was the preaching of repentance, then the healing was secondary, “And they cast out...”}, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.” (Mark 6:12,13) {And by the way, do you think the disciples sold the oil to the persons being healed as faith resources. Remember what Peter said as he was healing people, “Freely we have received, freely we give.”}

The Healing Touch of Jesus

From the verses up to this point which is the chapter focus in Mark 4, we can note that most of the faith-healing was done by Jesus with a touch. So it was in Mark 1:29-31 with the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law. She was bedfast there in Capernaum of Galilee with a fever. Jesus “took her by the hand and lifted her up” (1:31), immediately she was healed to the extent that she fixed them a meal. So it was with the leper of Mark 1:40-45 who showed his faith to be healed by saying to Jesus that if you want to you can make me clean. Jesus moved with compassion, stretched out his hand and touched him. Immediately the leprosy left him. So it was with the "boat" reference of Mark 5:21 as Jesus and the
disciples crossed back over to the Western side of the Sea after the healing of the man of two thousand evils spirits, and with a plea from Jarius, the ruler of the synagogue, to heal his daughter at the point of death, he said, “lay your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live”; and seeing the faith of the father was on the way when from the following and thronging multitude {He no longer had the protection of the boat off shore}, had His garment touched by the touch of faith from a woman 12 years with an issue of blood. She said to herself, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.” (Mark 5:28) Immediately she was healed; and feeling the power got out of His body through the garments, Jesus asked “Who touched my clothes?” (Mark 5:30) And so the touch of faith was also accomplished with the daughter of Jairus who died while Jesus was enroute, but when Jesus took the child by the hand, saying “child arise” (Mark 5:41), the 12 year old girl immediately arose and walked. So it was after Jesus walked on the Sea in Mark 6:45-52, after teaching and feeding the five thousand, this time Jesus making His disciple get into the boat to go to the other side at Bethsaida, there on a mountain to pray {by the way the incident here with Jesus alone on the land and the disciples in the middle of the Sea, is the occasion that we must look at in more detail later where the disciples saw Jesus walking past them on the Sea}; but when they anchored off shore from the land of Gennesaret, and when they came out of the boat (Mark 6:54), in every city and village the sick were laid near where Jesus walked, “and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment, and as many as touched Him were made well.” (Mark 6:56) Although in the region of Tyre and Sidon (Mark 7), Jesus heals the daughter of a Syro-Phonecian woman, casting out the demon from a distance, it was in response to a treasured saying of faith, later however when departing that region through Decapolis back to the Sea, Jesus once again healed with a touch. This time it was the touch of Jesus in his ears and on his tongue (Mark 7:31-37). The man’s ears were opened and he spoke plainly.

The Parable of the Leaven of the Bread in the Boat

After the feeding of the four thousand in Decapolis, immediately they “got into a boat” (8:10), sailing to the region of Dalmanutha, where it seems that Jesus could do no mighty works because of the disputing Pharisees, so they escaped via the boat to the other
side where Jesus taught in the boat about the parable of the feeding of first five thousand and then four thousand. Actually the whole parable of the boat, on the way between Dalmanutha and the Pharisees they had left behind and on the way to Bethsaida, where He would heal the blind man with a touch of His hands... that is, the parable in the boat started with Jesus’ warning to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. Recall what the Pharisees had disputed about as they were seeking a sign from heaven, testing Jesus (8:11,12). What does this remind you of? Yes, the temptations from Satan Himself in the wilderness who also wanted Jesus to subvert from prayer and fasting by performing certain miracle-signs as turning stones into bread, and as flying down from the top of the Temple.

“But He {Jesus} sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, ‘Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.’” (Mark 8:11,12)

In reality, Jesus had been performing many miracle-signs of healing, and feeding, and teaching; and the Pharisees knew that, it was because of these signs and the multitudes that went after Jesus that they had come out into this far away region to dispute with Him. They wanted the kind of signs like Satan wanted, signs of a kingdom of power and like David and Solomon. Jesus sighed so deeply because He knew all this, but also because he knew that these religious leaders, perhaps even Saul was among them as a Pharisee of the Pharisees and even a spokesman for them, were representative of the majority of the people; further that when He rejected their concept of the “kingdom”, there would inevitably come the Crucifixion.

You begin to see the relationship to the parable of the leaven in the boat when you see how the teachings of Jesus turn in the boat toward words that are very similar to the very description of parables of Mark 4.

“Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? {Remember understanding for the authorized is to come through parables.} Is your heart still hardened? {The Pharisees had hardened hearts that kept them from understanding parables, or that would appreciate the meaning of miracle-signs except for personal use and for
“Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? {A hardened heart grows blindness and deafness like the Pharisees, which can be summarized as a lack of faith.} And do you not remember? {While faith grows a remembrance and understanding of the teachings of Jesus, a lack of faith grows selective memory.}

“When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?’ They said, Twelve. ‘Also when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?’ And they said, Seven. So He said to the , ‘How is it you do not understand’” (Mark 8:17-21)

What Jesus was after from the parable of leaven in the boat was a recognition and confession of Himself as the Son of God. This the Pharisees refused to do in spite of all the miracle-signs of power that only the Son of God can do, He had spread all around Palestine, and the Pharisees knew about them. I am sure the disciples pondered this parable of the boat, so that when later in the towns of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus pointedly asked the disciples who they thought He is, Peter replied for them, “You are the Christ.” (Mark 8:27-30) This was what Jesus had been teaching to hear, performing miracles to hear, feeding thousands with a few loaves to hear, walking on water and disputing with the Pharisees for, in order to get recognition from His own disciples that He was and is the Son of God, the Promised Prophet Messiah of the Old Testament. {Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew word of the Old Testament Messiah.} You know, Jesus had patiently led them step by step, but enough was enough. It was time for a little faith that He by His actions and teachings and miracles was the Christ of the Old Testament. It was time to go beyond the hardened heart of the religious teachers of the day to a faith in Jesus.

The Second Half of the Gospel of the Kingdom

That brings us to the second half of the Gospel of the Kingdom, which by the way is also the end of the boat references. You might call Mark 1-8:30, with in Mark 1 the “beginning of the gospel of the kingdom” and in 8:30 the confession of faith from the twelve apostles that Jesus is the Christ {other Gospels record
the complete confession as “thou art the Christ, the Son of the 
living God}; and the rest of Mark from Mark 8:31-33 through 
Mark 16 as the “Gospel of the Kingdom through the Death and 
Resurrection of Jesus Christ”.

“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man 
{recall the Son of Man is the favorite expression of 
Isaiah for the suffering servant, the Messiah which 
Jesus identifies with since He knows that it refers 
to Him since it was through His Spirit that He put it 
in Isaiah in the first place}...the Son of Man must 
suffer many things {yes, sounds like Isaiah}...and be 
rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes 
{all the religious leaders of God’s chosen nation of 
Israel, like the Pharisees of Dalmanutha}..., and be 
killed, and after three days rise again. “ (Mark 8:31)

Jesus needed a lot more teaching and showing in life parables 
for the disciples to understand this; for Peter, as representative 
and as the spokesman for the group, rebuked Jesus for speaking 
this loudly and openly as he knew that it would inevitable lead 
to Jerusalem and Crucifixion by the Roman government. Jesus 
recognized Satan in the voice and attitude of Peter, saying “get 
behind Me Satan”. And that needed teaching on the requirment 
of crucifixion is the rest of the story. A story we need also for 
salvation, and in order to share the influence of Jesus with the 
rest of the world. Without the crucifixion and resurrection, the 
story of Jesus would be no more than that of a Prophet. But by 
being crucified, and in the manner His character was shown in 
crucifixion--also the silence with which He took if which spoke 
to others volumes that perhaps He could do something about 
it and chose not too--Jesus thereby showed “God was in Christ 
reconciling the world unto Himself.”

Chapter 7: WITH COMMENTS

What more is there for Jesus to teach His disciples, including 
us, since we are determined to be influenced by Christ and to 
Learn Christ as the first disciples learned Christ, not as church 
members are learning Christ today in the period of the Falling
Away? What more can Jesus do for miracles? And should He not stay away from Jerusalem since He knows that the religious leaders will try to kill Him. Yes, unless death is His plan, and the plan of God from before the beginning of time; and we know the latter to be true. And in the very nature of the Gospel of Mark as a Gospel of Action and Boats, of the Kingdom and Parables, the teachings and miracles with the final and ultimate miracles of death, resurrection, and Ascension come rapidly in Mark 8:34-16:19,20.

A Condensed Version

Mark 8:34-38: Jesus teaches that His death is also a parable, without using that word, in that any disciple who truly follows Him into the kingdom must also take up a cross, must lose his life for Jesus and the gospel of the kingdom, and must give priority to the soul over what the world can offer. If any human is ashamed of Jesus and His words in his own sinful generation, then Jesus will be ashamed of him when He comes in power and glory with the angels at the Second Coming.

With Comments

{Yes, already Jesus is teaching about the Second Coming, even before the First Coming has been terminated.}

A Condensed Version

Mark 9:1-13: Before the sealing of the Supreme Position of Jesus in the Universe at the Mount of Transfiguration, and with testimonies from Elijah and Moses, Jesus teachings about the power of the kingdom of God. Considering the leaven of the Pharisees and other religious leaders, their influence if you would, Jesus needed a little knudge toward faith on the part of the disciples. On the high mountain, with Peter, James, and John, Jesus was first transfigured before them with His clothes become shiny, snowy white; with the appearance of Elijah and Moses, holding conversation with Jesus; and then the supreme testimony of God to Jesus in order to elicit faith from the disciples. The Pharisees had played their final card, recall that the Pharisees also believed in a body resurrection, and now Jesus and God were playing a card to elicit faith from the future leaders of the
church—Peter, James, and John. Like at the baptism by John, the voice from heaven came, saying “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him.” (Mark 9:7) These events on the Mount were the answers to the deep sigh from Jesus as the Pharisees sought to spread their venomous leaven by disputing.

On the way down the mountain, Jesus told Peter, James, and John to tell no one until He had risen from the dead. So how did Mark hear about it? Peter told him, I am sure. What they really pondered about then was not what the appearance of Elijah and Moses meant, it obviously meant that Jesus was to be respected right up there with the most revered of the forefathers and prophets; nor did they ponder as much about the voice of God the Father from heaven with approval of Jesus, setting Him apart from other Prophets in that He is and was the only Son of God, and hence to heed the disciples to listen to Him more than the Pharisees or even Moses and Elijah. What they were more concerned about now was some of the other religious leaders of the nation said, which was also common knowledge among the people in the nation, and that was that Elijah must come first before the Messiah—Son of God? Jesus reminds them of John the Baptist, who did come before Jesus, much in the same mannerism of the Prophet Elijah, and how he was killed. You can read in the Old Testament and in the other Gospels about these details of Elijah.

“And He said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.’” (Mark 9:1)

With Comments

And from reading the rest of the story in Acts, with the Coming of the Holy Spirit in great power on the first day of Pentecost after the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, we know this to be the kingdom of God coming in great power, an event beheld by all 12 of the apostles except Judas Iscariot who fell by transgression. You might say that Judas working with Satan and the established religious leaders of the nation was representative of the nation itself, represented in the fig tree which Jesus cursed without fruit, representative of the desolation of the abomination as in a few years the Temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed by the
Roman General Titus, and representative of the whole nation who after one week, according to Daniel, one week after the nation of Israel cut off the Messiah would be desolate of any more salvation. The one week, of course, representative only one short year for salvation in Israel.

A Condensed Version

Mark 9:14-29: Evidently the other 9 disciples needed the more faith messages of the mountain, they had let the scribes draw them by way of the leaven of unbelief into a dispute centered around their inability to heal the mute son of one of the crowd. That we are dealing with faith and lack of faith in the leaven is made clear in Jesus’ response to all present.

“O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? {the end was getting much closer for the death and resurrection and ascension} How long shall I bear with you? {only one more year Jesus and God would bear with the unbelief, rebellion, and abominations of the nation of Israel: you can see that in the wording of “O faithless generation...”} Jesus always looking for signs of faith, found it in the father of the boy after his description of the long-standing illness of the boy, how the spirit within him would convulse him into the fire or water in order to destroy him. Jesus did get the famous response of faith from the father, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.” (Mark 9:24)

With Comments

Did this time, Jesus use the touch of faith for healing as in most of the faith-healings. Yes, after He rebuked the deaf and dumb spirit to come out of the boy, and after with removal of the unclean spirit, when the boy became like dead and the crowd thought he was dead, the record says that “Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.” What do you think that this life-parable taught even beyond that of the necessity of faith? Yes, the power of Jesus over what seems like death; and later of death itself. “It was not possible that the very Son of God, nor of God the Father’s power, that He should be beholden or obligated to death.” Jesus as the Son of God, and
God Himself, are eternal life incarnate or personnification. They can not more be the victims of death than they can be victims of the forces of nature which they in the beginning Created.

_A Condensed Version With Comments_

**Mark 9:30-32:** Another Forecast by Jesus of His death and resurrection on the third day. Jesus definitely wanted the disciples to know that His death and resurrection, much like the preparation of the boat from the press of the crowd, was His plan and the great eternal plan of God. He, nor God, would be a victim of a crucifixion plotted by the religious leaders, approved by the crowd, and executed by the Roman government at the request of the leaders and crowd. The rejection of the very Son of God would by His own chosen people and nation would be complete even as the abomination of desolation, one year from the crucifixion, would also be complete until the Fulness of the Gentiles was finished.

“The then they departed from there {there was the region of Caesarea Phillipi} and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples {Jesus must concentrate on faith for the disciples that can overcome all, primarily the leaven of the religious leaders and the lack of power to heal a little boy.}...and said to them, ‘The Son of Man is being betrayed {Judas and Satan were at work already in the evil hearts of the leaders}...into the hands of men {we know who those hands are}, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day. ‘ But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.” (Mark 9:30-32)

The crucifixion, Jesus knew, would discourage their faith; and the resurrection, obviously a demonstration of the power of Jesus and God, would revive their faith. But the problem, you see, is that the leaven and the lack of understanding was still too strong, overcoming their faith; and like in the boat where they were chastised and several incidents later for unbelief, they “were afraid to ask Him.”

_A Condensed Version with Comments_
Mark 9:33-10:31: Jesus continues to teach the disciple intensely. At Capernaum in Galilee, He taught of how the top positions in the kingdom of God comes only by being a servant of all, by becoming like a little child; also when John told Jesus of seeing a person not of their little group casting out demons in the name of Jesus and how the disciples had forbid him, Jesus tells some important things which will help us as we develop understanding and toleration for the tares and the wheat: (1) Do not forbid anyone of any group for working a miracle in the name of Jesus; (2) Such a person of another group can not first work a miracle in Jesus’ name then “soon afterward speak evil of” Jesus (Mark 9:39); (3) Those not against Jesus and His disciples, those who can do a miracle in the name of Jesus and who find it difficult afterwards to speak evil of Jesus are on the side of Jesus and disciples; (4) Even a cup of water given to a disciple of Jesus in the name of Jesus and because the disciples belong to Christ, will give the members of these other groups a reward from Jesus. How the fundamentalists in this day of their warfare in the SBC against what they call the moderates, need this message of toleration and moderation for those not of their Darby and Scofield moral majority group.

The opposite of a cup of water in the name of Jesus and for those who belong to Jesus is a use of influence or other offenses which causes any “little one of faith” to stumble. Each and every person who comes to Jesus, even after much intellectual seeking and obstacle removal, must come ultimately like a little child with simple faith in Jesus and God; so that when Jesus talks about “whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble”, it includes but goes beyond little children to all disciples that are children of God, and the very influence toward stumbling, being the opposite of a cup of water in the name of Jesus and because they belong to Jesus, the punishment also the opposite of the reward, is so great as the viable alternative would be to hand a millstone about their neck and be thrown into the Sea. Did you hear that Stanley and other fuedamentalists who destroyed the careers, work, and perhaps even overthrew the faith of some, as they created warfare in the SBC years ago, and have sustained it quietly all these years? Or likewise what about the influence these moderate men of God could have had on little children of faith as pastors, teachers, and denominational workers. You have destroyed that also.
We have three groups in succession that we are dealing with here, from the teachings of Jesus, and before we wrestle with toleration of the tares and the wheat: (1) those not of the most prominent group of Jesus' disciples {call them the OTHER DISCIPLES}, who perform a miracle in the name of Jesus, and therefore can not quickly speak evil of Jesus; (2) those who give a drink of water or materially {call them the OCASSIONAL SUPPORTERS to those disciples who belong to Christ, who will get a reward in this life and perhaps in the next for that cup of water; and (3) those who cause little children of faith to stumble with offenses {call them the INFLUENCES FOR STUMBLING}, the opposite of a cup of water. So to be thorough on the teachings of Jesus, we must deal with five groups.

The Tares and the Wheat;
The Other Disciples;
The Ocassional Supporters; and
The Influencers for Stumbling.

Whatever, we know that even as Jesus is down to the nitty-gritty of what members of the kingdom of God must know about His death and resurrection, also it what disciples need to know about other characteristics of kingdom membership. It is a unique eternal kingdom, yet one established with power with the coming of the Holy Spirit in power; and therefore the characteristics required for citizenship will be unique and eternal. While it is obvious as to the difference between the local church and the kingdom of Christ which will have members of every nation, language, and region, the difference between the one church of the body of Christ and the kingdom of Christ. One difference we must consider is that while the one church never becomes more than the total Temple of Christ in the fulfilled kingdom of the new earth and new universe, the kingdom of Christ must also have some amount of materialism and government because of the vast size of every nation, kindred, and tongue.

The horrows of hell taught by Jesus Himself in Mark 9:42-50, and lead into by the criticism of stumbling, no doubt surprised the disciples even as it surprises many today, not stopping to think that Jesus quotes three times from the Old Testament letting us know that teachings about hell are not new or novel, the quote being three times, "Their worm does not die and the fire is not
quenched.” (Isaiah 66:24 and Mark 9:44, 46, and 48). Jesus calls this “hell”, and it is to be avoided at all cost to the extent of cutting off all pleasures of the world to the extent of losing a right arm. Don’t let your hand offend; don’t let your foot offend; and don’t let your eye offend you; and that these are possible offenses that can prevent entrance into the “kingdom of God” is made clear by Jesus in Mark 9:47 of how entrance into the kingdom of God with one eye would be better than entrance into hell. Yes, now Jesus has turned around the fear of the disciples to ask about what they did not understand, to a real fear of offences that could cause an entrance into the very fearful hell!

And Jesus goes beyond this into more eschatology, and so quickly that we almost miss it, as He says, “For everyone will be seasoned with fire....” (Mark 9:49), which is the same refined and made white of the end times of the book of Daniel. How the final fires of the end time as the elements melt with a fervent heat will be on all until the Second Coming where one in the field is taken up and another in the home, and so on. Also we almost miss the next phrase of that sentence, “...and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.” Those sacrifices of a cup of water and miracles in the name of Jesus, those sacrifices of the five groups previously identified, all have the caveat that conclusions about them must be seasoned with a dash of salt. What is the required caveat?

“Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor {if a kingdom member or disciple lose their distinction as salt or a kingdom member}...how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.” (Mark 9:50)

COMMENT: Have salt in your own lives as a kingdom member, and let that salt be seen by others by having peace between you and fellow kingdom members, not seeking the first positions, not forbidding others, and not exerting influences for stumbling. Yet the clincher on those that eliminate themselves from the kingdom with their stumblings and falling aways comes next in: (1) the unsound doctrines of people like the Pharisees who substitute the laws and teachings of men on marriage and divorce, and outright rebellion against God on the subject as Jesus taught in Mark 10:1-12; (2) those who forbid Jesus to touch the little children received the rebuke of Jesus of how the very kingdom of God is like little children in Mark 10:13-16; (3) how a grown up rich young
ruler who kept the Ten Commandments outwardly and according to the moral majority, must like a little child also give up priority for the other toys of great possessions in his life in favor of the cross and treasure in heaven, in Mark 10:13-22; and (4) when the disciples could not take the dominant concept of God's blessings of prosperity the equivalent of salvation, like many evangelists can not do today, Jesus explains what is impossible with men is possible with God, Mark 10:23-31. Is he talking about the same thing, all the way from the discussion with the disciples about who will be the greatest in the kingdom, through the other disciples, and cup of water, and stumbling and little children, and hell, right up to disputations with the Pharisees over the very popular marriage and divorce, to the rich young ruler with the subsequent explanation of who can be saved by the power of God. Yes, you see that as Jesus adds the final comments at the end of this greatness in the kingdom of God passage, in Mark 9:33-10:31.

“But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” (Mark 10:31)

They are still in the kingdom of God; and will be part of the kingdom of God that spreads out from Jerusalem to the whole world: but some will be last and some first. You know the saying, “Be careful what you say to a fellow employee as you may be working for him someday.” Even so be careful of your treatment of the first and last tares, the first and last wheat, and the others as they may wind up being first in the government of the kingdom of God as finalized at the end of time.

Condensed Version with Comments

Mark 10:32-34: A third Forecast by Jesus of His death and resurrection. There is absolutely no entrance into the kingdom of God now or when it comes to fruition as the new heaven and new earth, and Jesus continues, a third time, to teach his disciples on the imminent necessity of His death and resurrection. Does He add anything to this third teaching as compared to the other two. Yes, as we previously discussed, He gives them more details designed to engender faith, just like the predicted details of the Old Testament about the crucifixion and resurrection can engender faith in Jesus as the Promised Messiah-Christ. You
recall. How He will be betrayed to the chief priest himself, with the scribes, who are already trying to kill Him; how they will sit in judgment on Jesus to condemn Him in a mock trial and then deliver Him to the Romans to be crucified, since the Jews under the government of the Roman Empire can not themselves legally bring the penalty of death;

Mark 10:35-45: Greatness or Firstness or Pre-eminence in the Kingdom of God comes by serving fellow-members of the kingdom. Look at the ones today who have taken first place in the kingdom by first places in their churches and denominations, then you will see the ones that are going to be last. The ones that are going to be first, no doubt, you will not see on TV or at the head of a group, but they work quietly and hidden as they work as a servant of the other children of God and of faith. {I think also we must add as we get further into the Falling Away, that even as Jesus will hear after the Second Coming from many of these firsters of the great works they have done for Him, and have to say depart from me you that work iniquity because I never knew you, even so during the Falling Away there will be more and more of the Tares and less and less of the Wheat.}

Chapter 8: How Did It Get So Personal So Quickly.

Immediately after Jesus' first prediction of His death and resurrection in Mark 8:31-33, which of course is also immediately behind the confession of faith from Peter, is the mention of the necessity of a personal cross. This is somewhat surprising, for hardly had the disciples puzzled over His own death on a cross, then He speaks about for them also a cross. Surely, the thought must have entered their mind that all of them were going to Jerusalem in order to be crucified on a cross. No, it turns out that their cross was to be taken up immediately, even before Jerusalem; but we must develop that in this book, and also how the disciples might have even suspected that the death Jesus foretold was to be by crucifixion. First of all, all Palestinians knew that only Rome could legally put a person to death, and that all executions were by the cross. Of course, Jesus had told them in the words of Mark 8:31-33 that the rejection would start with the chief priests and ruling body of the Jewish people, who
would hardly have been expected to do anything illegal without a mock trial. It got intense for the disciples now. Immediately behind their puzzlings of the leaven of the Pharisees, and Peter’s confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and then followed swiftly by Jesus’ first prediction of His death and resurrection, comes this first mention of the personal cross that they must bear.

“When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, ‘Whosoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” (Mark 8:34)

Those had to be scary words coming right behind the prediction of His own pending death which must come by way of a cross. It would sound to them at first as if He were calling them, and notice Jesus before teaching this called all of the people around Himself as well as the chosen twelve disciples, to go with Him to Jerusalem in order to be crucified with Him. No, He was inviting them to be crucified with Him, but even before Jerusalem. Paul would later make that clear in the writing of Galatians 2:20; of course, of which John Mark was well aware at the time of his writing of Mark, from their time together in the missionary journeys. {At some point, we might need to discuss how much John Mark knew about the teachings and meanings of the teachings of Jesus, at the time He wrote compared to what the twelve understood at that point, and how much understanding from the rest of the Bible should be allowed to crept into a study of Mark. The preliminary answer is all of it, although we want to have some appreciate for the step-by-step teachings of Jesus to His disciples to elicit faith and discipliship. However, since we have all of the recorded truth of the letters of Paul, of the four Gospels, and of the Old Testament, we cheat ourselves in an effort to learn the total truths from God if we neglect any of it. I know that Mark in the writing of the life of Jesus, likewise a story of the cultivation of faith in the disciples, struggled often with an urge to preach the whole message of the New Testament; at least what he knew of it. And what we will find is that Jesus exposed His first disciples to far more than they could immediately understand, even with the later help of the Holy Spirit to guide them, and that Jesus had to call, after His
Ascension, a scholar like the Apostle Paul to explain in great detail, with the writing of 14 books of the New Testament, what Jesus had only time to mention.}

Harmony on the Personal Cross

What we might do is to look at the other four Gospel writers from a harmony of the Gospels to see what they heard Jesus teach at this point in His life? It is number 83 in Robertson’s HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS, in the section he harmonizes under “The Special Training of the Twelve Around Galilee.” {Matthew 16:21-26 and Luke 9:22-25 with Mark 8:31-37, and for several reasons to be discussed later Robertsons harmonizes the other three Gospels, John of course not on this passage, around Mark.} Looking at only the comparable verse or verses of this section of the life and teachings of Jesus, we find the following.

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?” (Matthew 16:21-26)

Matthew did hear the same thing as Mark, it is only that Matthew talks about disciples while Mark talks about the people and His disciples, no doubt, Matthew including those people as disciples as many disciples existed at that time beyond the twelve. It would seem that Mark, even like Paul, would like to emphasize more the extensive nature of disciplisship of all who would take up a cross and deny self, both Jews and Gentiles. {Remember that some thing of Mark as the Gospel to the Romans.} Mainly, we begin to understand the nature of the personal cross as: (1) a self denial of pleasures of this world and self direction of life; (2) following in the same paths as Jesus, although that path may not be exactly the same as crucifixion in Jerusalem by the Roman government; (3) a lose of life as the world thinks of life, and for the sake of Jesus which by the way is the only real way to find “life” itself—the subtle implications here that was more food for thought for disciples was that finding this life was both an eternal life and and special blessings in this life; (4) Jesus makes the
contrast that goes with the cross of what is the profit in gaining all that the world offers as compared to eternal life. Along with a cross, this is another word, the word “world” that Jesus offers to puzzle the disciples along with cross. It is a word that Paul will explain, but primarily the Apostle John with years to ponder after the Ascension of Jesus and with the help of the Holy Spirit will explain in I John 2:15-17.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (I John 2:15-17)

What is the world as defined by Jesus and clarified by His Apostle John? It is three things, and that summarizes all that we know of this world in which we live, America or otherwise: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Lust is “wants” or “desires” of this life that tend to control our life and motivations; and we should contrast pride of life, forbidden here, with the love of the good life which the Apostle Peter recommends in I Peter 3:10-12 {by the way a quote from Psalm 34:12-16} which is essentially living a long time and in peace, also so restraining talking evil, doing good, seeking the peace of righteousness that it pushes out the negatives of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. {Peter also mentions righteousness and prayer, which we must also do later in justice to total truth of and from God.}

We have yet to look at Luke 9:22-25 from the Harmony with Mark on the personal cross.

“And he said unto all {well, with “all” you can see that both Mark and Luke, and I would think that by way of encouragement from Paul would emphasize the wide-spread nature of discipliship beyond that of the twelve}, If any man {you can see that the “any man”, Jew or Gentile, would certainly go with the all} would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, {Luke adds the “daily” which I am sure
that Jesus also said; but even if Luke added the total of what Jesus meant as later explained to Paul and Paul to Mark and Luke, then would that not be okay with us in the nature of getting at total truth.) and follow me.” (Luke 9:25)

And I like the translation of Luke as “losing his own self”, giving us also the full meaning from Jesus of how the real self is gained with the losing of the world. The real self is what God and God through Jesus wants for our life. Now, you can not get any more personal than that; and clearly we see that all of the disciples heard Jesus talk about the nature of the cross that not only had to be taken up for discipliship, starting then and before Jerusalem, but also was to be a daily thing starting immediately.

{I am sure it took a while for the disicples, the twelve as well as the crowd of disciples, to learn this. We know that one of the select twelve, Judas, never learned it; and that he considered 12 pieces of silver of this world more important than Jesus. He just could not get rid of the materialistic nature of a kingdom of God like the kingdom of David, and right now instead of at the end of time.}

You know this is a fate of a Tare for which we should have some pity and tolerance. Once a Tare, always a Tare, and there is nothing that they can do about it. At least, when someone is stumbling or has been offended, there can be hope still that they are among the wheat. A Tare, like with Lazarus and the rich man, of whom Jesus said the rich man received his reward in the comforts of this life, must also receive all his rewards in this life as there will be zero for him, even torture, in the life to come, and eternally.

Back to a Condensed Version with Comments

However, the comments are getting ahead of the condensed version of Mark itself, so that we will take up again with Mark 10, yet keep in mind that we must come back time and time again to previous chapters and verses for more comments. {I think we see the wisdom of the teaching method of Jesus, which the Spirit of Jesus started in the Old Testament, where you go from the start to the end, and then repeat with more detail, until you have exhausted every mountain peak and valley. Daniel did it; Jesus did it in Matthew 24 and Mark 13; and
the Ascended Christ did it through the Apostle John in the book of Revelation.}

Mark 10:35-45: While Jesus just before this makes the third prediction of His death and resurrection, and we must keep in mind that is the prime thrust now of His teaching as we head toward the end of Mark in Mark 16, still He continues to clarify characteristics of kingdom membership. Still He must deal with the dissensions and divisions among His own disciples, recalling that there is still one there that is a Tare, Judas. The Apostles James and John asked for special favor when the kingdom finds fulfillent. They wanted to seat at the right and left hand of Jesus. What do we learn about the coming fulfillment of the kingdom from what Jesus then teaches? (1) Positions in the finalized kingdom have already been determined by God the Father; (2) Positions in the finalized kingdom are for whom they have been prepared; (3) positions in the kingdom are based on the amount of suffering for Jesus on this earth; (4) positions in the kingdom are based on the amount of servitude to fellow citizens in this kingdom on earth; (5) postions in the kingdom will be a surprise to all as many of the first in this world will be last and the last will be first, get ready for it; and (5) Jesus greatly advances the argument with other puzzling words, that of “drinking the cup” and being baptized, both not references to the Lord’s Supper or water baptism, but reference to a baptism and drinking the cup of suffering for Jesus; and (6) primarily we should see here that the custom among the Gentiles, every prevalent in America today and of American churches, for control and supervision should cause all to heed the challenge of servitude over supervision. {By the way in order to further understand the govenment of the fulfilled kingdom since we already know it to be over a multitude so much larger than one country, we should add that Jesus told the twelve in Matthew 19:28 that when He reigned on His throne during the “regeneration” that the twelve will also sit on 12 thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Yes, Judas will not be there; but I think Paul will be on one of those 12 thrones over the regenerated nation of Israel; and this regenerated nation is also something that we must consider again, later.} Furthermore we get some more insight into this cross that Jesus is about to take upon Himself in Jerusalem as "to give His life a
ransom for many” (Mark 10:45) Is this the first mention of ransom in Mark, or do we find it previously mentioned? Wham...bang, the disciples were hit again. First the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus in three days, then the personal cross, then the difference between the world and the Father, and the Lord’s Supper and baptism as suffering, and now Jesus is giving up His life as a ransom for me. What happened a few verses before, and in Mark 10:32-34, as they saw Jesus headed toward Jerusalem, and “they were amazed” and “they were afraid”, became more puzzling. I can easily think that they walk that road to Jerusalem dizzily, or in a daze. But we do not find a previous usage of “ransom” in Mark. In fact the only other place we find it in the four Gospels is in Matthew 20:28. You might think, at first, that this is the place in Matthew 20 which harmonizes with Mark 10; and so it is. The wording in Matthew 20:28 is very similar to that of Mark 10:45, “…and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Loss of Servitude over Supervision with Loss of Kingdom Emphasis

How often do you hear of the kingdom of God as contrasted to how often do you hear of the local church, the body of Christ of the church, or of denominations and other man-made groups? Seldom is the kingdom of God mentioned, and that silence surely correlates with the lack of servitude over supervision. The whole world wants to supervise, lording it over a local church or denomination like a Rick Warren or a first in the kingdom. And why do you think there is so little discussion of the kingdom. That is what is going to take over the world at the end of time when the old heaven and old earth pass away and that governs over the new heaven and the new earth. While the headquarters will be at Jerusalem, with the demand that all come there to worship, and with the New Jerusalem which is lowered down from heaven, the multitude of kingdom members will be so large with accumulated believers from the beginning of time until the end, that many nations will be governed out of Jerusalem and Israel, and many more thornes will be sat upon in other nations like the 12 apostles will sit on the thrones of Israel. I think we are even materialistic in our concepts of the spiritual. We want to see new and large brick buildings as representative of the local
church; and we want to hear of largeness and financial resources
and vast organizations with a lot of high-price administration in
our denominations, even of the summer camps as a symbol of
wealth. We do not want to hear of any invisible, whether it is the
total church which is the body of Christ or of the kingdom. And I
think this is one reason that the fundamentalists so easily bought
the inadequate and superficial teachings of Scoffield and Darby
on a thousand year kingdom. They still want that materialism of
a thousand years in their own homes and on their own lands and
with their own positions that they have now.

If Jesus were preaching today, do you not think that you would
hear the same message that He preached to the masses, and
individually to the twelve. Certainly, it would be the same “gospel
of the kingdom”; and indeed it is to the extent that we are faithful
to the total content of the Gospels and the Bible. Pick and chose,
hunt and peck methology in Bible study, preaching, and teaching
will not get it. There has to be a thorough chapter by chapter
and book by book exegesis of the Bible much like B. H. Carroll
went through the whole Bible in his lectures with the start of
Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, now in the commentaries
AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE. The hunt
and peck method of Bible teaching and preaching not only grows
generations of a lack of soundness in doctrine, but also promotes
the intolerance toward sound doctrine which comes with the
Falling Away. Kingdom is mentioned approximately 54 times in
Matthew, 19 times in Mark, and 44 times in Luke. Most of these,
of course, came from Jesus Himself. How often do you hear of
the kingdom from your pulpit as compared to local church, church
activities, and even the total body of Christ, the one church?
Why do you think that is? Because service in the kingdom of
Christ is non-exclusive; there is no profit or credit for the local
church in kingdom service; and kingdom service is not considered
a function of the pastor in order to earn his salary. We have
lost something, and that something is a proper perspective on
the kingdom of Christ. If Christ were here today in person, He
would have the same message of the 117 times the word kingdom
is used. In fact if you were to contrast the messages of Jesus
in the New Testament, with their kingdom content, you will find
little mention of kingdom in all the other New Testament books.
Why, I think it is because of all other major Bible doctrines,
Jesus so developed the concept and characteristics of the
kingdom, that He did not need to give Paul further revelations on the matter. {Of course, you will remember that Paul through his manuscripts and books left with Mark and Luke that guided in their kingdom emphasis, and when we come to that chapter in this book we will want to see where Mark and Luke used the word “kingdom” independent of a quote from Jesus; and you will also recall that Paul left specific Old Testament quotes with both writers, some quotes from the Old Testament on the kingdom, and that also we want to check out as we get into the “kingdom” emphasis in the book of Mark as well as the rest of the Bible.}

Chapter 9: Kingdoms in Mark & the Bible.

The outline of Mark developed in SNATCHING, STUMBLING, AND THE FALLING AWAY, centering around “kingdom” as well as Old Testament quotes and the 35 miracles of Jesus in Mark, will be used here as a summary of what Jesus and Mark had to say about the “kingdom”. Also we must add some others, especially on the characteristics of kingdom membership as given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and as recorded in Matthew 24. Likewise we must look at some perspective on the everlasting kingdom as contrasted to all kingdoms of this world as Gabriel lead Daniel to understand, and of course, a little from the book of Revelation where the “kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And ultimately we must ask ourselves, what difference would it make in our attitude and work for Christ if we add an attitude more like Christ about the kingdom, local church, one church, and denominations; and beyond that what difference would it make in our attitudes toward the wheat and the tares.

Kingdom in Daniel

In order to appreciate the “concept” of the kingdom of God in Mark and the rest of the Bible we need the background which was also in the minds of Jesus’ disciples on Daniel. It is in Daniel that we get the real contrast between the kingdoms of this world like Persia, Greece, and Rome and the kingdom of God. Does it surprise you that the word “kingdom” is used 44 times in the book of Daniel? While Daniel is explaining the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:36, it is with the words of how the
king is a "king of kings", and how the God of heaven has given him a kingdom. In 2:39 God through Daniel predicts history after Nebuchadnezzar of how another but inferior kingdom will arise, and then a third kingdom of bronze but which will rule over the whole earth. {Can not help but add here that when we come later to the kingdom of Christ, yes it is also part of Daniel, that while at first it does not rule over the whole earth, and even loses some ground and numbers during the Falling Away as the refinement process kicks in and with the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit; then end goal and fulfillment of the kingdom of Christ will be to rule over the whole new earth under the new heavens.} You know one of the most un-appreciated passages of the New Testament, and yet one of the most significant is found in I Corinthians 15 tells about the Second Coming of Christ and of how Christ will deliver the kingdom up to God the Father.

“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. {This is a different Christ from the Christ who came first, or it would almost seem; but rather while His goal was only to establish the kingdom at His first Coming, giving many thousands the opportunity to join, the purpose of His Second Coming is to establish the kingdom as the absolute rule over the earth, then deliver that very kingdom to God the Father. He will in the process destroy all other rules, authorities, and power. While we think often of the destruction of the heavens and the earth that must take place before the Second Coming, we tend to think little of the governments and kingdom rules that Christ must destroy in order to rule supreme.} For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. {you know how death and Satan and the man of sin with his army will be among the last rules and authorities to be destroyed}... The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For ‘He has put all things under His feet’ {here Paul quotes from Psalm 8:6}. But when He say ‘all things are put under Him,’ it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”
I want to say this respectfully; however to say it, that Christ had to do all the dirty work at the First Coming and the Second. At the first coming, He gave His life a ransom for many as He died on the cross for the sins of the world. At the second coming God the Father is standing by as Christ subjects all remaining on the earth to Himself. Of course, we know from Revelation and other Scriptures that the thousands of thousands and ten thousands times ten thousands of the angels of God will assist Christ in that dirty work of the Second Coming. Jesus said that He could have also called them to assist during the First Coming, in the Garden when Peter drew the sword; but the crucifixion was the plan and purpose of God for the salvation of the world, at least of that part of the world that had eyes to see and ears to hear. And even this we must attach a grain of salt, because the Scriptures tell us that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” And I think we get something of the pain that God the Father suffered as He had to turn His back on Christ temporarily at death on the cross as the pain was to great to look. We see this in the parable, which Jesus got from God the Father and delivered to the world, of the wicked winedressers as They teach of how the tenant farmers killed the owners only Son, the one remaining messenger He could send to get the fruit of the land. How is Jesus going to do this dirty work of government and rule destruction at the end of time? We will come to it in more detail later as we look at the cycles of Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation, but suffice it to say for now that the elements melting with a fervent heat, after the great and real battle of Armagaddeon in the middle east, being set up right now as the forces of Mohammed align against that of the West and Democracy...that is, the elements melting with a fervent heat will take care of government buildings and armies of other kingdoms, and then the Great Judgment with consignment of many rulers into hell with Satan and his angels, will take care of much of the governments. {I heard one preacher of unsound doctrine on the radio a Sunday morning, tell of how the fires of hell are not real heat or burning, but they just feel like it. Well... what can you say! If it smells like a duck and walks like a duck and looks like a duck then maybe it is a duck. And I'm afraid that such preachers are in the category of those so-called Bible scholars of many Universities who parade their Ph.Ds, and ignorance by the way under the disguise of the Jesus Seminar, having the nerve to vote whether Jesus really
claimed to be the Son of God, and denying among many other things that approximately two-thirds of the Gospel of John is actually the words of Jesus. These are they of which Paul wrote in II Timothy, who “overthrow the faith of some”; and those of whom Jesus said it would be better for them to have a millstone about their neck and be cast into a lake, than to offend the smallest member of the kingdom.}

Continuation of “kingdom” in Daniel

We need the “kingdom” background of Daniel, just like Mark and the first disciples had, when we come to understand what Jesus taught on the kingdom in the 117 times of the Gospels. {Actually when you add the 4 times of the Gospel of John, it is over 200 times.} In Daniel 2:40 the fourth “kingdom” is a kingdom of iron which like iron will shatter and break in pieces all the other kingdoms; and with the hind-sight of history we now know that to be the Roman Empire. It shattered into many divisions, but still ruled over the world for years. So that in 2:41 that kingdom of Rome is divided since the feet are iron and clay; and then in 2:44 we have the background that we need to proceed into a New Testament study of kingdom, the background of the eternal kingdom to be set up, the kingdom that Jesus Himself set up during the reign of the Roman Empire over Palestine.

“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” (Daniel 2:44)

Here we have the germ for what Jesus taught, and what Paul helped to explain in I Corinthians. (1) the God of heaven sets up an eternal kingdom, and the time of establishment is the time of those kings of the Roman Empire; (2) WE must ponder some of how “the kingdom shall not be left to other people” to mean that God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit intervene continuous in the health and welfare of this particular kingdom, much like the law of the Old Testament would not make fit citizens so Ezekiel predicts a new heart to do the will and ways of God; (3) Just like the Roman Empire breaks into many pieces, the kingdom of God will extend across the earth slowly consuming all other kingdoms—and the
exact process we have trouble appreciating here. We know how the Roman Empire of iron shattered and consumed the Greek and Persian kingdoms, but while the gospel has been spread to every nation as the fulness of the Gentiles has been ushered in, we do not see the world getting better and better like the kingdom of Christ is taking over and as the post-millineumists predict. How will the kingdom of God consume the others. Surely it must wait past the Falling Away, the shattering of the holy people of God completely of Daniel, past the influence and battle against the man of sin and Satan, past the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from earth, until Christ intervene in Person to protect the camp of the saints outside of Jerusalem, and Himself fight the great battle of Armagaddeon. \{If we find anything different in our study of Daniel and of Mark and the rest of the Bible on “kingdom”, we will of course modify this concept.\} (4). And this kingdom of God shall stand forever!

In Daniel 4:3 King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar introduces his second dream, having bought what Daniel told him about the first dream and the everlasting kingdom, with a tribute to the “wonders of the Most High God” and of how “His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom” whose “dominion is from generation to generation”. In Daniel 4:17,25, and 32 near the end of the King’s telling of the second dream, where he attributes the dream to an effort of the Most High to let the living know that He rules in the kingdom of men. \{This is a good testimony to God as the Great Maker of History who right now exerts a rule in the diverse kingdoms, here called one kingdom of the kingdom of men.\} It tells us two additional things about the kingdom of men, that (1) God gives the rule of the kingdom of men to whomever He wants, definitely a control over history; and (2) even sets over the kingdom of men the lowest of men. \{Certainly when we look at some of our Presidents over the United States, we would have to say that God has indeed set up over our kingdom some of the “lowest of men”.\} In Daniel 4:18 the reference is to the King’s own “kingdom”, a kingdom of which the wise men can not interpret his dream, so that he turns to Daniel for interpretation, knowing that he is able since “the “Spirit of the Holy God is in you.” \{Peter tells us that this Spirit is also the Spirit of Christ who moved Holy men of God like Daniel.\} In Daniel 4:26, part of Daniel’s interpretation of the second dream, and after the bad news of how the King will be crazy for a while, is of how his “kingdom” is
assured of existence by God after the King learns that “Heaven rules”. {I am inclined to think that heaven is ruling far more than we know in the history of nation, in the acts of nature, and in governments and armies; and perhaps we can modify our concept of kingdom shattering the other kingdoms to find that God will consume many of these earthly kingdoms before the very end times of the Falling Away.} We could perhaps picture a time of no world powers and little government, perhaps a more nomadic time of little kingdoms and powers. We see that, if this is the case, we have a long ways to go with the elimination by God of such super-powers as the United States, China, and Russia, and even the European Community. {I will not at present go into the thoughts of the pastor of the largest church in the world, in Seoul, Korea who believes that the end anti-Christ, the man of sin and perdition, will be a Syrian Jew that is the leader of the European Union. Yes, he reads all of this out of the first cycles of Daniel; or is it that he reads this meaning into it in the desire for fame and notoriety.}

Daniel 4:29 refers again to the King’s palace of his kingdom where after 12 months past the dream interpretation, the fulfillment started, when as the King gloated over his kingdom of Babylon built by the power and glory of the King, a voice falling from heaven said, “the kingdom has departed from you” in 4:31. And after the King ceased to live like an animal, in 4:34 as he praises the Most High God with a “kingdom from generation to generation”, we learn more about this even-then rule of God: (1) His dominion is an everlasting dominion that started with Creation, simply becoming more evident as Jesus announced the characteristics of kingdom membership, and as Jesus showed how the kingdom of heaven had invaded, so to speak, the kingdoms of this world; (2) It is a kingdom, according to the King, where all the inhabitants of the earth are considered as nothing {you might consider the contrast here of the perspective of God as compared to our respect for numbers in nations, in churches, in universities and governments and government and church and university buildings; and how all this is just plain “nothing” to God}; (3) God rules an army in heaven which carries out His will and rule; (4) And God also does according to His own will here on earth, a testimony to God working through history from a king, almost heathen, and many years ago; (5) There is none on earth with enough power to restrain the hand of God; and (6) There is
none with enough wisdom, power, and status to say to God, “What have you done?” In Daniel 4:36 the King's reason returned to him at the same time as his "kingdom"; in Daniel 5:7, we have King Belshazzar on the throne of Babylon, ruler over the inferior kingdom to come behind Nebuchadnezzar, and after seeing at a feast with the vessels of the temple in Jerusalem a finger writing on the wall, offers to all the wise men of his kingdom a third of the kingdom if they can interpret the writing of the finger. As Daniel is brought in to interpret the finger on the wall, in 5:18, starts the explanation with how his King-father was given “a kingdom and majesty” from the Most High God; in 5:21 a re-cap of Daniel to the present king of how Nebuchanezzar, being lifted up with pride and gloating over his kingdom, was driven to become like an animal until he learned that “the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints whomever He choses” {And if that is not the Great Maker of History making history, what in the world is it, as God Himself choses the top leaders in the nations, some for good and some for evil.}

And from here on we will choice very discritionarily the ones on the kingdom, that will in particular help in our understand of the kingdom of God established by Christ and secured at His Second Coming. One such is the interpretation in Daniel 5:25-31 of the writing on the wall. Daniel said the inscription was: “MENE, MENE< TEKEL, UPHARSIN”: and the interpretation is “MENE” for God has numbered your kingdom and finished it {evidently the number of the days was completed by God because of the king's failure to acknowledge God}; “TEKEL” for God has weighed you in the balance of what it takes to be a king over the kingdom of men and found you wanting; and “PERES” for God has divided your kingdom and also given it to the Medes and Persians.

According to Daniel 5:30,31 that very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain; and Darius the Mede received the “kingdom” being 62 years old. Another such insight into the kingdom of God is when King Darius the Mede gives honor to the most high God in Daniel 6:24-27: (1) This God's kingdom is “the one which shall not be destroyed”; (2) His dominion endures to the very end of time; (3) This God as part of His kingdom rule “delivers and rescues”, works “wonders and signs” in heaven and earth, which of course would remind one of the rule of Jesus on earth during the first coming as He exercised authority over nature and healing: (4)
it is the same God who rules now by delivering Daniel from the Lion’s Den.

In Daniel 7:14, after Daniel himself had a dream and a vision of four beats, and while Daniel was writing down the dream in the book of Daniel, after the four beasts had their dominions taken away, He saw the second coming, not the First Coming {recall how Daniel and God through Daniel likes to go all the way to the end in a cycle, before later filling in the details. Well, here the first coming is bypassed temporary ion this first sweep in order to go all the way to the end cycle, to an everlasting dominion.} of the “Son of Man” {remember, how often in Mark and the other Gospels and Isaiah does Jesus refer to Himself as “the Son of Man”}. Here is the description is of this Jesus being given a kingdom like other king-beasts have been given a kingdom with the description of: (1) Coming with the clouds in heaven, which reminds us of the way Jesus ascended back to heaven, after His first coming; (2) Jesus, the Son of Man, presents Himself before the “Ancient of Days”, the One seated on the throne with the vast court before Him; (3) Jesus is given “dominion, glory, and power” {no wonder Paul after reading this wrote of Jesus as the name above every name}; (4) All nations, peoples, and languages will serve Him—that just about covers the whole world of the kingdom of men; (5) Jesus dominion is an everlasting dominion; (6) Jesus kingdom will have no end since it will not pass way; and (7) His kingdom is the only kingdom, which like all the other kingdoms of this world, will not be destroyed.

Fine Tunings of the “Kingdom” in Daniel and Mark

It is in the second cycle or sweep of Daniel, in Daniel 7:15-28, that we get some juicy details about the very end time as a judgment by the Most High still in court session is made in favor of the “saints to possess the kingdom” (7:22). The little horn was making war against the saints, which we know to be the man of sin or perdition with the help of Satan; the man of sin was “prevailing against the saints” {surely the same as the time when the power of the holy people is shattered}; when a Judgment was render from the eternal throne in favor of the saints {I’m sure this is also referenced in Revelation as the camp of the saints close to Jerusalem, which could be a close in heart as for example in the United States instead of a
The Message of the Writing Prophets

"Power of the holy people (Daniel 12:7) completely shattered."

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book; although he went with Barnabas on a second as Paul and Barnabas split; and of course near the end of Paul's life he told Timothy to bring John Mark as he was “profitable to me for the ministry”. I would call that a significant comeback in the eyes of the greatest of all Apostles, Paul, if not also in the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ. And just look at what the little Gospel of Mark has done for all of us, being an abbreviated and action version of the life of Jesus.

The Kingdom of the American Democratic Faith.

While much has been said in other chapters about the American Democratic Faith, and even more in previous books such as SOME MORE SOUNDS and THE SOUNDS OF SOUND FAITH, only now with a consideration of some of the meanings of “kingdom” can you appreciate the phrase of “the kingdom of the American Democratic Faith.” It is a kingdom of government, a kingdom of “ideas” and the intellectual and of the history of American thought, that like all other kingdoms of men will be shattered ultimately by the kingdom of God and Christ. {Rather than repeat all the time the kingdom of God and Christ, we can easily just write the kingdom of God, especially since we know according to II Corinthians that when Christ ultimately reigns supreme over all men, then Christ will deliver this kingdom to God the Father.}

I think hardly anyone would deny the influence of the United States in the world today and as a super-power, especially after the demise of Russia as a legitimate super-power, and the influence that the United States has in the world in the direction of the American Democratic Faith. Indeed, some speculate, legitimately so that since there were no real weapons of mass destruction as a cause for attack in Iraqi, that the United States had the goal of a certain liberalization of the Middle East in the favor of democracy and of the nation of Israel. And certainly as all rules of men must be shattered by the kingdom of God before the end, so also the kingdom of the American Democratic Faith must be overthrown in favor of the faith of the Bible and of Christ. Could it be that when in Daniel, the power of the Holy people is shattered—indicating that even the power of the saints must be shattered by the kingdom of God, that it closely relates to a demise in the super-power status of the American Democratic Faith, synonymous no doubt with the completion of the Fulness of the Gentiles and the gospel being
spread to every nation?

Well, again back to the Condensed Version with Comments with some of The 35 Miracles of Mark

**Mark 10:46-52:** A touch of faith without the touch of Jesus as the blind man Bartimaeus is healed of his blindness. Jesus did not have to touch a person in order for them to be healed as we saw previously about the Greek woman of Mark 7:24-30 who came home to find that Jesus had healed her daughter from a distance, in response to her saying of faith about the dogs eating crumbs of the table. Does this incident of faith healing on the part of Jesus help us in any way in dealing with the charlatans today, or is it that we must exercise a toleration for them as of another group more than even of the toleration of the Tares. WE do know that at the judgment many will refer to the marvelous works that they have done in the name of Jesus in order to hear Jesus respond with, “I never knew you. You that work iniquity.” And we know that of all the marvelous works that we can think of today which would help so-called Christian workers to deceive themselves into their “marvelous works” at the head of the list, along with building large church buildings and donating vast amount of moneys and occupying large places of church government, would be the marvelous meetings of faith healing. *(A little reality from Jesus does make you stop and think on the realities of the Toleration of the Tares.)*

That lesson for us is: (1) immediately the man received His sight when Jesus said he was made whole; and (2) Jesus said His “faith has made you whole”. It was the man’s own faith which made Him whole, which of course, makes us think that if a person has faith to be made whole in a distant meeting with a famous faith-healer, that they also have faith to be healed on the road, or anywhere else God is. You will recall, by the way, that Jesus saw God healing from heaven for thousands of years; and He said that is where He learned it.

**Chapter 10:** “Hear Him”

God Himself told three of the first disciples—James, John, and Peter—to listen to Jesus; and you need to listen carefully when Jesus teaches something, in a parable or otherwise; for there
is far more to what He is teaching than the obvious. Take for example when He told the story of Lazarus and the rich man, and how the rich man had received his rewards while here on earth, the natural conclusion being that a person can so live in this world as to receive all the good rewards that he is going to get. It would seem that so to live also eliminates the possibility of rewards in eternal life, making possible only the bad compensations of hell. Would you think that also, those of other groups from the twelve, might receive a reward in this life from giving a cup of water to a disciple in the name of Jesus, that does not imply eternal reward; and the Tares, what are we to think of the Mormon Tares and the Roman Catholic Tares as it is so obvious that they continue the works of false teachers and anti-Christ. Then we must come to the Falling Away that must also encompass all the churches and denominations of the United States; and having already the examples first of the Roman Catholics and of the Mormons, how much further can they also go in a falling away from God, Christ, and the Bible. Church attendance may go up during the Falling Away, although as Daniel writes “the power of the holy people will be destroyed completely.” The Holy Spirit will be withdrawn at the end of the Falling Away, and the influence of the wheatly people of God will diminish to nothing in the world. You still will not be able to tell the difference between the tares and the wheat until the work of Christ at the Second Coming, although there will be some separation of the two in the refinement and making white of Daniel during the Falling Away; but the key to the Falling Away is to make the wrong seem right, unsound doctrine and behavior seem like sound doctrine, to make the angels of darkness look like the angels of light, the man of sin look like god and take a place of leadership in the temple, and the false prophets and teachers take over the spiritual leadership. Can it be done? Of course, it will be done; and it is already being done among those two groups mentioned above. It was also done in 6 out of 7 of the first churches of Asia Minor. Can it be done? It is inevitable! Like the members of the seven churches, we must learn to listen individually to the Jesus who continues to speak to us in the remaining spirits of our heart; and although we will find it impossible to close the increasing gap between Christ and the churches, we can find individual assurance in what Jesus and God, at home in our hearts, have to say to us individually. Remembering if not the individual messages to individual members of the seven churches, then remembering Daniel on the Falling Away as those
that are wise will shine as the firmament and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars. \{We will want to make sure that we will therefore in this chapter consider something of “rightness” or “righteousness”, and something of listening to Jesus on wisdom.\} We must remember that even the Prophet Moses told of the Messiah to come, which Moses effectively referred to as the Prophet Messiah; and of how Moses warned to the nation of Israel that they must listen to this Prophet like himself, this Prophet Messiah, lest they would be cut off from the land and from the designation as the people of God. Listen to Moses briefly before we listen more to Jesus Himself.

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.... I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.” (Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19)

Mark 4

And we must go back to Mark 4 where we discussed as Jesus presented the reason for teaching in parables to begin a more thorough look at what Jesus really taught in parables. The big parable with explanation from Jesus Himself to the twelve, just after laying out the purpose of parables; and of how “all things are spoken in parables” (4:11) to those who are outside the kingdom, is the Parable of the Sower. I think I can safely say that this is the biggest, most significant parable that Jesus taught: no only did it explain what was about to be the response of Israel to His teachings as only approximately 25% believed, the equivalent of the seed sown on good ground with multi-fruit, compared with the 75% respectively of sown by the wayside, seed sown on stony ground, and seed sown among thorns. Jesus explains the three unfruitful efforts at sowing the seed of faith as (1) sown by the wayside is where Satan immediately snatches away the seed; (2) sown on stony ground is more complicated, as it is immediately received with gladness simulating the conversion experience and leading evangelists, pastors, and churches to think that the new birth has instantly taking place and filling churches with Tares; (3)
seed sown among thorns are when some church members hear the word, but three things choke out the Word which we can easily recognize as influences in our churches today, especially where the preaching of the Gospel of Prosperity is often heard—the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and other things keep the word from being fruitful. By the way another thing that happens when the seed of faith is sown on stony ground is that there can be no root to the life, and when tribulations and persecution which of necessity must come and for the sake of the Word, immediately such a church member stumbles. Does the stumbling not remind us of one who causes offences against the smallest of a kingdom member, which by way of analogy, we would say is one of the church members, pastor or evangelists, or others, who leads that stony heart where the seed was sown to go in the direction of tribulations and persecutions. You know what I mean, many are the churches including one of the largest in Houston where faith must be tested by encouraging members to step in every mud puddle visible and to surround themselves with problems. {It is considered an appropriate challenge to faith. We will try to express the gist of this parable and the other parables in one concise sentence. First, however, a parable of 3:20-27 which we previously discussed, but have yet to express in a concise sentence.}

Gist of Parable #1 (A House Divided Cannot Stand, Mark 3:20-27): Since Jesus heard the scribes from Jerusalem saying that Jesus cast out Satan by the power of Satan, He told the foolishness of Satan casting out Satan, of a kingdom divided against itself, and of a strong man that must first be overcome in order to rob his house. {We will have to ponder if we can apply this to the tares and the wheat. Certainly the scribes would be among the equivalent of the tares, and if Jesus was casting out demons therefore on the side of the kingdom of God, then the tares have to be on the other side of the divided kingdom.}

Gist of Parable #2 (The Seed and the Sower, Mark 4:1-9 and 4:13-20): Four human responses come when people hear the Word of faith, only one of which is fruitful that sown on good soil, and the other three would compare to by the wayside—Satan snatches it immediately—seed sown on stony ground and received with gladness like an instantaneous new birth but there is no root
and with tribulation and persecution, they are caused to stumble,
and seed sown among thorns where the cares of this world, the
deceitfulness of riches, and other things choke it out.

Gist of Parable #3 (Light under a bushel, Mark 4:21-25): The
lamp bought not to be put under a basket or bed is the beginning
of a short parable with several implications: (1) the hidden and
secret comes to light with the lamp in the proper place; (2) In
the nature of the understanding of parables, in order to have
ears to hear, what is heard and utilized will determine what more
understanding comes; and (3) the opposite is true, whoever listens
a little only will have even that taken away.

Gist of Parable #4 (The Mustard Seed, Mark 3:30-32): This is also a short parable, sometimes the most difficult; but
certain tells us something of the kingdom of God, as Jesus says
what the kingdom of God is like; and replies that it is like a grain
of mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds when it is sown, but
which grows up larger than all herbs. {I think that Jesus is
telling us with respect to the kingdom of the Roman Empire
and of Greece and even of the Persians, the kingdom which
Jesus is about to make evident on earth, the kingdom of
God, that it starts small and with years grows big. One
reason that it grows big, because unlike other kingdoms, it
has no end; but continues as long as time continues, to grow.}
As we hopefully and quickly pass, at least once, all the way to
the end of Mark in chapter 16, we would want to include not
only the life and teachings of Jesus, but also how the people
of His generation reacted or responded to them. We will
separate the more general type of responses from those which
were positive indications or teachings on the Falling Away.

Falling Away #1 (In the Purpose of Parables, Mark 10-12):
The quote from Isaiah 6:9,10 should certainly be considered a lot
of seed being sown by the wayside, where the birds or Satan come
to snatch it away immediately, alias the people see and do not
perceive, they hear and not understand; and this prevents them
from turning around in order that their sins might be forgiven.

Falling Away #2 (At the End of the Parable of the light and
the basket, Mark 4:25): where the “whosoever does not have”
caused by not hearing and understanding, has even that taken away
which is a very good description over time of the Falling Away.

**Falling Away #3 (In the quote by Jesus of Isaiah 29:17):** of worship with lips without the heart, vain worship, and teachings of the commandments of men, like the Pharisees and Saducees, not hardly tares as they never claimed to enter the kingdom of Jesus, but certainly of the seed sown by the wayside, that with the work of Satan on such a sad heart, never stood a chance.

**Response #1 in Mark 8:31-33 and Falling Away #4:** This response of Peter to Jesus’ teachings on His impending death and resurrection was a rebuke by Peter, which is turn received a rebuke from Jesus of “Get behind Me, Satan.” And the Falling Away #4 is in the 33 verse with the rest of the response from Jesus to Peter of “For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” And of course, while this attitude of “things” and “mammon” over God could lead, and often does lead to the Falling Away, we know that while Peter stumbled in unbelief and even denial for a while, he did not fall away from God, Christ, and the truth of the Word.

**Falling Away # 5** comes in Mark 8:34-38 in the self denial and personal cross teachings of Jesus: as at the Second Coming he who has fallen so far away as to be ashamed of Jesus and His teachings will likewise be ashamed at the result during the Second Coming.

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Condensed Version with Comments

**Mark 11:1-24:** The Triumphant Entry as related to the kingdom of God, the withered fig tree, the judgment on the temple, and the explanation of the parable of the withered fig tree.

**Mark 11:25,26:** Prayer with forgiveness as necessary for entrance into the kingdom of God. And at this point we should briefly consider the Sermon on the Mount as given in more detail in Matthew 24 as to exactly what attitudes we must assume in order to be legitimate citizens of the kingdoms. They are given in the “blessings”, the so-called “beautitudes of Jesus and God.

**Response #2 is the way the three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration reacted to what happened and what God said about listening to Jesus:** as they came down the mountain Jesus commanded them to tell noone what they had seen until after His
own resurrection, and their reaction was that they pondered it over in their heart, puzzled at what the resurrection from the dead meant.

Response #3, also from the twelve, was also after a prediction of His death and resurrection in Mark 9:30-32: The response was simple, they did not understand and they were afraid to ask.

Falling Away #6 is implied in Mark 9:49,50 about worthless salt: when all members of the kingdom are tested with fire and when every sacrifice for the kingdom is seasoned with a grain of salt, if the salt has lost its distinctness and flavor, then it can not season the sacrifice of service. However the disciples, except for Judas, prevented this loss of flavor in service by heeding what Jesus said about, “Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.” (Mark 9:50)

Falling Away #7 is definite in Mark 10:22 as the rich young ruler: goes away sad at Jesus recommendation to sell all he has and give to the poor, then to take up the cross, just like he told other disciples, and follow Him; and the rich young ruler went away sad because he had great possessions. Remember in the parable of the seed and the sower how cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches are like thorns which choke out the seed of the Word of faith.

Mark 11:27-33 through Mark 12:12. The atypical attitude of Israel that brought on the curse of the withered fig tree, the abomination of desolation, and the lack of salvation one year after the Messiah was cut off. And so important was this for the people of Israel to see, especially the approximately 100,000 that would be converted in the next year, and the apostles, that Jesus reinforces the teachings of 1:27-33 with the parable of the wicked vinedressers in Mark 12:1-12, also including in the parable a quote from the Old Testament that predicts and describes the rise and fall of the nation of Israel. They were builders for many years, and how beautiful were the stones of the Temple and the city they built; however, according to David in Psalm 118:22,23, they rejected the chief cornerstone that was selected by God Himself even as He though Ezekiel selected the exact pattern of
the building of the second temple.

“This was the LORD’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.” (Psalm 118:22,23 and Mark 12:11) {GOD DID IT!}

Mark 12:13-17: The relationship between the kingdom of the Roman Empire and the kingdom of the Death and Resurrection of Christ given in the parable of Caesar and the coin of the Roman Empire.

Mark 12:18-27: How does the kingdom of the death and resurrection of Christ relate to the subsequent resurrection from the dead of His disciples.

Mark 12:35-44: How does the kingdom of the death and resurrection of Christ relate to the Kingdom of David, to the religious leaders of Israel, and to a poor widow that gives her all.

Mark 13:1-37: How does the kingdom of the death and resurrection of Christ relate to the existing Temple, the abomination of desolation of Daniel, and to the end times and the Second Coming.

Chapter 11: The Tares and the Kingdom

You have heard about or read B. F. Skinner's BEYOND FREEDOM AND DIGNITY which advocates that the American and worldwide problems are not to great to be settled if we continue to allow for human freedom and human dignity. In other words, you can not solve them if you let people have freedom of choice, speech, and the other freedoms, and if you do not allow State control to have dominance over even the human dignity of control over their own children. This challenges our thinking; but there is another challenge to our thinking, say let us call it convenient church and community thinking, that goes beyond the obvious of government and dominant world movements. Beyond government and dominant world movements is an underground movement, moving always slow and unwavering, which is seeking to bring about the will of God on earth to the same extent that the will of God is
done in heaven. Have you ever stopped to think of all the choices that God had in heaven of living souls from the beginning of time until the impending time of the death of Jesus, why God chose to send Moses and Elijah to encourage Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Stop to think about it, Moses at a critical time in the history of God's people, and for the future of the nation, made such a serious mistake in the striking of the rock at Horeb, that it prevented his entrance into the Promised Land. {Moses, of course, was not among the vast majority in the wilderness, all of those 21 and over except Caleb and Joshua, who were not allowed to enter eternal rest; and that is verified as you see him now with Jesus on the Mount. It was a critical time for Jesus and for the salvation of the world. He was thinking now even as He would pray later in the Garden, “If it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; but nevertheless not my will but Your will be done.” Like Moses and in anger, He did not want to strike the rock; and cease to be without sin, negating His own life as a sinless, perfect sacrifice on the cross for sins. Well, it was similar with Elijah. In the heat of the battle against Baal, the prophets of Baal, and King Ahab and Jezebel as well as the rebellion of the whole nation against God and toward idol worship, Elijah lost his temper when the tree did not provide shade for him, thinking as he stated that He alone was left as a loyal follower of God. {God had to assure him that He had in Israel 5,000 faithfuls who had not bowed their knee to Baal.} Elijah and Moses both could encourage Jesus in His monumental task of dying for the sins of the world not to sin under the pressure.

Well, what does all this about Moses and Elijah had to do with the kingdom of God and the tares in the kingdom? The main point is that we must get behind history, past and primarily present, to understand the very nature of the spiritual warfare that goes on here on earth and in America in 2006, and how it includes "high places" as well as the low places where we live and worship. Answers about the priority of the kingdom over local churches and the total body of Christ, and answers about what should be our attitudes toward the tares in the kingdom and local church will not come easy; and it requires far more than a superficial answer. We need to look deep into the mentality of a Pharisee and scribe, into a Moses and Elijah, of even a typical religious person during the generation of Christ in order to understand
what made them tick. Why did the religious leaders of Jesus' own generation reject Him, having seen enough miracle-signs to know that the power of God was with Him? Why did almost all of the children of Isarel—in fact all above 20 years of age except Moses, Joshua, and Caleb—not qualify for the eternal rest of God? And most importantly as there is nothing new under the sun, and people behave and react to God today as they have of old, what can we apply of the behavior of the majority in Isarel and of their religious leaders to the kingdom of God today and of the current religious leaders. Is it not possible that many denominational leaders of religion are just like the Pharisees and scribes of the nation of Israel? What is it that makes our American religious movements so much better than the Jews? Or, is it possible that they are not any better: not any different.

There are several Bible facts that can guide us into this serious look at ourselves and our churches today.

First, the majority far from being reliable is never right, in any generation or of any nation, even the greatest nation that has ever been on the face of the earth. It is true today and of our time like Jesus told in the parable of the majority and the minority. Most people go the broad way which leads to destruction as it is a broad and easy way, and few people go the narrow way which leads to life eternal since it is a narrow and difficult way. This is called taking the path of least resistance; and how subtle are the ways, as the tares travel down the broad way in which they justify themselves and rationalize behavior to look like the wheat while they enjoy the life of the tare.

Second, there are going to be a lot of surprises on the Judgment Day which contradict our easy way of community and church thinking. While many will say, “look at the marvelous works that we have done for you”, Christ will say, “get away from Me, you that work iniquity, I never knew you.” That is a shocker, right. And then there is the “last” and “first” concept from the teachings of Jesus. When He demanded service and service with salt from His disciples, He also told them that when all of on earth is settled up many of the religious first will be last and many of the religious last will be first. In short, we will be surprised as to who is sitting on the throne and ruling our little bit of the kingdom of God in the new earth. {I think what you are going to have to admit as we move along in this book and chapter is that God's thinking is not conventional and like ours. You will also have
to admit that Satan and the prince and power of this world is
more in control of conventional community thinking than God is,
although don't neglect that continuous, unstoppable underground
movement of the kingdom of God.)

Third, it is hard to shallow in our nation and time where
the “toleration” of the American Democratic thought is dominant
in community thinking that Jesus told the Pharisees and other
religious leaders that “you are of your father the devil”. We
just can not fathom, and do not want to fathom, the fact that
religious leaders can be under the control of Satan.

Fourth, we have not faced up to the realities of the Falling
Away, still thinking of it as something in the distant future and
on foreign soil. The Falling Away is for the most religious as
they must have some knowledge, experience, and works of God
in their lives in order to fall away from it. {Of course, we still
believe in the security of the believer, and as made clear in
SNATCHING, STUMBLING, AND THE FALLING AWAY, and
I hope echoed here, the reason for all the tares at the end
of time is shown in the parable of the Seed and the Sower,
with the Snatching of Satan, the Stumbling where there is
no root and the human tendency toward comfort and security;
and above all the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of
the Gospel of Prosperity. In short, many instantaneous new
birth happenings were not conversions at all.) And it is not a
falling away from church as church attendance may actually go
up, especially among the Roman Catholics and the Mormons, as
the world of unbelievers and the unrighteous are attracted to
them, even as to other large and unsound doctrine and practices
churches. It is a falling away from God, Christ, and the Bible as
the children of Israel did for 40 years in the wilderness in spite
of seeing many works and wonders of God. It is “an evil heart of
unbelief in departing from the living God.”

Fifth, we must learn to exercise “righteous judgment”. How Satan has deceived us along with a dominant attitude of
tolerance for almost anything, in perverting what the Bible says
on judgment, to keep us from making good decisions on what is
happening in our churches, denominations, and country today. We
do want to be judged by the same judgment, that is the truths of
the Bible, that we use to judge; and all those truths of the Bible,
and in depth, must be applied to our thinking, a real challenge to
thought, as we face what to do and how to do it with the Falling
Away in our local churches, denominations, and nation. So back
Moses' Sin at the Rock of Horeb

Often was the time when God wanted Moses to step aside so that He could destroy the children of Israel in their unbelief in the wilderness; and often Moses with patience pleaded for His own people, a people that God had chosen to be His own in a special way all the way back to Abraham. {Right now, we should straighten out another mis-conception of Abraham, the people of God, and the extent to which they were the chosen of God. When God said that He would bless the seed of Abraham, it was singular, and applied to Jesus Christ; and the reason God did not destroy the nation of Israel sooner was in order that Israel could be the nation of the birth of Christ. Of course, according to His promise to Abraham, he did make a great nation out of a rag-tag bunch of desert nomads, as they came to prominence under King Saul, David, and Solomon; but always consistent with a personal covenant between God and an individual, there were few really saved in the nation, just like the only three in the wilderness that were over 20 years of age. Of course, in order to be thorough and as Paul tells us in the book of Romans, in his answer to the question “what profit is it to be a Jew”, the Jews or Hebrews as they were called in most of their history, were chosen to be custodians of the oracles of God.}

It is true that God has always had a special place in His heart for Palestine and for Jerusalem in particular. And it is true that for many years He protected His chosen nation and their temple, until what they were doing in secret as recorded in Ezekiel was such a stench in His nostril that He rejected that nation. It did not happen in fact until after they were instrumental in the cutting off of the Messiah, the final rejection of the son of the vineyard owner, and it happened exactly as predicted in the book of Daniel, one year after they cut off the Messiah the Jews became an abomination and an abomination of desolation to God. While many thousands of Jews were saved during that one year, including thousands who came to Jerusalem for the first feast of the passover after the Ascension of Jews, you see how the dirth of the desolation continues even unto this day among the Jewish people. {Of course, we must allow that after the
fulness of the Gentiles is complete, there could be a revival for Jesus among the Jews; but often in the Scripture the “consummation” seems to be more for the New Jerusalem and the new Israel after the old has passed away. In other words, those many Hebrews throughout Old Testament and the beginning of New Testament times were saved, with a sprinkling of men like Hyman Appleman that we hear about occasionally that were marvelously converted, will make possible the consummation along with a multitude of Gentiles that no man can number.}

How can you admit the consistent message of the Prophets of how God controls nations, looking the same time on the blessings of God on the nation of the United States, and not believe that America was chosen as a nation of God’s people just like Israel was a chosen nation of God’s people. {Remember separate a chosen nation from salvation.} Surely the United States has had a special place in the Fulness of the Gentiles, being undoubtedly the world leader in godliness and evangelism in the world for many years; and surely in God’s plan to have the gospel preached to every nation, and “then shall the end come”, the United States with many missionaries and godly influences in the world has been the leader. However there are now many indications that the Fulness of the Gentiles are represented by America is over, as evangelization has reached every nation of the world, as American increasing is doing more counter to the will and way of God; and that God, and the angel that God has set over to watch the United States, have withdrawn the umbrella of their support. We see that in 9/11, in the many hurricanes striking this nation as the major of New Orleans noted in one of his recent speeches, and in other works of nature which the Prophets teach as instruments of God’s immediate judgments.}

Sampey in his marvelous little book THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT describes the incident at Horeb providing a proper background in the 40 years of wilderness wanderings.

“In the first month of the fortieth year, after nearly thirty-eight years of wandering and waiting, Israel is back at Kadesh-barnea again. Here Miriam dies. The generation that came out of Egypt has perished in the wilderness {this was part of their
punishment from God because of their “evil heart of unbelief”, the most serious punishment however being of elimination from the eternal rest of God, we might say which is the same as from the eternal kingdom of God}..., and a new generation has grown up in its stead. Will their sons endure affliction any better than their fathers? Jehovah tests them by letting the supply of water fail. Like their fathers, they murmur and complain. {Do you hear any murmuring and complaining in your church today, a sure sign of tares and falling away?} The patience of Moses and Aaron at length fails them, and they make a proud address to the rebellious people. {It is not enough to serve God, but as Jesus taught to serve with salt. To not lose the distinctness of Christ-likeness while serving.} Moses in anger smites the rock twice; whereas God had commanded him merely to speak to it. Because they thus dishonor the holy God in the presence of the people, Moses and Aaron are told that they will not be permitted to lead Israel into the promised land (Num. 20:1-13).

When God puts men before the world as His representatives, He holds them to a strict account. Unbelief in a great leader of God’s people brings reproach upon God Himself. If even Moses, after a long career of singular faithfulness, finally failed through human weakness, who may presume upon his past achievements? “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” {You see why Moses was such a good choice for the Father to send to the Mount to counsel with Jesus on the eve of His crucifixion, lest He also sin by striking a rock, even slaying a Roman or a chief priest.}

That is good, but we need the real impact of the actual historical record in Numbers 20:1-13. Some exegesis of the passage follows: (1) they are called by the Word of God as a “congregation”, as the whole congregation came into the Wilderness of Zin; (2) as there was no water for the congregation, “they gathered together against Moses and Aaron”; (3) the people contended with Moses {and this is not the “contend for the faith like in Jude, but more than the contention and contentious attitude of the fundamentalists as they have inspired southern baptist to overthrow God’s ordained leadership in religious organizations. Does this not remind you of the questioning of God’s leadership in most churches today as part of the Falling Away, church members reject with rejection of Jesus’ leadership and lordship}
the leadership of Jesus through the pastor, and in the name of the majority and of democracy); (4) they question the bringing of the “assembly” {yes, they are called an assembly, the same Greek word as “ecclesia” most often translated as church, for local church} into a wilderness like Zin where they and their animals might die; (5) they call it an “evil place” which reminds one of how easily certain national leaders throw around the word “evil”, and in order to suit their own purposes; (6) Moses and Aaron went to worship in the tabernacle, seeking help from God; (7) God gave them the solution, take the rod in your hand but speak to the rock, and water will come out; (8) Moses took the rod which was in the tabernacle and before God as a symbol of the leadership of God, then gathered the “assembly” together before the rock; (9) here is the point of the sin of Moses as in anger he says, “Here now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?” {with all due respect for Sampey, I think the sin of Moses here was the same “I” problem that many leaders have today. Instead of simply saying to the people that God had said with a word from us as we speak to the rock water will come out, they wanted to take some credit and to establish a certain moral superiority over the people by calling them “rebels”. You see the people had already come to the point where God wanted them in the wilderness of Zin, where they recognized that there was not other way out of the dilemma apart from faith in God; and now it was simply a time for the messengers of God like Moses and Aaron to relay to the people exactly what God told them.} (10) It did work as Moses struck the rock violently and twice, water gushed out as if by a act of Moses, giving Moses the glory over God, but the congregation and the animals drank the water; (11) I think the LORD took them aside to explain that because “you did not believe Me” (there was a little evil heart of belief in Moses and Aaron briefly); because you did not hallow God in the eyes of the “children of Israel” and as per “My” instructions, you will not have the privilege of bringing this people into the land of Israel. Do you understand a little better now Jesus’ parable about service with salt. Incidentally, it came right behind the incident on the Mount of Transfiguration, and of the counseling from Moses and Elijah. It can be called “tasteless salt is worthless”. This kind of service of leadership, God did not need in the refining work of the wilderness.
“For everyone will be seasoned with fire, {Certainly all of the children of Israel, especially this second generation, had gone through fire, and thirst, and hunger, and tests of belief in preparation to settlement in the promised land.} ...and every sacrifice {certainly Moses and the people had made many sacrifices}...shall be seasoned with salt. {We should ask the question as to who in this case is doing the seasoning, and the answer would come back that God is doing the seasoning. He seasons with salt whatever service that He sees on the part of man, leaders or otherwise; and He says that it is not simply a matter of what you do, but it is also a matter of how you do it in order to give Him the glory. How much glory do you think God truly receives from Benny Hinn and his work as compared to the glory that Benny Hinn receives for himself.} **Salt is good** {well, we can buy this simple statement that leads Jesus to the next part of the parable}...but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? {You can not season that salt with similar salt which has also lost its flavor, for like one bad apple in the barrel of religious leaders and disciples, it affects all the apples, so one unflavored spoon full of salt implies the rest is unseasoned. And remember that all the disciples had been disputing among themselves as to who would be the greatest in the kingdom.}

“Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.” (Mark 9:49,50)

Have the fundamentalists in their takeover of control of the southern baptist convention, the largest Protestant and one-time most conservation and evangelistic denomination in the world, not signalled the demise of the United States as the leader in the Fulness of the Gentiles, losing with their fighting spirit and their subsequent destruction of the careers of other disciples in their quest for the first places in the kingdom, not also lost the flavor of their personal salt while they have replaced with warfare what should be “peace with one another”? {You must recall that the whole subject under discussion from the time that Jesus heard the disciples disputing among themselves of who should be first in the kingdom, is the matter of how fellow disciples will behave among themselves. Is that not the province of the local church, the larger church of all believers, and of the kingdom today; and are we not to think of such fundamentalists and
warfare leaders like Falwell, Stanley, Rogers, and Criswell as disciple-leaders in the kingdom? You know when you come right down to it and face up to the intellectual honesties of the matter, and of the related teachings of Jesus, these fundamentalists have been and are being just like the first disciples in seeking first places in the kingdom for themselves; and they fail to realize, also like Moses and the twelve failed to realize, that what you can make happen here on earth may not really be part of kingdom service. They will really go down in history and in the history books of heaven as striking the rock of Horeb like Moses. Listen to Falwell, the self-appointed leader of men like Stanley and LeHaye, the self-appointed leader of the moral majority, and you will find much of the tone of Moses as he accuses with moral superiority the nation of sinners, and as he talks about himself and the marvelous works that he is doing. You can see him like Moses, striking the rock of Horeb, as he says, "You rebels; look what you have forced me to do and say."

By the way, I think it is obvious that we need an in-between category, especially for religious leaders, that is in-between the tares and the wheat is a category of wheat which has lost the flavor of salt. There is in their leadership still service to God, but they have lost the distinctness of Christ, the flavor of salt if you would!

Moses and the Assembly or Congregation at Mount Sinai

It, of course, was an honor for Moses, with Elijah, to be summoned by God to the Mount of Transfiguration to meet with God’s only Son. I am sure they visited and talked often in the aeons of eternity between the time Moses went to heaven and the time of the life of Christ on earth. They had another similar experience as in the presence of God, Christ as He walked up the mountain for a special blessing with God and Moses as he went up Mount Sinai to receive the commandments of God, they became transfigured. As from Jesus on the Mount, He was “transfigured before them” (Mark 9:2b), the “them” being Peter, James, and John; and as for Moses at Mount Sinai, “So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him”. (Exodus 34:30) And we learn that the assembly or congregation was afraid of more than that from the New Testament interpretation of these incidents on Mount Sinai, in Hebrews 12 and from the Apostle Paul, of course
"For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words {seeing how Paul and the Word of God here is appealing to all our senses, the forbidden touch of the mountain where God had, like the mount of transfiguration made His presence known in a very special way; the vision of the burning fire on the mountain which came with the presence of God even as in Daniel we read of the Ancient of Days where fire proceeded from His throne; the vision and feel of blackness, darkness, and of the wind of the tempest; and the sound of the trumpet and of the awesome words from God Himself}..., so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken them anymore. {Well, what do you think we have right here at Mount Sinai as God Himself tries to talk to His own chosen nation, and they in turn react by begging that the speaking of God to them not happen anymore. It is the very beginning of the end of the Falling Away in the wilderness, and so it is for churches and denominations today, where church members beg that the Word of God at its points of difficult sayings, not be spoken to them.}

"(For they could not endure what was commanded: {What does that sound like except II Timothy 4 where “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.} ...’And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow. (Exodus 19:1,13) And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and tremble. “ (Hebrews 12:18-21)

Now this is background for what we read earlier from Deuteronomy as introduction to Moses foretelling about the Prophet Messiah. You must detect an ultimatum as God Himself speaks after Moses introduces the Prophet Messiah, and in the words: “and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speak in My name, I will require it of him.” (Deuteronomy 18:18,19) And a few words before that of how the people begged not to hear personally the voice of God, in these words, “according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly {God and God
through Moses were about to give them their very request of no direct words from God—can you imagine how many long for the honoring of direct speakings from God and when these haughty people and this haughty nation have the privilege, a privilege that is part of the normal environment in heaven of listening to God, they turn it down—then we start to appreciate a little this peculiar and rebellious people called the Jews or Hebrews, and in particular begin to understand something of the mentality and behavior of a scribe or Pharisee), saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'" (Deuteronomy 18:16)

Well, Moses or God could have told them right then that because of such an evil heart of unbelief, and refusal to listen to the voice of the Maker, they were going to die in the wilderness, as not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of their lack of faith in God, the wilderness wanderings were extended for 40 more years. Not only do that generation {all above 20 years of age} die in the wilderness except for Moses, Aaron, Caleb, and Joshua, but the book of Hebrews, indeed the book on the Falling Away of the Bible, tells us that they could not enter God’s eternal rest. What can of attitude is this on the part of people who fear their God and Maker so much when He speaks to them, in spite of all the feeding, guidance, and care of over 40 years, that they think it will kill them. And I think we also see a little sensitivity with a little trying to manipulate God with the excuse related to God’s command that no one or no animal touch the mountain. With a little care, they could prevent themselves and their animals from straying into the mountains. This is much like the Pharisees, and people today, who strain for any excuse to place the guilt on God for why they do not want to listen and heed.

And you recall how that Jesus had nothing good to say about the religious leaders of His day. They were leading the people of Israel astray with their leaven of unbelief; they made pretentious prayers on the street corner in order to be seen of men; they would worship God in vain; they lips would speak formal praises to God while their hearts were far from Him; they had the gall after not being willing like their forefathers to listen to God Himself, or even His Prophets, to substitute their own teachings and commandments for God’s; they accused Jesus of being a devil
while Jesus had to remind them that they “were of their father the devil”; in their buildings of religious institutions and the kingdom of God they had ignored the chief cornerstone selected by God Himself {they followed more faithfully the construction details for the rebuilt temple from God through Ezekiel more carefully than they did the instructions for the spiritual temple and kingdom}; and not only did they miss the correct way, but lead others in the false way.

The Prayer of Daniel for His People

The prayer of Daniel for His people is a good history of the constant rebellion of the leaders and the people of Israel, and as we take a good look at it we are reminded of the words “like the priest, like the people”, and vice versa, of how leaders and people became one in their rebellions so that God often in the Old Testament—Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah and Daniel for example—warned of a time of desolation of spiritual renewal in Israel, an abomination much greater than any drought in the land. How do we miss all this in our Bible reading and study? Because we want to, and because we in this nation have also come to the time when we “will not endure sound doctrine”. If it is not comfortably to us, like God’s voice with fire coming out of the Mountain, then we do not want any part of it. However, I do have to admit that it was scary what Daniel put up with in the revelations given directly to Him from Gabriel and the Spirit of Christ, it was so awesome that Daniel at first fell to his knees and afterwards became unconscious, and was sick for days. When in chapter 12 Daniel got the full impact of the revelations of the future for His people in the “abomination of desolation”, how that it would all be over for his people one year after the Messiah was cut off, we are not even told of Daniel’s help and welfare. It does sound ominous when he is told to rest and that things would be well for his soul, which sounds like death after Daniel had time to record the revelations. For now, however, back to the history of rebellion of the people of Israel as given in Daniel’s prayer, Daniel 9.

You will recall the beginning of this prayer in the first year of King Darius, and how the prayer starting with the reading of Jeremiah where the Prophet predicted the 70 years of the “desolations of Jerusalem” {70 years without a temple of God, 70 years
without the chosen people of God in the city of God; and 70 years of embarassesment and captivity of Daniel’s people in a foreign country—you would think that after recovery from the 70 years with a rebuilt temple and city and restoration of the nation, they could start listening to the voice of God through Jesus, rather continue in rebellion to the extent of bringing the abomination of all desolations on themselves one year after the Crucifixion}; (2) Daniel set his face toward God in prayer to make supplication for his people, and Daniel confessed to God how the nation had “sinned and committed iniquity” {we need the specifics here of their history as recognized by one of their own: (a) “we have done wickedly”; (b) “we have rebelled”; (c) we have departed from Your precepts and Your Judgments; (d) we have not heeded your servants the many Prophets that you sent to us through the years—was their any year that they truly heeded the Prophets except somewhat during Isaiah, then spasmodically: (e) Daniel acknowledges how faithful God was with the Prophets, speaking to kings, princes, forefathers, and all the people in the land—Prophets who spoke in the name of God; (3) Daniel contrasts how righteousness belongs to God, but shame belongs to the nation of Israel (wow, what Daniel is about to learn of additional and long lasting shame for his people); (4) Daniel elaborates on the shame in which the people of Judah, Jerusalem, and all of Israel experience—those near to Persian and those far off in all the countries are mentioned; (5) It is admitted by Daniel that it was God who drove the children of Israel into all these countries, primarily because of the “unfaithfulness which they have committed against You” {recall how Hosea accused Israel of being a harlot, and was instructed by God to take a prostitute for a wife as a message to Israel, and more—by the way if you read Hosea carefully, you will be inclined to think that at that point in their history, it is all over for Israel}; (6) “O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You” (Daniel 9:8); (7) In spite of their admitted rebellion against God, Daniel appeals to the God of mercy and forgiveness; and (8) then comes another list of specifics of their unfaithfulness and rebellion from one of their brightest and best, Daniel: (a) Israel did not obey the voice of their own God; (b) Israel did not obey the voice of God {if they will not listen, how can they obey}; (c) Israel did not walk in the laws of God as were faithfully set before them by His servants the Prophets—yes, yes, yes, many times and in many ways; (d) All
the nation of Israel has transgressed God’s law; (e) all of Israel has departed so as not to obey the voice of God {their is a good reason for not listening, or not wanting to listen to the voice of God, because what you don’t know can not hurt you, they thought, as they did not want to obey the voice of God}; AND THE NEXT IS VERY IMPORTANT—

“...therefore the curse and the oath {we should look at the curse and the oath in the books of Moses} written in the Law of Moses the servant of God {Daniel had been reading the Law of Moses, the first five books of the Bible as well as the Prophets} have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us {looks like Joshua and Judges also where we see the checkered up and down history of the nation of Israel before they were unified under a king}, by bringing upon us a great disaster {it seems that Daniel here refers to first the northern kingdom of Israel going into Assyrian Captivity, and then later with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the southern kingdom of Judah with Daniel and his friends going into Babylonian Captivity}; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:11-12)

Then Daniel quotes {actually it looks more like a precis or paraphrase} from the Law of Moses, “all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.” (Daniel 9:13)

The rebellious people still had not as a nation turned from their iniquities.

They as a nation still did not understand God’s truth.

More about the “disaster” from Daniel, as the above has not happened, God has kept the disaster in His mind, continuing to bring the disaster upon Daniel’s people. Daniel does not forget Who He is praying to, the Ancient of Days, and the court that surrounds Him, quickly mentioning How God is righteous in all He does in spite of how Israel has not obeyed. “And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand {You see how Daniel calls his people the people of
God, and indeed they are as a chosen nation for Christ and for the oracles of God, and a remnant of the remnant for salvation, but not all for salvation{God did become famous in the world of the middle east with His overpowering of the Pharaoh of Egypt, but you will recall how Paul, also of their own nation, tells in Romans how because of the actions of men like Daniel's generation, and men like the Pharisees and scribes, the name of God was desecrated all over the world}. Daniel admits that Israel as a nation has sinned and done wickedly, and would it not be a comfort to see such a confession to God in this day and time. Rather than continuing as Daniel's generation of Jerusalem and Jesus' generation of Jerusalem and today's generation of Jerusalem to rebel against God, to hear them say in the past and now we have done wickedly against God and sinned. Too much pride to do that. Yes I think so unless after the time of the Fulness of Gentiles, there is implied in Romans that some kind of spiritual revival could happen; that is, if God lifts the curse of the abomination of desolations, or if the consummation of that desolation is on earth instead of in heaven. Daniel makes a fervent prayer that "Your anger andYour fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain." Daniel again mentions part of the desolation as "Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us." And we hear again of desolation in the prayerful words of "Your sanctuary, which is desolate." See our "desolations" Daniel prays, and for the sake of Your people and your city that are called by Your own name, forgive the people.

Therefore should we be surprised that a latter generation at the time of the life of Jesus, well after the announcement by God through Daniel that extreme diaster and desolation will come after the birth and crucifixion of Jesus, that Jesus uses such harsh words to describe the behavior and attitude of the religious leaders of His day; and while certainly, the United States does not have the long rebellious history against God of a nation like Israel, is it not possible that religious leaders in this day and in the America of the Falling Away could see something similar; and where would you look but to the religiously popular and established for such behavior and attitudes.
Christ for Individuals

A Study Guide To

Learn Christ from the Apostles and Prophets

Volume 2: 5 books of the Apostle John

Revelation, the Gospel of epistles of John

John, and the three little

SunGrist
Chapter 12: Service and Separation with Salt.

“For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good {separation and service is good}, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.” (Mark 9:49,50)

An immediate disclaimer is made here of Hebrew or Jew bashing, as they might want to claim instead of an admission that a year after they cut off the Messiah, they have ever since become spiritually desolate toward God. Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews before his encounter with the Ascended Christ and conversion, expressed it about his own nation in these words of Romans 10:1-3.

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness {he could because as a lawyer of the religious law in Israel and a leader, he had also been overcome with that religious zeal of the Jews} that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Romans 10:1-4)

If anything there should be an accusation against this book for local church and denomination bashing; for the attempt is being made to show after an assumption that all churches are now a victim of the Falling Away, some more and some less, that is, to show with on that basis some possible ways in which it has happened. Of course, the tares among the wheat caused by a fundamentally inadequate concept of instantaneous new birth is one, along with the substitution of a Gospel of Prosperity for the Gospel of the Kingdom of God where the deceitfulness of riches becomes and remains part of the message, where seeking first the other things shows God is not with them as they have not learned to seek first the kingdom of God and righteousness so that these things will be automatically added as needed, enough things for daily bread but not for wealth as the advocates of
the Gospel of Prosperity preach; but the failure to realistic face up to the human frailities of the tares in the local church as bad behavior and act accordingly with the takeover of the saltless servers of the fundamentalists have been factors also, and if there is any hope for the SBC at all, it will be by real pre-fundamentalists domination southern baptists regaining control of their own local churches and denomination. I would say that this is the equivalent of taking back the kingdom of God from which other invaders, and outsiders, have taken the kingdom by violence. In short, what I am really attempting to do is to take the most famous religious leaders of all time, with the insights from Jesus on these Pharisees and scribes and from the rest of the Bible, then see what of this insight can help us on the religious leaders of today who have helped to lead us into the Falling Away. If you want to accuse me of bashing, then accuse me of fundamentalists bashing. What has changed is not my respect for real southern baptists or of our concept when growing up in southern baptist work of the fundamentalists as feudamentalists, what has changed is that fundamentalists with support of the moral majority and other factors have become more popular than the so-called “moderates”, really another brand of conservatives, whom they have accused and still accuse. These leaders like Stanley, Criswell, Rogers, and Falwell have lost their salt in serving and separation, if they ever really had it; and you can readily see how they like the first disciples before the learned the salty lessons from Jesus not to seek the first places in the kingdom, have gone to the extreme to topple from leadership other real conservatives in order to have their places in the present kingdom of the United States and in the kingdom of the American Democratic Faith.

Let us make something clear as Carroll does in his INTERPRETATION, and in the volume on the inter-Biblical period. It was during the period of the restoration as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, that the Hebrews were first called “Jews”, being a short form of Jerusalem. It was also during this restoration that the Jews had re-inforced the saltless nature of their separation from the rest of the world as only Hebrews that could prove their lineage back to Abraham were allowed to return from the countries of Captivity. However, this only served to enhance their “blood and birth” pride back to Abraham, that they had counted on for distinctness and peculiarity all along. We must
allow the Gospel of John to help us here, and I think one reason that the tares of the Jesus Seminar fight John so hard, saying that only about 1/3 of the recorded teachings of Jesus actually came from Jesus, is because of the frankness with which John levels the real teachings of Jesus on the behavior of the religious leaders of his time, the Jesus Seminar {pardon us Jesus, for using your name with such a group of the evil hear of unbelief as these PhDs and teachers at diverse Christian schools, and if you don’t recognize who they are a list of the members with their schools are in the back of their book, and they are the bunch who foolishly get together to vote on whether Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, or not} also recognize similarities between themselves and the scribes of the time. John records the famous Abraham versus Satan dispute between Jesus and the Jews at the Feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem. {These teachings of Jesus under fire during the Feast of Tabernacles is recorded in John 7-8, just before the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida. The Harmony of Robertson places it as “The Later Judean Ministry”, after Mark 9 where Jesus was transfigured on the Mount and before Mark 10 where Jesus encounters the rich young ruler. You will notice that while Luke and John only record this bout with the Jews, Mark in 10:1 also speaks of the trip back into the region of Judea; and this is immediately after the verses of our chapter focus, indeed what may become the most focused verse of this book on the toleration of the tares, as we continue to explore Mark 9:49,50.}

Jesus had a special word in John 8:31-36 for those Jews who believed Him on how to be disciples indeed. {Perhaps we should coin the word “indeed-disciples” in order to distinguish between the tares and the wheat of the kingdom.}

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”  (John 8:31,32)

Somehow we must come to understand and appreciate the response of these would-be disciples: “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free.” (John 8:33)
This is hard for us to appreciate. They had been in Egyptian bondage; they had been under the Captivity at the direction of God to the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians; and more recently in bondage to the Greeks and Romans. So what in the world did they mean by being free by being a descendant of Abraham. It had to be more an intellectual or mental thing rather than a physical reality. Of course, it would be in the same realm, at least in their minds, of the kind of freedom that would come by knowing the truth in Jesus. Indeed through time and captivities that had developed a certain self-bondage or captivity to custom and tradition among themselves, sort of a group cohesiveness, that was based solely on their common ancestry back to Abraham. They thought of themselves as motivated primarily by the customs and traditions of Abraham. You will recall how Carroll tells of how the returning remnant must be able to prove ancestry back to Abraham which through the year had formulated a large pride of birth among residents of Palestine. It is the equivalent of saying, “We are born the most privileged and blessed people of all the world and all history, because we are the descendants of Abraham; and everybody knows, have you heard that community saying before, everybody knows that the descendants of Abraham are the people of God. They were soon to be in for a violent shock as the very Son of God, recently from God Himself and with the total truth from God, was the tell them who their real father was.

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” (John 8:44)

Now we get some more insight as to what is happening to church members today in the Falling Away. They like these people who would be “indeed-disciples” while deceiving themselves into thinking that they were people of faith like Abraham, based not on faith but on blood lineage and national identity, were really under bondage and control of their real father, Satan. Wow, can Satan exert that much control over the very nation that God had chosen for His own. Yes, He did; but it was based on their lack of ability and understanding as we have discussed often in the
parables. Jesus made that clear in what John records in John 8:43.

“Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.” (John 8:43)

We must ask ourselves the serious question, “Can Satan gain such control of the present nation chosen by God as he did over Israel, and is not the present gap between Christ and church membership with the Falling Away leave the undeniable possibility that Satan has control over most of the churches?” Impossible, one might say. Look at all the marvelous works that we do for Christ. Well, you know what Christ had to say about that. Rather than fall back to the large numbers and big buildings that our churches have, with pastors that are PhDs, we should rather look for the salt of Jesus in serving and separation. Without salt there can be many not “indeed-disciples” and many victims of the Falling Away, etc.

Continuation with the Parables, Falling Aways, and Events of Mark to chapter 16

{You will find some brief repetition in this chapter as more of Mark is added to the effective outline of previous chapters. This keeps the chapter and verse material of Mark in context, and effectively develops a complete and condensed in context version of Mark with comments.}

That we need a lot more insight from Jesus and the apostles whom He trained is obvious, so that we will continue through to the completion, I hope in this chapter, of the parables, the evidences of Falling Away {these are little falling aways, not to be confused with the great Falling Away of the whole nation of Israel in the wilderness warnings, as made clear in Hebrews, and of the likewise great Falling Away, according to II Thessalonians that must happen before the Second Coming of Christ, which is as great or a greater Falling Away among the Gentiles of the Fulness of the Gentiles}, and the incidents—remember also sometimes with the messages of parables—of the rest of Mark. First a short review of where we have been in Mark.

Gist of Parable #1 (A House Divided Cannot Stand, Mark
3:20-27): Since Jesus heard the scribes from Jerusalem saying that Jesus cast out Satan by the power of Satan, He told the foolishness of Satan casting out Satan, of a kingdom divided against itself, and of a strong man that must first be overcome in order to rob his house. {We will have to ponder if we can apply this to the tares and the wheat. Certainly the scribes would be among the equivalent of the tares, and if Jesus was casting out demons therefore on the side of the kingdom of God, then the tares have to be on the other side of the divided kingdom.}

Gist of Parable #2 (The Seed and the Sower, Mark 4:1-9 and 4:13-20): Four human responses come when people hear the Word of faith, only one of which is fruitful that sown on good soil, and the other three would compare to by the wayside—Satan snatches it immediately—seed sown on stony ground and received with gladness like an instantaneous new birth but there is no root and with tribulation and persecution, they are caused to stumble, and seed sown among thorns where the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and other things choke it out.

Gist of Parable #3 (Light under a bushel, Mark 4:21-25): The lamp bought not to be put under a basket or bed is the beginning of a short parable with several implications: (1) the hidden and secret comes to light with the lamp in the proper place; (2) In the nature of the understanding of parables, in order to have ears to hear, what is heard and utilized will determine what more understanding comes; and (3) the opposite is true, whoever listens a little only will have even that taken away.

Gist of Parable #4 (The Mustard Seed, Mark 3:30-32): This is also a short parable, sometimes the most difficult; but certain tells us something of the kingdom of God, as Jesus says what the kingdom of God is like; and replies that it is like a grain of mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds when it is sown, but which grows up larger than all herbs. {I think that Jesus is telling us with respect to the kingdom of the Roman Empire and of Greece and even of the Persians, the kingdom which Jesus is about to make evident on earth, the kingdom of God, that it starts small and with years grows big. One reason that it grows big, because unlike other kingdoms, it has no end; but continues as long as time continues, to grow.}
As we hopefully and quickly pass, at least once, all the way to the end of Mark in chapter 16, we would want to include not only the life and teachings of Jesus, but also how the people of His generation reacted or responded to them. We will separate the more general type of responses from those which were positive indications or teachings on the Falling Away.

**Falling Away #1 (In the Purpose of Parables, Mark 10-12):**
The quote from Isaiah 6:9,10 should certainly be considered a lot of seed being sown by the wayside, where the birds or Satan come to snatch it away immediately, alias the people see and do not perceive, they hear and not understand; and this prevents them from turning around in order that their sins might be forgiven.

**Falling Away #2 (At the End of the Parable of the light and the basket, Mark 4:25):** where the “whosoever does not have” caused by not hearing and understanding, has even that taken away which is a very good description over time of the Falling Away.

**Falling Away #3 (In the quote by Jesus of Isaiah 29:17):** of worship with lips without the heart, vain worship, and teachings of the commandments of men, like the Pharisees and Saducees, not hardly tares as they never claimed to enter the kingdom of Jesus, but certainly of the seed sown by the wayside, that with the work of Satan on such a sad heart, never stood a chance.

**Response #1 in Mark 8:31-33 and Falling Away #4:** This response of Peter to Jesus’ teachings on His impending death and resurrection was a rebuke by Peter, which is turn received a rebuke from Jesus of “Get behind Me, Satan.” And the Falling Away #4 is in the 33 verse with the rest of the response from Jesus to Peter of “For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” And of course, while this attitude of “things” and “mammon” over God could lead, and often does lead to the Falling Away, we know that while Peter stumbled in unbelief and even denial for a while, he did not fall away from God, Christ, and the truth of the Word.

**Falling Away # 5 comes in Mark 8:34-38 in the self denial and personal cross teachings of Jesus:** as at the Second Coming he who has fallen so far away as to be ashamed of Jesus and His teachings will likewise be ashamed at the result during the Second Coming.
Condensed Version with Comments

Mark 11:1-24: The Triumphant Entry as related to the kingdom of God, the withered fig tree, the judgment on the temple, and the explanation of the parable of the withered fig tree.

Mark 11:25,26: Prayer with forgiveness as necessary for entrance into the kingdom of God. And at this point we should briefly consider the Sermon on the Mount as given in more detail in Matthew 24 as to exactly what attitudes we must assume in order to be legitimate citizens of the kingdoms. They are given in the “blessings”, the so-called “beautitudes of Jesus and God.

Response #2 is the way the three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration reacted to what happened and what God said about listening to Jesus: as they came down the mountain Jesus commanded them to tell none what they had seen until after His own resurrection, and their reaction was that they pondered it over in their heart, puzzled at what the resurrection from the dead meant.

Response #3, also from the twelve, was also after a prediction of His death and resurrection in Mark 9:30-32: The response was simple, they did not understand and they were afraid to ask.

Falling Away #6 is implied in Mark 9:49,50 about worthless salt: when all members of the kingdom are tested with fire and when every sacrifice for the kingdom is seasoned with a grain of salt, if the salt has lost its distinctness and flavor, then it can not season the sacrifice of service. However the disciples, except for Judas, prevented this loss of flavor in service by heeding what Jesus said about, “Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.” (Mark 9:50)

Falling Away #7 is definite in Mark 10:22 as the rich young ruler: goes away sad at Jesus recommendation to sell all he has and give to the poor, then to take up the cross, just like he told other disciples, and follow Him; and the rich young ruler went away sad because he had great possessions. Remember in the parable of the seed and the sower how cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches are like thorns which choke out the
seed of the Word of faith.

Response #4 in Mark 10:32-34 is an exact prediction of Jesus of what the response to Himself and His teachings will be from chief priests and scribes: While sadder than the response above of the rich young ruler who chose the great possessions over following Jesus, the outcome of the rejection of Jesus is the same. Well, not exactly for this rejection by the cutting off of the Messiah, God had decided as early as the book of Daniel, to be the temporal end, if not permanent end, of any salvation in Israel.

Respone #5 in Mark 10:35-45 as it began to dawn on the twelve about the kingdom of God through Christ, and of Jesus’ obvious power to bring it about in spite of continued opposition from the majority in the nation of Israel, they started thinking of their own places in the realized kingdom of eternity: in their expressed desires for the first places at Jesus’ right and left hand, Jesus responded to them with a challenge to drink the same cup He drank and to be baptized with the same baptism. {Can you see the faith-healers today that we see on television, and who are promoted by the millionaire Lamb with his gospel of prosperity, drinking the same cup and having the same baptism of unpopularity and a cross that Jesus had. What we indeed see in these evangelists and false prophets of television is a drinking of the cup of prosperity and a baptism in comforts, security, and money with all the things that money can buy. And again we must express the vast difference between the society in which we live, like the Gentiles in Jesus’ day where the leaders lorded over the citizens, where firstness is considered to be supervision and control while lastness is considered to be like an inept servant. Jesus challenges “indeed-disciples” to be slaves of all people, and that is not easy in the United States.

Mark 12:10-11 with the quote from Psalm 118:22,23, the focus of our thought, has become a settled fact in the mind of God even before the actual rejection of the crucifixion: You will see that the quote from David is in the past tense, and even as Jesus quotes it in the past tense as the nation of Israel has already rejected Jesus a the chief cornerstone of the Temple and the kingdom. However, you must see that David sets in awe of the marvel of God’s salvation plan, related to the temple and
the kingdom, as “This was the LORD’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?” It took a God, a great God like the LORD is, to think of such a marvelous plan in the face of all the manipulations, that is what builders means like the movers and shakers of today, done by the nation of Israel and of their religious leaders. You see you just can not buy into the kingdom of God, anymore with impunity, without the right and individual response of repentance from sins and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, including what He did on the cross for the salvation of the world. We echo with David, and with God in His Word, that it is marvelous in our sight!

Mark 11:27-33 through Mark 12:12. The atypical attitude of Israel that brought on the curse of the withered fig tree, the abomination of desolation, and the lack of salvation one year after the Messiah was cut off. And so important was this for the people of Israel to see, especially the approximately 100,000 that would be converted in the next year, and the apostles, that Jesus reinforces the teachings of 1:27-33 with the parable of the wicked vinedressers in Mark 12:1-12, also including in the parable a quote from the Old Testament that predicts and describes the rise and fall of the nation of Israel. They were builders for many years, and how beautiful were the stones of the Temple and the city they built; however, according to David in Psalm 118:22,23, they rejected the chief cornerstone that was selected by God Himself even as He though Ezekiel selected the exact pattern of the building of the second temple.

“This was the LORD’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.” (Psalm 118:22,23 and Mark 12:11).

GOD DID IT!

Therefore we take up with Mark 12:10 and the quote from Jesus from Psalm 118:22,23, That Will Predict His Crucifixion Under the Phrase of “The Stone Which the Builders Rejected”.

However, we must add to our analysis of the events, miracles, and teachings in the life of Jesus also the debates and questions of the religious leaders. This will give us much insight into the mentality and “wants” of the Jesus Seminar today, as well as other
false prophets and teachers that must, by prediction, proliferate in this time of the Falling Away. We will label them “debates and disputing questions”; and we will briefly go back to Mark 11:27-33 where truly publically began to question the authority of Jesus to do what He said and did.

Debate and Disputing Question #1 in Mark 11:27-33, a question of authority to teach and heal: By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you that authority? This is indeed a strong argument from religious leaders today. You need the authority of a piece of paper which says PhD from a recognized organization, or you need degrees from the most famous of Universities or you need the authority of the top position or of special recognition among men. Let us see if we can get some help from Jesus on this issue? Jesus stumped them with a question in reply, is the baptism of John from heaven or from men. In other words, what authority did John the Baptist have to baptize? Was that authority from heaven and God, or from men. But at this point, the religious leaders so feared the popularity of John as a Prophet among the people, that they would not answer; but they had their answer already, and they knew it, the authority and source of Jesus’ ministry of teaching, healing, and other miracles, and well as the character which He exhibited, was from heaven and from God Himself. Two chapters before this and a short while before this, the select disciples of John, Peter, and James had a direct witness to that authority as God Himself on the Mount of Transfiguration said, “THIS IS MY SON, LISTEN TO HIM.”

Debate and Disputing Question #2 in Mark 12:13-17, a question from some of the Pharisees and Herodians, which by the way were sent according to the record from the very top, also related to authority and whether it was right to pay taxes, hence also tribute to the Roman Caesar: The very words were a test much like religious leaders would try to test us today to get agreement from the people, and to embarass as we would try to teach, with questions that tend to set you up: (1) Calling you “Teacher” in a sacrastic manner; (2) calling you likewise “true” in a sacrastic manner; (3) Built you up with a status of being indifferent to the customs, opinions, and traditions of others; (4) Setting you up as a non-respector of Persons (how grand this would have been if sincere to so recognize Jesus); (5) how you
teach the way of God based on very truth itself {wow, what a set up; for if they had recognized that they would never have been there in the first place to trap Jesus}; (6) is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not; (7) Jesus, of course, who knew the heart of all men, and who did not even need that here as the “set-up” was so obvious, told them “Why do you test Me?” (7) And Jesus was so poor, a lesson for the Gospel of Prosperity advocates, that He had to borrow a Roman “denarius’ in order to teach a point. You remember the point, “Don’t get your kingdoms mixed up: render to the Roman kingdom what belongs legitimately to the Roman kingdom, like the coins of the State, and render to God’s kingdom what legitimately belongs to God; and we know from the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount and of Matthew 24, that all which is not “mammon”, or the creations of man, belongs to God.

Debate and Question #3: Ah yes, they come rapidly now here in Jerusalem as there is a concerted effort of the religious leaders to destroy His influence with the people, short of killing Him which they must do as swiftly and as secretly as possible. If they could only use the influence of their own authority, both religious and some delegated authority from the Roman government, to overcome His own sense of authority and support, then they could easily win. And being unbelievers in God, and having Satan as their father, they actually deceived themselves into thinking they might overcome the very Son of God in wisdoms of teachings. After all, they knew themselves to be right as THE SOLE SURVIVING DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM. I guess subversion was always a possibility. After the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness was real, and that Satan really thought He could tempt Jesus away from His mission on three counts: (1) Perverting His power from God to make bread out of stones, putting seeking these things ahead for this important moment of the kingdom of God and His righteousness, which indeed was the focus of the moment for Jesus; (2) Taking the easy way of a kingdom by the worship of the world as offered by Satan who really had and does have that power over the long-range attainment of the kingdom after the Second Coming, and of a kingdom based on His own death and resurrection, which above all Satan wanted to thwart, being as Satan was very familiar with the Old Testament as with all Scriptures about Christ; and (3) To tempt God by casting Himself down from the high point.
Well, let us see if Satan works now through his children, the Sadducees this time to solve one of the most puzzling riddles of this time, and as related to the Resurrection. *(They were definitely hypocrites and their questionings were hypocritical in that they did not believe in the Resurrection like the Pharisees did, but some of the people would side with them on this issue.)* In the after life and after the Resurrection of the physical bodies, a woman who was wife to seven brothers, each of whom died and the woman married them only after the death of the other husband, whose wife would see be in heaven. We are indebted to these disputing Sadducees for some of the most informative teachings on the after life. First of all, those who have died in faith like Moses, go to immediately at death be with God; and you recall that Jesus just talked with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration. Secondily God is Himself a living God and not God of the dead. They, as Jesus told them, had the same lack of understanding of this as of parables; however here the doctrines from God through Jesus were more specific, they did not understand (1) the Old Testament Scriptures, and (2) the power of God, that is, they did not understand God Himself. And what you must look for in authority is real understanding of God Himself, His thoughts and His character, and real understanding of Scripture that only comes through the ASI.

**Debate and Question #4:** Well, here come the scribes right behind the other religious leaders, in Mark 12:28-34, with their efforts to stump or try Jesus verbally and to embarrass Him. Their question is, “What is the greatest of all commandments?” They figured that there were Ten to chose from, so that they might catch Jesus on a matter of priority for one commandment more than the other ten. Tricky huh, in straining at a knat in order to shallow a camel; and yet often today we also here that, more from average people than from scribes, but nonetheless similar as people say “well I don’t kill or steal”, effectively in their own mind and life giving a priority for those two commandments over the others. Jesus evaded their efforts by going to the real heart of the matter which is “love” itself—love of God and love of fellow man—and with a summarizing quote from Moses of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 6:4,5.

**Response #6 and in Mark 12:32,33,** comes from the questing scribe: You would have to put the scribe with his answer to Jesus
about the Ten Commandments in the category of almost disciples, yet not quite “indeed-disciple” and in the previous teachings of Jesus, and as Jesus does now in replay to the response of the scribe.

“No when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.” (Mark 12:34)

So what we have is another category from Jesus Himself which is the “category of not far from the kingdom of God”. Surely not far from the kingdom of God is just before being an “indeed-disciple.” And we think of Jesus and the rich young ruler where Jesus told the disciples, after the rich young man walked away from the challenge of following Jesus because he had great possessions, Jesus explained how hard it is for a man of riches to enter the kingdom of God. Although, I doubt if the scribe was a man of riches: rather a man of wisdom, scholarship, and even of Bible knowledge.

Unfortunately in a way, Jesus here puts an end to the questioning and debates, as Mark relays how “But after that no one dared question Him.” (Mark 12:34) The questions are over and the efforts will commence to get Him alone for capture, mock trail, and deliverance to the Roman government for death. Questioning was too dangerous from the additional popularity gained among the people, and from the fact that Jesus almost made a convert out of one of their own religious leaders.

**Mark 12:13-17:** “The Stone Which the Builders Rejected” was not a stone from the kingdom of the Roman Empire. The relationship between the kingdom of the Roman Empire and the kingdom of the Death and Resurrection of Christ given in the parable of Caesar and the coin of the Roman Empire.

**Mark 12:18-27:** “The Stone Which the Builders Rejected” implied the crucifixion of the nation of Israel of the very Son of God. How does the kingdom of the death and resurrection of Christ relate to the subsequent resurrection from the dead of His disciples. According to Psalm 118:22,23 the very stone rejected by crucifixion by the Jews was selected to be the chief cornerstone of the beginning Temple of God. Bad choice on their part: to overlook and ignore even reject the cornerstone chosen by God Himself for their own salvation.
And David himself in Psalm 118:22,23 speaks of this rejection of the chief cornerstone whom God has chosen as a basis to build His own kingdom. How does the kingdom of the death and resurrection of Christ relate to the Kingdom of David, to the religious leaders of Israel, and to a poor widow that gives her all. By the sacrifice for God of giving her all, surely the equivalent of a cross and self-denial, like the cross in the teachings from Jesus relate to His own crucifixion, so does her self-sacrifice, showing even the faith of a little child, also relate to the death and resurrection of Christ. {At some point we must make clear from Paul and Romans, how a baptism in the death and resurrection of Christ, the process of real salvation, also relates to the cross of Christ. After all, Christ belatedly chose the Apostle Paul to make things like this clear as Paul did in the majority of the New Testament books which he wrote, and even in the choice of his quotes and manuscripts for the three other books from John Mark and Dr. Luke.}

Jesus takes on the unsound doctrines and practices of the scribes in Mark 12:35-40: First in their mistaken claim that the Christ-Messiah is the Son of David, something for which the scribes were responsible in the beliefs of the multitude as Jesus did a triumphant entry {we might question that phrase as not really Biblical} into Jerusalem, saying, “Blessed is the kingdom of our father David.” We see that the Jews could find more than one father to justify themselves, David and Abraham. Then as we previously discussed Jesus quotes from Psalm 110:1 how David called Jesus the Chirst, “Lord”; and this is an interesting study of contrast you might want to make some time between God the Father as LORD in all capital letters and Jesus as Lord in mostly little letters; and please if you do, add to that study the passage in I Corinthians 15:12-19 where the Lord Jesus Christ ultimately delivers the completely subdued kingdoms of this world under His own lordship to God the Father, in order that God may be all in all. Secondily Jesus takes on the unsound practices of the scribes. {One thing that we must do, by way of Paul and the pastoral epistes of I, II Timothy, and Titus is make clear the relationship of bad church behavior to bad and unsound doctrine.} Jesus enumerates to the people what to beware of in the practices of the scribes: (1) they dress in long, loud and attractive robes {does that remind us of certain religious leaders today with their pompous dress in public}; (2) they love greetings
in the marketplace—that is, they solicit popularity and adulation from the people in the common places like the market, and it is the status and position among the public that they most love above God and the kingdom of God. {At some point, we must also speak with the “human frailties of church members” on what has been referred to as “the unspoken influences of the Pastor”, one of those often not spoken about is the status of the community that pastors come to love, no doubt in many cases more than the love of the kingdom of God which is invisible now}; (3) they love the best seats in the synagogues, indeed they take and demand the best seats in the synagogue sort of like asking for firstness in the kingdom, the synagogues of course being the equivalent of our churches and we know who demands certain seats or the best seats in our churches; (4) likewise out there in the world and at the feasts, some religious and some not so religious but where food is, they demand the best seats; (5) wow, Jesus says that “they devour widows houses, and for a pretence make long prayers” {we can not let this opportunity pass for insight into II Timothy 3:1-9 where we have the characteristics of bad church behavior, and where some of the church members, like the scribes, were taking captive simple women in their homes with their false teachings and practices} of course the long prayers are for money, and Jesus shows us that it is more a professional ministry without real concern for the widow or the needs of the widow, but long prayers for money, once again much like the characteristics of bad church behavior of II Timothy 3:1-9 where there is “a form of godliness {the public establishment of their own righteousness like Paul describe the average Jew} but without the power thereof {as the power of God does not come inwardly without the prerequisite saving faith}; (6) Jesus teaches that there is a greater and a smaller “condemnation” for the tares like the scribes, some will receive greater punishment in the Judgment than others; and now we have still another category beyond tares, wheat, “indeed-disciples” as contrasted to those “not far away from the kingdom of God”. We have the tares of lesser condemnation and the tares of greater condemnation, the greater being those like the scribe who with their knowledge of Scripture was not far from the kingdom of God. Almost but not quite, and it reminds us of the categories of the book of Jude which we must also explore in our chapter on the “Human Frailities of Church Members”.
You know, we should also think about this as we approach the actual Crucifixion of Jesus which seemingly had already been settled in the mind of God and recorded in Psalm long before it happened; and therefore we must ask the question, “Did God and Jesus setup the chief priests, Pharisees, Herodians, and scribes to carry out the crucifixion that He had already planned?” Yes, I think so; but only to the extent to show what He had already decided on and planned on, how Israel had already earned the abomination of desolation, and how they would behave as wicked vinedressers when confronted with the Owner’s own Son. In other words, God gave Israel a final chance to put up or shut up; and we must add to that how God through Christ made a tremendous personal sacrifice, the humiliation and death of His only Son, in order to carry out that plan. Either way, the cross of Jesus was necessary for the salvation of the world; and although Jesus tried to keep most of the healed silent about His works which showed the power of God in His life for years, finally as He knew the time of the end approached as He and God had planned, He spoke and performed miracles more in the open and more in Jerusalem. So much of His work had previously been done in Galilee, except for Nazareth where He was without honor, and in the regions beyond Galilee, the regions of the Gentiles; but now the focus and efforts of Jesus centered in Jerusalem and toward the cross. What we have from the point above in Mark 12-16 is: (1) Jesus Prediction about the destruction of the Temple and Last Things in Mark 13:1-37; (2) The Plot to Kill Jesus with the Betrayal of Jesus by Judas and the prediction of Jesus at the Last Supper in Mark 14, with also a momentary denial by Simon Peter, although not fatal like the betrayal of Judas {and perhaps another sub-category we should consider of fatal-betrayal versus redeemed-betrayal}; (3) Arrest and Betrayal in the Garden, which some speculate belonged to the mother of John Mark, in Mark 14:32-51, with the young man fleeing naked, not doubt John Mark telling on himself as sort of an act of self-identification of authorship and authenticity, along with just before these events, the Lord’s Supper, which most agree was at the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark {we, of course will desire to speak of Jesus’ preparation and predictions about this to the disciples even as we did of the preparation of the young colt for triumphant entry and the ship in waiting near the shore of the Sea of Galilee, but the biggest preparation of all, especially of the disciples, in His death and Resurrection on the third
day—who but Jesus, the Son of God, could predict the exact day of His Resurrection, three days after His death}; (4) The whole false arrest and mock trial business of Mark 14:53-15:20 of before the Sanhedrin {the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees and Herodians finally have their day in court as they had plotted}, Peter's denial—a redemptive betrayal—before the cock of the early morning crowed twice, Jesus taken before the Roman ruler Pilate and replaced by Barabbas for freedom, and the Roman soldiers mocking Jesus, all so surprised at His silence acceptance of the process; (5) The King of the Jews, Jesus, as Pilate had written on the cross and His death and burial in Mark 15:21-47; and (6) Lastly the Resurrection in Mark 16 with several appearances, the giving of the Great Commission to the "eleven", and the Ascension back into heaven.

Mark 13:1-37: Ah, the difference between the Temple at Jerusalem and the Temple of God which is the same difference between “The Stone which the Builders Rejected in the building and maintenance of the Temple at Jerusalem and the Eternal Temple which is very similar to the kingdom of God which God built through the chief cornerstone of Jesus, a Temple of Gentiles and Jews, and of the real children of faith of Abraham. How does the kingdom of the death and resurrection of Christ relate to the existing Temple, the abomination of desolation of Daniel, and to the end times and the Second Coming. {We must continue in this book at some point on some similarities and differences between the kingdom of God and the Temple, of the kingdom of God and the local church and one church.}

Chapter 13: Some Marvels of Daniel

I. Thrones are Put in Place in the First Sweep, Daniel 7:9-14.
   God in place for Judgment and the Books opened.

II. The pompous words of the Man of Sin judged with his sponsor the beast, and the execution of justice in the flaming fire.

III. The other beasts given a short dominion.
IV. The Second Coming of Christ and His everlasting kingdom that has been given dominion over all kingdoms.

V. The Four Great Beasts versus the Saints of God and their kingdom, Daniel 7:15-27.

8. The four great beasts are the four Kings. \{Remember that this is the interpretation of the previous vision, so here even like Jesus identifies the actors in the parable of the seed and the sower, so one of those standing near during the vision explains to Daniel that the four great beasts are four Kings.\}

9. What Daniel asked to understand the most about: the fourth awesome beast and the 10 horns, and especially the little horn that came up whose appearance was greater than the others and who spoke pompous words. \{You see consistently, we have in the five cycles information about the man of sin and perdition of II Thessalonians.\}

10. This little pompous horn was making war against the saints of the kingdom, and he was "prevailing against them". \{You know this is the final great Falling Away of II Thessalonians during which Satan is released as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the earth.\}

11. The Ancient of Days comes, judges in favor of the saints, a theme repeated from the first cycle, and the time comes that the saints wholly possess the kingdom, as the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Jesus and God.

12. Okay, an explanation about the fourth beast, the 10 horns, and the little horn.

   (1). The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom—different, devouring, and trampling all other kingdoms on the earth \{Daniel 7:23\}.

   (2). The ten horns are ten kings (actually Caesars as we see from later history in the Bible and in secular history).

   (3). "Another shall rise after them", different from the first ones who will speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints, who will try to "change times and law"; and the saints will be given into his hand for "a time, times, and half a time". \{Daniel 7:24b-25\}
13. The court of God is seated and takes away his dominion, destroying it forever.

14. The greatness of all the kingdoms on the earth shall be given over to the kingdom of the saints, the kingdom of the Most High who has an everlasting kingdom. He will have dominion over the saints and they will serve and obey Him. {this is a partial answer to Daniel’s repeated prayer and question, what is going to happen to my people?}

(Note that while you get some detail on the major peaks from the first cycle, in this second sweep you primarily get details on the four beasts, the 10 horns, and even more on the little horn. This little horn is undeniably the final man of sin of the Falling Away who under the supervision of Satan will try to change all history and all law, although it can like any parable also include more men before the final man of sin.)

VI. The Second Vision of the Third Sweep, “the Time of the End” {Daniel 8:17} the Ram with two horns interpreted by Gabriel as kings of Media and Persia, and “the male goat is the kingdom of Greece.” (Daniel 8:21)


(1). The ram with two high horns, the second one higher than the first that came up, pushed north, south and west conquering until a male goat with a very large horn from the West attached the ram, breaking the horns of the ram.

(2). The male goat grew large and strong, the large horn broke off and four notable horns came in its place from the four winds.

(3). Out of one of the four notable horns came a little horn which great exceeding great and spread toward the south, east, and toward the Glorious Land. {Little have doubt that this is the Promised land of Palestine, whatever name it was called throughout history.}

(4). “And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.” (Daniel 8:10) {Obviously we have a reference to the war in heaven against Satan as Satan and his angels, the fallen stars, are cast out of heaven, and already we begin to see what
we will see more and more of in Daniel where the spiritual warfare above becomes one with the spiritual warfare here on earth.}

(5). “He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; {the reference here is of the man of sin exalting himself to the Prince of the power of the air and this earth, since the host would refer back in the last verse to the host that is cast down out of heaven}...and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.”

(6). An army is given, obviously by Satan, to this horn; and with this army, he opposes the daily sacrifices, cast truth down to the ground, and while he did all this, he prospered. {God let it happen!}

(7). How Long between the taking away of the daily sacrifices and the “abomination of desolation”, destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem? The answer comes, “for two thousand three hundred days”.

5. The Interpretation by Gabriel in Daniel 8:15-26.

(1). The vision refers to the “time of the end”, what shall happen in the later time of “the indignation”. It shall be at a definite time that God has appointed with echoes again of “known unto God are all His works from the beginning” of James and the book of Acts, help from the ASI if you would.

(2). The ram with two horns are the kings of Media and Persia, the male goat is the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king of Greece.

(3). Four kingdoms shall arise out of Greece, but not with that power.

(4). In the latter time of the Grecian kingdom, another king shall arise of fierce features, sinister schemes, welding the power of Satan, destroying, prospering, and thriving, destroying the mighty and the people of God {8:23-24—here you almost have a parable within a parable as this latter Grecian king is a prototype of the last man of sin. His characteristics of Satan sponsorship, the abounding of sin and transgression, and of himself as a man of sin carry all the way through a Grecian, a Roman, and then a final days son of perdition.}
(5). A long verse is given over to a detailed description of what this preliminary, parable-like man of sin will do: (a) with cunning cause deceit to prosper as he rules; (b) exalt himself like a god in his own heart; (c) destroy many that prosper; (d) rise against the Prince of princes, obviously Christ, and we have another anti-Christ; and (e) he and his kingdom are broken by God without human help like war and politics.

(6). Seal up the vision because it has references to “many days in the future” (Daniel 8:26b)

6. The fainting and sickness for days of Daniel, 8:27.

{Once again you see a lot of focus on the atypical man of sin, or anti-Christ, which will be a final fulfillment with the last man of sin. Again it is like a parable, without names, that is a general-type story that applies to at least three kings—one of Greece, another of Rome, and then the last at the final days.}

VII. The fourth cycle or sweep as Daniel starts his quest for understanding and prayer again for “what will happen to my people” with Jeremiah’s 70 years of Jerusalem desolation, and Gabriel comes with an answer to his prayers.

7. The history of Daniel’s people, a history of disobedience and rebellion, from the wilderness to the destruction of Jerusalem, Daniel 9:1-19.

8. The intercessory prayer of Daniel, Daniel 9:1-20: “Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God....” (Daniel 9:20)

9. Gabriel started his trip from heaven to earth when at the start of Daniel’s prayer, God commanded him to move swifly. Gabriel came to give Daniel “skill to understand”, something that we must have in the ASI and in parable, often called in the Bible and by Jesus as “eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand”. Gabriel told Daniel that he was greatly beloved.

10. God has determined that the period of time will be 70 weeks for Daniel’s people and the holy city of Jerusalem as that amount of time is required by God in order to: (a) to let the transgression runs its course; (b) to make an end to the sins; (c) to make reconciliation...
to God for their iniquity; (d) to bring in an everlasting righteousness, which we know clearly know from Daniel and all the Prophets and the New Testament to be the plan of salvation brought to earth in fulness by Jesus Christ in His life and death; (e) to seal up vision and prophesy, in the life and teachings of Jesus and the Apostles the seal is put on all Old Testament visions and prophesy as we come to understand what was forecast; and (f) to anoint the MOST HOLY.

11. From the Restoration {the return from exile and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple} until the time the Messiah comes will be 7 weeks and 62 weeks, for a total of 69 weeks which leaves us one short of the 70 weeks.

(1). The end of the 69 weeks is identified clearly as the Messiah being killed, not for his own sins, but for the people.

(2). Then the city and the sanctuary will again be destroyed by the people of the prince to come, which we now know to be Titus and the Roman Empire.

(3). A short description of the desolations and the war that ends Jerusalem and the Temple.

12. The one week after the 69 to complete the 70 weeks, Daniel 9:27.

(1). For this one week, the last of the 40 years, and a one week or really one year after the crucifixion of Christ, God allows the covenant of the New Testament to be confirmed with “many for one week”, and we know that approximately 100,000 Jews were saved during this one year after the crucifixion of Christ, many on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension.

(2). In the middle of that year after the Crucifixion of Christ, God brings an end to “sacrifice and offering”. {In other words an end to Temple worship.}

(3). On the wing of these abominations of desolation caused by no more temple sacrifice and offering shall be “one who makes desolate”. Satan and men of sin will thrive on the wings of the desolation.

(4). The end of the abomination that makes desolate is the “consummation”, and God has determined a precise time; and the consummation is poured out on the desolate, obviously a judgment on the desolate.
Prophets and Apostles

A Study Guide To
Learn Christ from the Apostles and Prophets

Volume 1

SunGrist
Chapter 14: Where Did the Word “Kingdom” Go?

Where did the word “kingdom” go in Gospel? When you hear in our large and small churches today, of all denominations, the Gospel preached and taught, do you hear the word “kingdom”? For example, when like Charles Stanley there is an effort to explain the plan of salvation in simple words, is the word “kingdom” ever used? And does this mean that not only have we lost the word “kingdom”, but also the Bible concept, importance, and meaning of the kingdom. {Forget for this chapter the Jehovah Witnesses with their unsound doctrines and kingdom halls.}

Remember at the beginning study of Mark, how Mark introduces the ministry and preaching of Jesus as “Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God...” (Mark 1:14) In fact Mark quotes from that preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of God from Mark by writing, Jesus said, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” We do hear repentance; we do hear believe; we do hear gospel; but we do not hear the “kingdom of God”. I think we are on to something: that we have ceased to preach and teach the Gospel message as Jesus preached and taught it. Now, granted what Jesus said about the Gospel of the Kingdom of God was a three point message like all good messages should be {remember homiletics 101 of three point and a poem, etc}. The three points you see in an exegesis, or break down of the phrases of Mark 1:15.

The time is fulfilled;
The kingdom of God is at hand; and
Repent and Believe in the Gospel.

Well, once might say that the “times” are different now in that the kingdom of God, through the life, ministry, and death of Christ, with the subsequent work of the Holy Spirit and the Apostles has been fulfilled, so there is no need for that third of the Gospel preaching; and that would be sufficient, if in our contemporary pulpits and Bible teaching which is being heaped up like a fortress for unsound doctrine, we could also hear that the time is fulfilled for the Falling Away which must come before the Second Coming. We do hear about the Second Coming, but how adequate can our Bible be on that matter when we neglect the very two signs that must happen before the Second Coming, as Paul gives in II Thessalonians, the Falling Away and the appearance of
the man of sin, the son of perdition?

The bottom line of the contrast between the preaching of Jesus and the preaching and teaching of today is that we have dropped two-thirds of the Gospel message. We have replaced a three part message with a one part message, dropping for all practical purposes—and you know this to be true by what you are hearing and by what you are not hearing—the "time is fulfilled" and "the kingdom of God is at hand". What happens to Christians when they do not hear and teach two-thirds of the Gospel; what happens to local churches and denominations when they not longer understand and hold up the gospel of the kingdom of God; and what happens in that part of the kingdom of God that is apportioned to local churches and the church of the total body of Christ when the kingdom of God is no longer important.

We would seem to me that this is like training a soldier without the mention of "gun"; or of training a golfer without the usage of the word "club"; or of the training of a football player without the concepts of "blocking" and "tackling". Now, granted that the large churches of many denominations strung across our country side, especially in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, and the room still left for so many small churches, have vastly departed from the New Testament pattern. Church schools helped saved the local churches in the communities and now wag the dog instead of the tail; the concept of "elder" as the same as a pastor or shepherd, with the realities of actual church employment have replaced the place of leadership of seniority in churches in favor of a popularity among youth {the loss of sound doctrine has been much greater than the gain of youthful enthusiasm, and both existed in New Testament churches as you see about John Mark and the Apostle Paul who worked out their differences to the benefit of the kingdom of God}; numbering of the people of God, once prohibited in Numbers, has replaced that prohibition with the church roll; automatic acceptance in going from a church in Jerusalem to a church in Antioch, for example in New Testament times, has been replaced by a certain American Democratic Faith process whereby existing church members find exclusiveness and status in voting on new members; and we could go on and on about the way local churches have departed from the pattern and practices of New Testament churches, of course the creation and maintenance of a deacon board like a board of trustees in
other American financial institutions is one, with a subsequent departure from the serving of the material welfare of church members as in the first churches.

Yet even if we could rationalize this as a natural evolution under the leadership of the Holy Spirit as He guided our professionals and denominational leaders, which we can not rationalize, then we are left with the puzzling question as to where the words “kingdom of God” went from our Gospel message; and what did we lose of important Bible and spirituality when we dropped this part of the truth from our messages, teachings, and our sound doctrines. Did the kingdom of God disappear some where along the line of history from Jesus to the present day? It can hardly disappear as Jesus told us the parable of the mustard seed of how large with time and history it would grow to be larger than all the other seeds. Perhaps, one might respond that it has become so large, well-established, that like our large church buildings which seem to be impregnable and immutability, we drive by them to almost ignore them.

I recall hearing the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, once under George W. Truett a powerhouse of conservatism and evangelism, lament to his congregation and over radio that “nothing significant has happened in this church for years.” The pastor of Preston Wood Baptist church should also admit that, it the custom of large and small churches was not to cover up; also of the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth, and similar churches in Weatherford, Mineral Wells, and Garland. As one of our SBC leaders said years ago, “We Baptists are many, but we are not much.” The sad story is that all that happens among the church members at those large and small churches stays right there in those church walls. You can pass by them for months, even live near them, and except for the seeing of cars come and go, never see the Christ ministry of that building, although you know a lot of busy work for the denomination is going on. But we will not labor the point, I think most are willing to admit, that there is a vast and rapidly increasing gap between Christ and church membership. It is only hoped to honestly explore the possibility that our loss of the meaning and message of the “gospel of the kingdom of God” has made a significant contribution to that gap, alias that Falling Away from God, Christ, and the Bible: a Falling Away that is directly proportion to an increase in numbers, and
a Falling Away where accusations against the youth are uncalled for since this Second Great Falling Away in all probability will be much like the First Great Falling Away of the children of Israel in the 40 year wilderness wanderings where all under 21 years of age were safe.

I would think that this wise, Bible-based pastor, had in mind that the First Baptist Church of Dallas would make some contribution to the kingdom of God; and how different would churches and denominations today be if the leaders would challenge church members to growth of the kingdom of God. A challenge of the actual implementation of the flippant prayers for the kingdom of God, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Of course, this would necessitate many changes in the life of that individual church member to truly implement in their own life the will of God. There is a small part in the kingdom of God where we are actually in charge, and that is in the realm of that part of the kingdom of God which is our own life; and there is where the will and desires of God must reign supreme even as they reign supreme among the multitudes of heaven.

New Birth and the Kingdom of God

I know you have heard about the new birth. Fundamentalists which now dominant the largest Protestant denomination in the world are famous for their “born again” concepts. While the fundamentals of this important Bible doctrine of the new birth are distorted by them as they use the same hunt and peck, pick and choice methods of Bible exegesis as on so many other doctrines, we must recognize that you do hear about it from them. {Unfortunately it has replaced the forgiveness of sins by God with a public approval of changed character and behavior for politicians like one of the favorite lines of the movie Chicago, “the whole world loves a converted sinner”.) And as previously discussed in this book, centered around understanding of the parable from Jesus of the seed and the sower, is that when the seed down on stony or thorny ground instantly received with joy, that instant joy is interpreted as instant new birth, when in reality spiritual birth like physical birth takes at least 9 months. Again, God can convert instantly, and don’t use Paul as an example since Jesus said that Paul had been kicking against the pricks for a long time; but it is just that more normally according to the
plan and program of God on the new birth, and according to the comparison of Jesus Himself with the physical birth of John 3, it normally takes at least 9 months. It requires 9 months to see if there is any root; it takes 9 months to see if persecutions and tribulations because of that Word are going to cause stumbling; and it takes at least 9 months to know if the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches are going to choke it out, no matter how marvelous the seeming conversion was in that meeting or personal encounter. You see just like our admiration of the visibility and appearance of our large church buildings, and the large visible size of our church rolls, even so is our preference for the visibility of salvation and immediately over the invisible aspects of the kingdom of God.” Look again at the teaching of Jesus to Nicodemus on the new birth.

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)

How important is it for all of us who expect eternal life, and for all of those who still hope to come around to the necessary conditions of the Bible for eternal life, to “see the kingdom of God”. We know from Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount, that to see the kingdom of God is the equivalent of seeing God; and likewise seeing the kingdom of God is the equivalent of being with the eternal God, and His Son, in eternity. You might want to say that “seeing the kingdom of God” is the equivalent of salvation. Okay, well why don’t we include that in our message when we are trying to explain the salvation of God. Well, it confuses people, one might respond to try to explain the kingdom of God while we are trying to explain the new birth, repentance, and belief. Well, well, well...therein is part of the problem that we have insufficiently preached and taught the whole truth of God and Christ in the very fundamentals of initial salvation, so that we have grown up at least one generation that is almost completely ignorant of the kingdom of God. Shame...shame...shame! And it is even worse if your church or denomination has come to the point beyond ignorance, of an intolerance toward sound doctrine that Paul predicted in II Timothy 4:3, as “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...”

And when the Pharisee Nicodemus protested with the ridiculous
image of an old man entering the second time into the womb, for another 9 months, Jesus once again reinforced the necessity of the “kingdom of God” part of the Gospel message in the following words.

“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”’ (John 3:5)

Even as most know that actual birth is referred to as the breaking of the water, and that in physical birth the babe resides in water-like fluids, even so beyond the physical birth by water is the spiritual birth by the power of God through the Holy Spirit; and it is important to hear and teach and preach the whole story of Jesus on salvation and the new birth, as the means of entrance into “the kingdom of God”. You see we are so eager to add one more number for entrance into our church roll and building, that we neglect what has truly happened—if indeed it has truly happened after we wait 9 months for the Biblical and Jesus-based new birth. Oh, that we might lament over the lack of fundamentals from the fundamentalists caused not only by their lack of a good spirit, being dominated by a fighting spirit, but also by their inadequate hunt and peck methods of Bible exegesis which place pragmatism and the functionality of the moment over the ultimate welfare of the kingdom of God. Perhaps this is another reason I can see congregations cring when I read of the kingdom of God and Christ in I Corinthians 15: not only a step back for the real exegesis of how Christ Second Coming is, then the end—they want to look for a thousand years between the Second Coming and the end; but also a step back when we talk of how God puts all things under the feet of Christ, excluded in those all things is God the Father, and of how Christ will then deliver “the kingdom of God the Father” to the Father in order that God the Father may be all in all. Look at it again.

“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom of God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.” (Mark 15:24)

Who does Jesus deliver “kingdom of God the Father” to? Naturally, to God the Father. It was the Father’s kingdom before Christ came on earth, and in all the aeons of time of the Old
Testament; it was the “kingdom of God” when Jesus preached on this earth of the Gospel; it was salvation for the kingdom of God when the Apostles in Acts and in letters of Paul took over the Gospel message; and at the end of time, when Christ comes again, dominates all kingdoms of this earth and reigns supreme, it will again be the kingdom of God the Father that Jesus delivers to God the Father.

Kingdom of God in the Gospel Preaching of the Other Gospels

Before we check out some references to how the Apostles, in Acts and in the letters of Paul, preached the Gospel of the kingdom of God, that is as to whether they actually included “the kingdom of God” in that message, we will check what some of the other Gospel writers have to say on the subject. We know what the results will be, as in all other cases where we find a consistency from the mind and heart of God between Mark and the other Gospel writers, we will find a consistency here; but since we have on the contemporary scene false teachers with PhD’s, ThD’s, and influence, we should reinforce our Bible studies with a little reality. Since the “kingdom” is found 54 times in Matthew, and primarily from Jesus Himself, let us look at a few pertinent and typical examples. In Matthew 3:2 the message of John the Baptist was at least a two part message, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”, even though it is “the kingdom of heaven” instead of the “kingdom of God”; we do know with our background on The Sermon on the Mount how interchangeable in meaning is the kingdom of heaven and of God. And in Matthew 4:17 is the equivalent of Mark 1:14,15 with the beginning of the Galilean Ministry, where Matthew quotes from Jesus as saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Interesting how Mark heard “kingdom of God” and Matthew heard “kingdom of heaven”, and I would like in the actual event, much longer than what is recorded, that Jesus either spoke both, or the words are almost the equivalent in the dictionary. At least they must be synonyms. If we check a standard dictionary on “kingdom”, we find the following.

“1 archaic : KINGSHIP
2 : a politically organized community or major territorial unit having a monarchical form of government headed by a king or
queen
3 often capitalized  a : the eternal kingship of God  b : the realm in which God's will is fulfilled
4 a : a realm or region in which something is dominant  b : an area or sphere in which one holds a preeminent position.”

Of course of the four definitions here, the definition that would apply would be, except for Daniel and other Prophets in the Old Testament where kingdom is more a political kingdom like in number 2, it would be number 3, a. of “the eternal kingship of God” and b. Of “the realm in which God’s will is fulfilled.” Of course when it comes to the end time after the Second Coming of Christ as He subdues all over kingdoms and reigns and delivers the dominant kingdom to God the Father, then number 4 would also apply, “a realm or region in which something is dominant” or “an area of sphere in which one holds a preeminent position.” That is sort of interesting here. We might call it a little message from the Webster Collegiate dictionary as to one reason that we don’t use the word kingdom in our churches very often. Can it not be that based on 4b. Christ does not dominant and Christ does not hold a preeminent position. The pastor, or deacon, or some loud group of the church hold dominance and preeminence; and at least we have the intellectual honesty not to claim a kingdom of God and Christ ruling over our church when we indeed that many other things rule over our churches.

WE might also look up “kingdom of God” in a Bible dictionary, say in EEORDMS DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE. First of all the heading itself under the definition is given is “KINGDOM OF GOD, KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

“The sovereignty or realm ruled by God. The image of the kingdom of God/heaven is n important on for understanding the message and ministry of Jesus, particularly as he is portrayed in the Synoptic Gospels {Matthew, Mark, and Luke}. This image builds on the images of kingly rule found in the OT, and it gives rise to NT discussions of the end times (or eschaton).”

    Kingdom of God in the Gospel Preaching of the Apostles

This is good; but we may become impatient to find where “the kingdom of God” was dropped from the preaching and teaching
of the Gospel, hoping still that is was by the Apostles and under
the leadership of the Spirit, rather than by us! First of all the
word “kingdom” is found 8 times in Acts, admittedly quite a drop
over the preachings of Christ, while we recall that the book of
Acts is often called the book of the works of the Apostles and
the Holy Spirit. We should be reminded as in Acts 1:3 of how
Jesus made Resurrection appearances for 40 days, and by many
“infallible proofs” as Dr. Luke relates, being seen of many people;
and of how during that period of time Jesus “spoke of things
pertaining to the kingdom of God”. It is important that Jesus
continued to teach His disciples, even after the doctrines of the
cross and resurrection, of the kingdom of God—how they needed
it as well as it was the way to continue to promote the kingdom of
God—and that likewise our ministries to new disciples, and after
initial salvation, should include things about the kingdom of God!
We can go too far on the kingdom, and we can go off on tangents
about the kingdom, if our goal is to discern or prove when and
what is going to happen to Israel and their kingdom restoration,
as the apostles asked him in Acts 1:6. You can see how much the
disciples still needed to learn with the answer of Jesus: “it is
not for you to know times or season which the Father has put in
His own authority...” (Acts 1:7) The time and the season now, as
Jesus continued to tell the Apostles, was to cordially welcome
and receive special power of the Holy Spirit on the first day of
Pentecost after His ascension, and to be witnesses into the whole
world. Yes, Dr. Luke starts the book of Acts, just like he and John
Mark ended Mark and Luke. {And while we must continue to look
at the Gospel messages of the Apostles of Acts, I think that
what Jesus is not telling us here is that later He will chose
and train the Apostle Paul to straighten out the issues about
the kingdom of Israel and any possible explantion; and also
the Apostle John as he will as one of the last books of the
New Testament write the book of Revelation.}

In Acts.

Acts 8:12 we must include the evangelist Philip in the list of
those after Christ who preached the Gospel, and while hold a
revival meeting in Samaria, and as the people there believed him,
the record said, that they also believed the things that he spoke
about: (1) “as he preached the things concerning the kingdom
of God”; and (2) “as he preached the things pertained to the
name of Jesus Christ”. Acts 14:22, about the first missionary
journey of Paul and Barnabas and at Derbe where Paul “preached
the gospel to that city and made many disciples”, and beyond the
initial disciple making process of Derbe came the “strengthening”
disciples process of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch where they
were exhorted to continue in the faith; and Dr. Luke quotes
part of that strengthening of disciples message, I am sure for
our benefit, as “We must through many tribulations enter the
kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22)

And one might say, “Ah here is the difference between our
Gospel message and the training of disciples today, we
don't need the kingdom emphasis because we do not need
the 'tribulation' emphasis”; and while much could be said
about, but not right now, we should be reminded of how
it takes tribulations and persecutions for the sake of the
Word, as in the stony ground of the Seed and the Sower,
to prove that our instant new birth has been more than a
lack of root and a stumbling.

In Acts 19:8, a record of the Apostle Paul talking in the synagogue
at Ephesus and on his second missionary journey, reasonings
“concerning the things of the kingdom of God” were so important
that Paul persuaded them on the subject for 3 months. In Acts
20:25 where Paul bids farwell to the Elders of Ephesus, and at
Miletus, he consider matters of the “kingdom of God” to be so
important in that while he attempts to summarize for these elders
what he taught and preached in Asia Minor, he mentions “among
whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God”. (Acts 20:25)
In Acts 28:23, under guard and Roman captivity in Rome, Paul
when he called the leaders of the Jews together in Rome, has his
message summarized by Dr. Luke, who of course there with him as
his personal physician, as follows: (1) Paul explained and solemnly
testified of the kingdom of God; and (2) Paul persuaded them
about Jesus from both the Lawand the Prophets, from morning
till evening. That was a long message; but even as audiences were
more accustomed to longer messages in those days compared to
the 20 or 30 inattentive minutes of today, so also did they then
hear more of the “kingdom of God” than we do today!

The Kingdom of God in the letters of Paul.
Since we find the “kingdom”, primary with the phrase “the kingdom
of God" in Romans, I Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, II Timothy and Titus, and in Hebrews; and for a total of 16 times, I think we can safely conclude that "the kingdom of God" was part of the preaching of the Apostle Paul even as we saw it was from Dr. Luke in Acts. We will try to find a few typical references. In I Corinthians 6:9 it is that "the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God". Could our lack of preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom of God in our churches signal a lack of righteousness in our churches, or a lack of willingness to preach the Gospel as Jesus and the Apostles did, in a fear of offended some unrighteous behavior on the part of church members who do come and who do give, perhaps an over tolerance of the tares—recalling, I hope the specifics of unrighteousness of "fornication, idolatry, adulterer, homosexuality, sodom, stealing, covetousness, drunkenness, reveling, and extortion—oh no, do you have executives—we know Lay's father was a Baptist preacher in Missouri, so we expect he and others were also honored members or large Baptist churches in Houston, after all we know as part of the current popular Gospel of Prosperity that wealth is a sign of the blessings of God on a life—of Enron in your church, and you recognize that these are people who make a habit out of these sins, not a one time or a few times happening and where forgiveness from God has not been asked and received).

Or perhaps we want some of the flesh and blood of our congregations, especially if status and money has come with their blue blood, to continue in our toleration of tares to consider themselves as indeed part of the kingdom of God, counter to what Paul preached in I Corinthians 15:50, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor doe corruption inherit incorruption." And with an emphasis on the thought above from I Corinthians where this unrighteousness is a habit of unrighteousness, Paul echoes in Galatians 5:21 about the works of the flesh, I might add the continuous works of the flesh, where "those who practice such things" you see in the practice the habit shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:12). Do you have the courage to preach and teach in your church that the practitioners of unrighteousness can not be part of the kingdom of God, even if part of your local church, your denomination, and even leaders like for example priests who commit sodomy against children? Has our tolerance as part of
the American Democratic Faith and as a toleration of the tares so grown out of balance, along with a correspondence intolerance toward sound doctrine and sound righteousness, that we cringe to talk of, or much less preach against such unrighteousness. {The Human Frailities to be mentioned in a later chapter, and the bad church behavior of II Timothy, has been allowed to run amuck under the disguise of "they are just human", and under the disguise, they need a church and ministry too.}

Lastly we must at least include II Timothy 4:1, from the letter of Paul on the kingdom of God, in order to set an adequate background for the good and bad church behavior of a later chapter, and to comprehend all important was the kingdom of God and Christ to the Apostle Paul.

“I charge you, therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word!” (II Timothy 4:1)

It is the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, so we assume it is also His kingdom; and that it is temporarily Jesus’ kingdom, based on I Corinthians 15, until the reign and dominance of Jesus is completed, and the kingdom is delivered to God the Father.

Kingdom of God in the book of Revelation
Revelation 11:15

“There the seventh angel sounded {seventh is always a number of a completion, so that here the sounding of the seventh trumpet is a completion of the kingdom of God}; and there were loud voice in heaven {you can imagine how many loud voices there were around the Ancient of Days and His court}, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms {notice that both the kingdoms of this world and the kingdoms of God and Christ are plural, as if of a one to one turn-over like the kingdom of the United States is a kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of Europe, and of Israel, and so on, which must puzzle us as we know that the old earth and heaven are destroyed with fire, so what remains of the old kingdoms} of our Lord {here in the New Testament
of the book of Revelation God the Father is not LORD as in the Old Testament, and as in Old Testament quotes, but it is clear as to the fact that it is the Father since the “His Christ” follows} and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15)

The answer, of course, is the settled fact in heaven before it takes place on earth, which when God says it or ordains it, is as good as done; and from verse 19 of the same chapter we realize that the location is above it all, in heaven, and in the temple of God.

Revelation 12:10

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God {here we see a lot of similarity between salvation and the kingdom of God}, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night has been cast down.” (Revelation 12:10)

Chapter 15: Sweeps of Daniel and the Finalized Kingdom.

“Last Things” or end time events have become known in the Biblical world as “eschatology”. And some of the weirdest and most unsound Bible teachings in the world have come out of eschatology, not to be confused with the real eschatology of the Bible itself. Since part of the problem of these interpreters of last things who ignore the ASI method of Bible study and teaching is that they most general start and end with the book of Revelation, taking it completely out of the context of the other teachings of Christ and of the Bible as if the book of Revelation was not part of the authorized Semi-Public Word of God, in reality and in interpretation. Many have take advantage of the neglect by most believers of last things and the book of Revelation, to spin their horrifying tales with scary and awesome symbols and charts. You can generally tell the real ASI interpreters from the charlatans when they drag out charts to show you elaborate timelines and kingdom phases, like as originated with Darby and Scofield, and like Tim LeHaye has done with his other books
not considered to be fiction. In short, in order to keep such errors of interpretation caused by such private interpretations, independent of Jesus and the Prophets, we will considered last things from Daniel, Jesus in Mark 13 and Matthew 24, and from the book of Revelation, showing the similarity in the method of sweeps and in the parable like nature of the teachings. If we succeed, and you buy it, we will have come one giant step forward in throwing off of the yoke of the fundamentalists which they have intimidated and forced on the Southern Baptist Convention. If the foundation for Bible conservatism and salvation is their pre-millineum beliefs where they have intimidated, and we throw off that yoke, at the same time we can start a revival that can likewise destroy their hold on control and on a spirit of warfare that has crept over the Convention like a dark cloud. {I must say that surely this is the most destructive of all bad influences on the kingdom today that has helped to bring on the Falling Away; and surely if Osama Bin Laden or the Pope were not such logical candidates for the man of sin, we might have to chose a fundamentalist to fit that role.}

The Five sweeps of Daniel

While I target for “last things”, sometimes called “end times” or eschatology, is Mark 13 with additional understanding from Matthew 24 and Luke, the legitimate place to start with this awesome subject of last things is in the book of Daniel, after we have gained some perspective from the Apostle Peter’s great sermon on the day of Pentecost, as he explained exactly what was happening with Coming of the Holy Spirit to earth in a special way. Peter and the Prophet Joel explain each other, typing the events of that day together with the “last days” as Peter quotes from Joel 2:28-32 on the famous subject of the Day of the LORD from the Old Testament. Far better than running off with charts and weird drawings, and interpretations as weird is it to start with something as basic and easy to understand as Peter’s message with his New Testament interpretation of “last days” and the Day of the LORD mentioned so often in the Old Testament, and always with references to the cessation of light from the sun, the moon, and the stars. {That always in New Testament times and today gains attention since the world is quite accustomed to the routine of sunrise, sunset, the stars at night and the moon.} There were two sayings common among
the Hebrews, “tomorrow in Jerusalem” to encourage themselves with better days; and “the Day of the LORD” to denote ultimate justice. And this is also a good principle of the ASI and Bible understanding. Since the Bible is semi-publically interpreted, in other words of “no private interpretation”, and since what the Apostles say about the Old Testament quotes interprets the Old Testament Prophets, and vice versa, we should start with what is most easily understood in the New Testament and from the Apostles of Jesus Himself in order to understand “last things”. Goodness knows, the struggle for Peter to understand was hard; but he had the help of Jesus, the Master Teacher, and don’t forget that Jesus after His resurrection was with them 40 days explaining the things of the kingdom before He Ascended on to heaven. Likewise we must remember that Peter now had the help of the Holy Spirit to understand and explain. We might add that as we get all this information on “last things” from Acts 2, as Peter quotes from Joel 2:28-32, we are also getting info from Dr. Luke who wrote Acts, and I maintain also from the Apostle Paul who left for him manuscripts for research.

You may want to read Acts 2:14-21 right now. You will see that the major part of it is Joel 2:28-32; and you will note how the Apostle Peter in an effort to explain that the other disciples were not drunk as it seemed and since it was so early in the day, explained that what was happening there in Jerusalem at that very moment was that which was predicted by the Prophet Joel. “But this is what was spoken by the Prophet Joel....’ (Acts 2:16) Okay, we need to nail down quickly certain obvious Biblical facts in order to proceed from the Bible with the wide sweep of eschatology.

First, on this first day of Pentecost after the Ascension was the beginning of the “last days”. In the Bible, you have “latter times”, end times, and last days; but you can clearly see from the context of Acts, Peter, and Joel that the last days started with the Coming of the Holy Spirit in great power to take the place of Jesus on earth.

Second, and by the way the end of the last days with the Day of the LORD is also given in Joel and from Peter as “the great and awesome (or notable) day of the LORD”.

The sweep of what happens in-between the beginning and the end of the last days in the order of Joel is: (1) the power and help of the Holy Spirit becomes more democratic and common
during the last days, not like the specialized empowerment of the Old Testament, as say during the period of the Judges; (2) the last days will be a continuous period of signs in the heaven above and the earth beneath, those signs summarized as “blood, fire, and vapor of smoke”—and certainly every year we see those; but (3) just before the Day of the LORD the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood—obviously the shaking of the heavens and the earth that Paul wrote often of, and the earth melting with fervent heat of which Peter writes; and that leaves for the Day of the LORD itself the Second Coming of Christ and the Judgment Court of which we previously read so much in Daniel; and of course another characteristic of the continuity of the last days is the growth of the kingdom of God as “whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved”. This would correlate with the Gospel being preached in every nation from Jesus in Mark 13 and Matthew 24. Also the Fulness of the Gentiles of Paul in Romans. {We would naturally think that while the final days of this old earth are marred by the Falling Away, that with more and more of the signs in the earth beneath and the heavens above, the extent to which humans, hopefully also Jews, call upon the name of the LORD will increase; and we are inclined to think that this unique combination of Falling Away from the tares and the stumbling will be mixed with new and surprising callings on the LORD which Daniel is told is the time of refinement and making white, alias a final tribulation as contrasted to the Great Tribulation which took place obviously during the first few centuries as the most awesome persecution which if not shortened by God would have even deceived the elect.}

With this simple Bible perspective, we will jump into the first four cycles of Daniel, then add to that the fifth cycle which we did not complete in chapter 1. The first sweep is given in the first vision that Daniel himself had and of the four beasts, and the peak and valley events are: (1) God, the Ancient of Days, sitting in Judgment with His court and the power to execute; (2) The Man of Sin, or the Son of Perdition, respectively of the Greek and Roman Empire, like a parable, completely fulfilled in the end time Man of Sin of Paul in II Thessalonians; (3) Other kingdoms under the control and judgement of God and kings given a period of dominion according to the determination of the Ancient of Days; (4) Establishment {not fulfillment} of the Everlasting kingdom
of Christ to rule over all other kings and kingdoms, determined by the Ancient of Days but not truly established on earth until the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and (5) The Second Coming of Christ to finalize the reign of Christ over all other kingdoms of this earth, and then deliverance to the Great Judge that God may be all in all.

Thus in the simplicities of Peter, Acts, and Joel we have with a first broad sweep of Daniel some of the main events of all time and eschatology. We can start our table of peaks and valleys.

With the second sweep of Daniel, of course, our radar sweep of the future must continue to peak up some of the previous peaks and valleys; but since we come closer, we will pick up more peaks and valleys, or at least see some of those previous peaks and valleys clearer. The second sweep is the interpretation of the first vision of Daniel about the four beasts, and we find it we looked at in chapter 1 of this book in Daniel 7:15-27. (1) Daniel has explained to him that these four beasts, like explanations from Jesus in parables, are four kings, giving some more details—therefore we really do not need to add a peak or valley event here; (2) the focus of Daniel's interest is on the details about the little horn, the man of sin or perdition so important throughout history and throughout Daniel's sweeps, mainly on how he speaks very pompous words against the Ancient of Days {we will show this addition of detail in the third column of the Table, which is the second sweep of Daniel, and with the color magneta}; (3) the pompous little horn, the man of sin, in his fight against the saints is prevailing {the Falling Away, of course}; (4) the Ancient of Days judges in favor of the saints and the Lord Jesus Christ executes Judgment at His Second Coming; (5) the son of perdition will be a revolutionary that tries to change “times and laws”, and the saints will be given into his hands for a “time, times, and half a time”; (6) The Court of God takes away the dominion of the man of sin and Satan, destroying it forever: and (7) the greatness of the kingdoms of the earth will be over to the Kingdom of the Most High God where the saints will obey and serve Him.

{We will hasten on to add all of the five cycles of Daniel, Mark 13 and Matthew 24, and the corresponding sweeps of the book of Revelation.}
The third cycle of Daniel is based on the second personal vision of Daniel, Daniel 8:1-28, the vision of the Ram and the Goat and with the interpretation from Gabriel himself, sent from heaven by the command of God as the beginning of Daniel’s prayer. While much of it is about the kings of Persian, Greece, and Rome—which you might if interested in history want to compare with secular history, all well-know facts, we do get additional insight into the little horn, the man of sin again, as the little horn spreads from the north to the south, east, and west; and as the forces on earth join with the fallen forces from heaven to wage war. {You are reminded of the war between Satan and the beast of Revelation which is against the Woman and Her seed, Mary being the woman and the seed being those who would be called saints.} And before we pass on to the fourth cycle, you should know that Gabriel was sent to make Daniel understand about “the time of the end”, to use the words of Gabriel himself.

The fourth sweep of Daniel 9:1-27, with the coming of Gabriel to give an answer to Daniel about what is to be the fate of his people, prayer on which started after Daniel read the Law, the historical books especially Judges, and the Prophets, and in particular as he focused on the 70 weeks of Jeremiah. (1) 70 weeks {or in reality 70 years} is the amount of time from Captivity to great desolation for Israel, God allows in order to let all the transgressions of Israel run their course, to make an end to their rebellion and unfaithfulness, to make reconciliation to God for their sins, to bring in the everlasting righteousness of Christ and the kingdom of God on earth, and to seal up all the Old Testament through the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles {the New Testament record, or the second half of the oracles of God}; (2) From the Restoration until the Messiah comes and will be cut-off {crucified by Israel} will be 69 years; (3) behind that will be the physical realities of temple and Jerusalem destruction, in the abomination of desolation, of the spiritual reality of separation from God and Christ that happened the year after approximately 100,000 Jews were converted; (4) this anti-Christ, a prototype or parable of the ultimate man of sin of the very end times, will be the Roman general Titus, later Caesar, who destroys the temple and Jerusalem in 75 A.D; (5) Satan and the man of sin, during the Falling Away and after the release of Satan by the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit, will prosper under the wings of desolation; and (6) the end of the desolation is in the consummation where
the Jews again receive some spiritual blessings, perhaps more in eternity than here on this earth, although we must allow from Paul and Romans something to happen among the Jews after the Fulness of the Gentiles.

Fifth cycle of Daniel, in Daniel 10-12 with Daniel's personal vision of the Glorious Man. Up to this point, Daniel has received primarily bad news in answer to his prayerful requests as to what will happen to his people. Now, we are hopeful like Daniel for more good news, although as in the nature of all sweeps in Daniel or elsewhere like in Revelation and Mark 13 and Matthew 24, there is much repetition. Here are the prime peaks and valleys, sometimes with just details of the previous peaks and valleys, of this last sweep. (1) while all know chapter 10 to be on Persia, and eleven to start on the famous kings of the north and the south, where the king of the north ultimately turns into the man of sin of the end times, we still must remember how Daniel was informed in an introduction to the interpretation that “the vision refers to many days yet to come” (Daniel 10:14); (2) it is the king of the north, first a Grecian king then a Roman king then the man of sin, that will take away the daily sacrifices and defile the temple in Daniel 11:31, the famous “abomination of desolation” of Daniel and referenced by Jesus in Matthew 24; (3) the people who know God shall be strong and carry out great exploits—obviously Acts and the Apostles including Paul contrasted with only a year from the Jews as “the people who do wickedly against the covenant” and who are flattered by Satan and the next-to-the-last man of sin, the Roman Emperors; (4) While the process continues throughout history and the world of those who understand instructing many (11:33), the great tribulation happens where “they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering”; and then (5) we go all the way to the Falling Away of the final tribulation where “some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end” (11:35) (perhaps you have never thought of the Falling Away period as a time when the kingdom of God, if not the churches, will be (a) refined, (b) purified, and (c) made white from this beginning to the end with the Second Coming, so that we might think of the simultaneous Falling Away and refinement, purification, and whitening as the Final Tribulation; (6) the king of the north, now almost completely turned the final anti-Christ, or man of sin, shows his colors with (a) do according to whatever he wants, (b) exalting himself above
every god, (c) blasphemy against the God of gods (11:36), and (d) prospering right up to the time the cup of wrath is full, (e) ignoring the God of his fathers, (f) ignoring women, (g) put a god of war to whom he is devoted above all else, (h) war against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which has to be no less than Satan himself—and the man will come out in the open to acknowledge this worship and service of Satan, (i) and this king, the final man of sin will advance the “glory” of Satan, (j) he will make wickedness to reign over many and divide up the land for his own gain; (7) NOW WE ARE NEARER TO THE END for the words are “at the time of the end” (11:40), there is a battle between the king of the north and the king of the south who attacks him, but the king of the north will enter the countries and overwhelm them all the way to the Glorious Land of Palestine with a taking of the riches of the lands and countries; (8) News from the east and the north, and the Great battle happens as “he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many” (11:44); (9) as he also plants the “tents of his palace” between the seas the glorious holy mountain, sound like on the Gaza strip doesn’t it; (10) “yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him” (11:45); (11) there shall be a time of trouble such as never seen from the beginning to then; (12) this is the time of deliverance of the people of Daniel, every one who is found written in the book of life; (13) the body resurrection of the all the dead with a separation into a group of (a) shame and a (b) group of “some to everlasting life” during the period of which some will shine like the firmament and like the stars forever.

Since we have obviously come to eternity with the Judgement separation of the shamed and the recepients of everlasting life, we will need a sixth cycle or sweep in order to finish Daniel 12:4-13, which is especially addressed to Daniel, but also applicable to us. (1) Shut up the book from now to the time of the end; and (2) from now to the time of the end, “many shall run to and fro” {an obvious increase in world travel}, and knowledge shall increase “ {obviously the information explosion}; (3) how long until the fulfillment of all these wonders Daniel asks, and receive the answer of a “time, times, and half a time” so here specifically the time, times, and half a time is applied to history from the time of Daniel to the very end—time would be from Daniel until the Jews are cut off from salvation, times would be the time of the last days, the preaching of the Gospel to every nation,
and the Fulness of the Gentiles, and the half-time would be that short period of the Falling Away, the realization of the Man of Sin, and the Release of Satan with the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from earth, corresponding also to the Final Tribulation, and somewhere in there before the Second Coming of Christ comes with the final great battle lead against the man of sin and Satan; (4) all of the things mentioned will be completely fulfilled as in the Falling Away and withdrawal of the Holy Spirit, "the power of the holy people has been completely shattered"; (5) Again is the re-interation in this sixth cycle like in the fifth cycle of how "many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and one of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." (12:10).

Chapter 16: Mark 13-16 and the Second Coming.

How can we summarize Mark 13 through Mark 16 which includes with the eschatology of Jesus in Mark 13, both good news and bad news, both encouragements and discouragements, as well in the remaining chapters events like the capture, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus—both bad and sad but necessary for the completion of the plan of God for the salvation of the world, and the good news of the Resurrection, only made possible because of the death of the Crucifixion; and then before the Ascension of the last words of chapter 16, the amoral news of the great commission, since it is a command, perhaps both good and bad in implications.

You know, in spite of the fact that God and Christ set up the chief priests as well as the Roman Emperor for His crucifixion, I suppose that at any point the value of the crucifixion was in jeopardy since Jesus could have failed at any point by a single act of anger or sin. This was no doubt the reason He was so silent during the trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin and before the Roman ruler, Pilate, and even before the mockings of the Roman soldiers. At any point with legions of angels, and awesome power, the Son of God who performed numerous miracles on nature and humanity, could have exhibited a like power of wrath and judgment. However, He had to be as it turned out He was through all these trials and temptations, "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The Lamb of God foretold by John the Baptist, the same Lamb of God of the Old Testament as
a sufficient sacrifice because “without blame and blemish” must go all the way through the shadow of the cross and the cross itself into very death without a moment of anger or other sin. I also think this is another reason that God sent Moses and Elijah to the Mount of Transfiguration to counsel with the One they knew from heaven, to leave no stone unturned in preparation for the cross so that unlike Moses who was angered at the rock of Horeb and Elijah who was angered at being alone in Israel, Jesus might retain complete control of the situation, maintaining the flawless character that was necessary as a sufficient sacrifice to God for the sins of the world.

“What will Be the Sign of Your Coming, and of the end of the Age?”

So quickly do the events in the life and teachings of Jesus pass from the Temple in Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, from the disciples attempting to solicit an admirable response by the type of stones and the magnitude of the Temple buildings to their question above on the Mount, that we might miss the transition of two verses at the Temple (Mark 13:1,2 and Matthew 24:1,2), where Jesus wisely starts the disciples thinking on last things with His forecast of the one stone not left on the other as the Romans will in 75 A.D. destroy Jerusalem and the temple, and to the Mount where their thoughts will bring forth the questions of Mark 13:3,4 and Matthew 24:3. Of course in the first case, actually at the temple, and the second case, on the Mount, there is a good view of the Temple. And never forget the place in the heart of God, and therefore of Jesus, for His holy mountain and His holy temple: a place that He is about to give up for thousands of years as He controls the Roman destruction of the temple with the daily sacrifice, and the destruction of Jerusalem with another scattering of the rebellious children of Israel. The temple and Jerusalem will only be restored after the end of this age, as with the new heavens and the new earth, a new temple and city is lowered from heaven to sit on that holy mount.

“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately. ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?’” (Mark 13:3,4)
While Mark tells us the most details about the “seating” on Mount Olives, in that he relates how the view is opposite that of the temple and how it is not all twelve of the disciples who ask Jesus about “last things”, it is Peter, James, John, and Andrew. {Interesting that Andrew has joined the special inner group of the disciples of the Mount of transfiguration}, Matthew 24 and 25 gives us more details with two chapters and a combined 97 verses on eschatology than the one chapter and 37 verses of Mark 13. Of course we already know that Mark is a more action filled and abbreviated form of the events in the life and teachings of Jesus. However the questions that Jesus will now answer in Mark 13 and in Matthew 24 and 25 are the same: (1) when will these events like you were talking about at the temple earlier happen; and (2) what sign do we look for to herald “Your coming” {the Second Coming, of course}, and of the end of the age? It would lead us to think that, at least at this point, disciples—four of them if not all of them—knew that the end of time, or the end of the age to use the exact words of the Bible—was the same. In other words, the Second Coming of Christ marked the end of time and of the age, and the beginning of a new age called eternity. {Much of the Bible calls it a period of a new heaven and a new earth with a new Jerusalem and a new temple, and even a new people made “white”, to use some of the words of Daniel.}

Even as Daniel in the last sweep has introduced the processes of “refinement, purification, and whitening” along with the Falling Away, in such a manner and from such a distance as in a sweep to see them as one, we must allow Jesus here to refine, or separate the two in such a way, that we can see the distinction; and what we will find with a careful study of Mark 13 and Matthew 24,25 is that while some measure of refinement between the tares and the wheat, between the goats and the sheep, takes place during the Falling Away, at the end of the Falling Away when Christ comes the second time, the full refinement happens, also the purification of the wheat or sheep made like Christ as they met Him in the air—at the same time as the sheep are placed by the angels on the right hand of Christ, then the goats on the left hand and bundled up for eternal fire, or the equivalent in the parable of tares and wheat of the tares bundled up for eternal fire while the wheat is purified. But that is jumping ahead of the story somewhat. Or by the way, the whitening comes in the eternal kingdom of God,
and in the presence of God and Christ, when like Moses on Mount Sinai and Jesus on the Mount of transfiguration, the presence of God rubs off on us! And one additional remark: Jesus is the same source in both cases, in the last sweeps of Daniel, if most of the conservative commentators are correct, having near the end visions taken the place of Gabriel, who needed his assistance in the warfare with Persia [this is the modern day “Iran” and I wonder if we are being told something about the last great battle of this earth age, already you see the influence of Iran to come against Israel and Jerusalem as exerted in Iraqi, southern Lebanon, Syria, and in Gaza].

“Your Coming” and “the End of the Age”

We have two key phrases here which are truly two key teachings of all the Bible, and of course, of Jesus. That should be called “doctrines of eschatology” or “doctrines of last things”; although the word doctrine is often in contemporary ill repute, partly because of a misunderstanding of how doctrine means the same as teachings, and partly because the word doctrine as something living, like salvation, is not understood. Often in previous books I have tried to explain about the “doctrine of Christ” mentioned in the Bible as living doctrine as Christ is the living Christ, that was dead but arose on the third day, and lives forevermore to make intercesstion for our sins at the right hand of God until He comes again to take us unto Himself and the Father in the house of many mansions. Likewise when we request in prayer the forgiveness of sins, as we should often, and we base our plea to God for the promise of forgiveness, while it is based on the specific words of the Bible, behind the words is the character of God on which it is really based. And during the Falling Away from the kingdom of God, the tares or goats, are really putting distance between themselves and the characters of God and Christ.

I think it is marvelous that even four disciples had come to understand about The Second Coming of Christ, the “Your Coming”, even before the completion of the first coming in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; and that the disciples had come to make the “End of the Age” synonymous with the Second Coming. Perhaps, Mathew is letting us know about only the four disciples as he tells more details of the event in order to let us know that all twelve, especially Judas Iscariot,
had not come to understand the sameness. These four did have Daniel to read; they had been schooled on it as from youth; and as they read it again near the end of Jesus' life, no doubt even discussed it among themselves and with Jesus, they were looking more for signs of when to expect the simultaneous events than for confirmations of the realities that the Second Coming and the End of this world age would happen.

The “end of this age” and the Second Coming loom large in the parables and other teachings of Mark 13 and Matthew 24, 25, also of the parable of the tares and the wheat of Matthew 13:24-30 and Matthew 13:36-43, immediately after the parable of the seed and the sower and the explanation that we primarily looked at in Mark previously. The parable of the tares and the wheat is in Matthew 13:24-30 and the explanation in Matthew 13:36-43. Since we are fortunate enough as disciples who read the Bible to have the explanation from Jesus Himself as recorded in Matthew 13:36-43 we will look their for “Your Coming”, “the end of the age”, and even mentions of the kingdom of God and Christ. {Even as the Day of the LORD of the Old Testament blends into the Day of the LORD God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament, so does the kingdom of God blend into the kingdom of Christ in the New Testament. And you know the story from I Corinthians 15 how Christ after through His angels He completes the submission of the earth will deliver that kingdom to God the Father in order that God may be all in all!}

Key words of “Christ's Coming”, “end of the age”, and kingdom in the Parable of the tares and wheat: “the field is the world” (13:38), “the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom” (13:38), “but the tares are the sons of the wicked ones” (13:38) {and right away we see the interesting fact that it is hard, if not impossible to distinguish the tares in the kingdom from the tares in the whole world since the field in which the separating angels will find the tares is the extent of the whole world”; “the enemy who sowed them {the tares} is the devil” (11:39), “the harvest is the end of the age” (11:39) {ah, we have here our first mention of the “end of the age” and we will find that it becomes synonymous with the sending our of the Returned Christ His angels—you might think here of the almost limitless power of angels to carry out the will and commissions of God, and to think of the power of a
legion, or legions which Christ always had at His command, even in the Garden of Gethsemanne before crucifixion, and the millions of millions of angels He will being with Himself at the Second Coming—this also allows us to see how easily, almost with a breath, Jesus will wipe away all opposition to Himself, including the army of the north of the Great Battle where no one will help the man of sin, how could they help against millions of angels, one angel can take care of one army like one Texas Ranger can take care of one riot}. “Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age” (11:40) {notice that it is “this age” as contrasted to the end of the age and as contrasted to the age to come which is eternal in duration}; “The Son of Man {you know, I’m sure that this is Christ} will send out His angels {it appears that immediately after His appearance which later we will learn is an appearance to all the world at one time, “every eye shall see Him”, the reigning complete work of Christ starts with a sending out of the angels to the four corners of the earth}, and they will gather out of His kingdom {there it is, “gather out of His kingdom, and do you see how the kingdom is more a subset of the field which is the world, as the angels under the instructitons of Christ, like always in the things of Christ He has made preparation as to which angel goes where, like the detailed preparations of a large battle plan} all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness...(13:41) {out of the kingdom could two types of tares: (1) those who offend, and we think naturally, as we should, of the offenses to little children where the little children cover all of the kingdom, from the smallest child to the largest child-like faith; and (2) those who practice sin, once again a continuous practice or habit of sin. Perhaps we can glean some toleration for the tares, both those inside the kingdom and those outside the kingdom in the larger world, as we realize the fate of both.

“and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 13:42)

And lest we not realize that this is the same end of the age event of which Daniel writes, you need only to look at the similarity of the wording about the shining, like whitening no doubt, of the righteous. Also you should see that with the tares removed from the kingdom, the wheat will stand out better, like whitening.
"Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father {notice that the kingdom of Christ has become the kingdom of God the Father}. (Matthew 13:43)

"At that time your people shall be delivered {this is the answer to Daniel's question as to what will happen to His people and as to the later question as to the “end of these things”, and while Daniel may not have understood that His people would be Jews and Gentiles as Paul so aptly explains in Romans, there is the possibility that he knew even the children of Abraham were the children of faith more than children by birth; and the magnificent fact we have here is a matter of DELIVERANCE, the second coming of Christ immediately after the Falling Away and the Last Tribulation is called in the Bible, THE DELIVERANCE}, every one who is found written in the book {the angels have done their homework in heaven, ready the gigantic book of names written there, which I maintain is more like a wall not unlike the Vietnam war memorial; and having determine where is the remains of the present life of that name have been assigned to go out to fetch that person to be delivered}. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake {you see the angels have to have previously correlated the name in the book with the location of the dead, this is the famous RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD of Corinthians, but the dead are separated here also in Daniel into the two groups of tares and wheat, although only Jesus uses those terms} some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt {while the fire of Jesus' parable is not here, the shame and everlasting contempt is sufficient get the picture and the harrow, just the eternal banishment and contempt from God is enough for eternal punishment, even if that were all}. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament {the wise and shining, of course, correlates with the wheat of the parable, and the shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of God the Father, and then there is a group that shines even more in the eternal kingdom} And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever." (Daniel 12:1-3)

Even as there is a challenge to abstain to the tares of two groups in the kingdom {likewise in the local church} to abstain from offences against other lesser kingdom members and to stop the
habitual practices of sin while naming the name of Christ, so also is there the challenge to the wheat to either shine like the brightness of the stars {a lesser whitening} or to shine like the sun {the greater brightness}.

Toleration of the Tares

Parenthetically, this is not to say that we can so tolerate the tares because of sympathy for their ultimate fate, that we can allow them unabated to offend little children and other lesser members of the kingdom by the use of their bad influences and habits of sinning. Even during the time of the Falling Away, when the power or influence of the holy people and the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit, allows these tares to shine in the kingdom like wheat, we must (1) seek to counter their offenses and influences; and (2) seek to expose and remove their practices of unrighteousness. All the time we know that during the Falling Away, the tares and the leaders of the tares will look more like wheat than tares; and the wheat will be made by the tares to appear like the real tares. There will be the challenge to judge righteous judgment, to look not on the appearance but on the realities; and of course, as always the teachings of the Bible on the Falling Away and the bad church behavior that leads into the Falling Away will help us through this crisis time {although we are told by the Son of God Himself in Daniel 12 to seal it up until the end time events make clear the end of the age in the 1335 days as contrasted to the 1290 which is the beginning of the Falling Away, we are allowed to see even as in the difference between the 70 weeks and 69 weeks of Daniel, the period of time of the Falling Away of 45 years. At least it might seem that way, although we must also wait for that, for those of us that indeed live through the 45 years of the Falling Away, and which has not yet been made definite to us in a visual of the man of sin, unless Osama Bin Laden--a lieutenant, son, or follower—is indeed that man of sin or son of perdition.}

As in The Falling Away sin abounds and the love of many waxes cold, even while the tares in the kingdom {those outside the kingdom will hardly care} will know that they will not endure sound doctrine, will even recognize that they are seeking teachers with itching ears to comfort them and will recognize that they
build up a fortress around themselves and around other tares, often the controlling influences in a church, to protect against the sound doctrines of the wheat, they will begin to recognize their “offenses” as characteristics of the elect and their unrighteousness habits as just shortcomings of humanity; and they will not even know—without eyes to see, ears to hear, and doctrines of the Bible as contrasted to the doctrines of mean, and their vain worship in place of a worship from the heart—the point at which they turn away from the truth of Christ completely and turn into the subtle fables of Satan. Those very characteristics that make them tares in the sight of the Returning Christ, and of the angel that comes to fetch them, will in the end not allow them to recognize themselves as tares until either that find themselves in the crowd, as controlled by the angels, on the left side of Christ or until they receive the blundling of the fires of eternity. You know, however, I would think that any person who has one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom, which is the case of tares or goats, must suspect that there is something wrong with such compromise; and there will be no great surprise as Christ gets past their marvelous works, which impressed the tares but not Christ, to hear Christ say, “Depart from me you that work inquity, for I never knew you.” And I think that is a key for the rationalizations and justifications of the tares or goats. They become so enamored with their “own marvelous works in the name of Christ”, that they are almost oblivious to their own offenses and habitual practices of unrighteousness. And if the opposition, by preaching as well as influence, against these tares in the kingdom and church were to prevent their offenses toward just one little child and for eternity, would it not be worth the effort for the real Southern Baptists to attempt a re-takeover of the SBC. {This is sedition and heresy in the SBC: I know it, but right now I have not real popularity to lose in the SBC.}

The key words of “end of the age”, “Coming” of Christ, and the kingdom in Mark 13:24-27 where Jesus speaks plainly on His Second Coming and in answer to the questions of the four {and by the way after completion of the cycles or sweep of last things which we will cover after a clear establishment of the Second Coming and the End of this Age, even as it is more important to first establish the event before it is important to look for the signs of the event. You need to know the
event as the four disciples knew the event before you start looking at the signs of the event, else what do you know to look for?}: in those days and after the tribulation, in parable form and like in Daniel, Jesus runs from the Great Tribulation to the Final Tribulation, but with the tale-tale signs of the Day of the LORD {and I hope you see in this and these signs the end of the Age, as contrasted to the signs before the “great and notable day of the Lord of Acts, Peter, and Joel, which come just before that great day in the “blood, fire, and vapor of smoke” of the signs in the heavens above and the earth beneath, the periodic nature of bad things happening on the earth as forecasts and reminders that the worse things of all, in the end, for the tares and the best of all things for those who will shine} of darkened sun and moon, with the stars falling from heaven {this is almost a new one} and the powers in the heavens shaken {this is entrophy, the lack of system coming to fruition in the universe and the shakings without gravitational attraction between heavenly bodies, and no telling what else Christ less loose of at the time, as the One through whom all things consist—it looks like Jesus lets go of some of those works of holding together the universe in favor of His Coming and subsequent Judgment and reigning work, of course on purpose and on plan}; “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory” (Mark 13:26)

“And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of heaven.” (Mark 13:27)

The wheat and sheep are here plainly called, and by Jesus Himself “His elect”. The angels, you can see and according to the plan worked out in heaven before the Second Coming based on the names written on the wall of heaven, deploy to the four corners of the earth to pick up the living and dead of the elect. That is the job of the angels. By the way, do you notice that the
angels also go up into heaven to get many of the elect that have previously died as the elect. No mention of the tares or the goats here, but the four disciples are hearing the kind of assurances about themselves and the rest of the elect that they wanted to hear, and about the people of Daniel who would also receive the DELIVERANCE.

The parable of the fig tree of Mark 13:28-31 \{remember the withered fig tree of Mark 11:12-14 and the lesson of the withered fig tree of Mark 11:20-24: "Now learn this parable from the fig tree... this is an interesting parable that Jesus is about to tell right in the middle of His detailed teachings on last things, the events and the signs, and I would have to say that the four are truly ready to learn it, I hope you also\}... When its branch ahs already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near... [Jesus wants disciples to know when the summer of their DELIVERANCE is at hand!]...

So you also, when you see these things happening \{granted that we need a more complete list of these things happening that Jesus enumerates in Mark 13, before this parable, and some appreciation of the sweeps of Mark 13 and Matthew 24, then we like real disciples, if we live that long, will appreciate the nearness to the end of the Age; however, we are in for a surprise if we do not appreciate the cycles, as Jesus will tell the four that they will be alive for some of those signs\}... know that it is near... \{what is "it" but the end of the Age and the Second Coming, no, not in the case of the signs for that generation of disciples to see, it is only for the cycle that goes up to the abomination of desolation of Daniel, the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem around 75 A.D. by General Titus, the second anti-Christ of the man of sin; and you will notice a difference in Mark 13, if not in Matthew 24, that while the sweeps identify themselves by going all the way to the end of the age, that is not the case here\}—at the doors! \{in this case at the doors of Israel, at the doors of the temple and at the gates of Jerusalem\}... Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will be no means pass away till all these things \{all these things related to the temple destruction question\} take place. Heaven and earth will pass away \{and so they will as the new heavens and new earth replace the old heavens and old earth at the turnover of the end of the age\} but My words will by no means pass away \{all of these things, the signs of
the temple destruction and the abomination of desolating of Daniel, and the other signs of blood, fire, and vapor of smoke before the Great and notable Day of the Lord’s Second Coming and the End of the Age will all happen). Do you think that even as Jesus left the impression on the minds and the hearts of these four disciples, and the rest of the disciples, that His return might be immediate, that He also intentionally confused them about the signs more immediate and the ones at the end even as Gabriel and Jesus confused Daniel and us between the signs of near and far, and as the Old Testament does often? Yes, of course we must remember as we will come to in Mark 13:32-37, that Jesus warned at that time He did not know the exact time of His Second Coming and the end of the Age, that no one knew, and only God the Father knew. Jesus had been shared by the Father with the events of the time of sorrows to come on that generation; Jesus had been part as the Son of Man of Daniel and of the other Prophets with knowledge of the destruction of the Temple and the cutting off the nation of Israel until the consummation; but the very last events and signs were known only to God the Father. We must think of how Daniel with learning of future events fainted and was sick for days, and of a certain sympathy from Jesus on these disciples; and a patience with all disciples as to just how much we need to know and when, although we are given many signs about both immediate and far future events. The exact time of the end of the 1335 days of Daniel, and the same as the Second Coming and the End of the Age of the teachings of Jesus, are not given; and will not be understood as Christ said to seal them up until they become clear to the disciples of the Falling Away, and that is the time to know.

The “beginning of sorrows” from Jesus and of Mark 13:5-8 that begin immediately after His Ascension, among those signs to be seen by that generation, but also to be seen by future generations up to the end of the Age as the same signs continue: Many will come in the name of Christ, claiming to be Christ, and deceiving many in the world (13:6); don’t look for the end even though you continual will hear of “wars and rumors of wars”, nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom {wow, do you think Christ’s implications were board enough here to include a worldly kingdom against a spiritual kingdom, but that could be reading too much into it like fuedamentalists like to do}; earthquakes in various places, famines, and troubles {by the way
in the teachings when Jesus stops warning about the end is not yet, is and are signs and events of the end!); Jesus identifies these as “the beginning of sorrows” only (13:8); also in the continuing sorrows that this generation will see are arrests before councils, beatings, paraded before kings and rulers for the testimony of Christ, “and the gospel must first be preached to every nation” (Mark 10:13).

We have a tremendous transition here at this saying from Jesus in Mark 10:13 and about the necessity of the preaching of the gospel to every nation, that Mark does not tell us about. We do find it in Matthew 24: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come.” (Matthew 24:14) {By the way, notice it is the “gospel of the kingdom”, also in Matthew like the introduction to the gospel and kingdom in Mark; and that here we see the transition to the end even as the preaching of the gospel to every nation becomes within itself a sign of the end of the Age.} Our point here though in the event on Mount Olives, looking at the temple, is that this point in the eschatological teachings mark an event for the End rather than a sign related to the destruction of the Temple. So that when we come to these words we are clearly in a second sweep from Jesus, of Mark 13 and Matthew 24, that will include as a continuation many of the beginnings of the first sweep like the earthquakes, famines, and wars; but which do not include the end since those are signs to be seen by that generation. Perhaps we could come with a division or sweeps like this of: (1) Signs to be seen and events of the present generation of disciples, some of which as the beginning of sorrows or travails continue to the end of the age; (2) Signs based on the beginning of sorrows which continue but go to the end, not seen by that generation of the disciples, charge also with the taking of the gospel to every nation, but who will not be in the generation that sees the taking of the gospel to the whole world which will mark the end of the Age.

I think it is obvious, with Mark among them, that Mark is more concerned with the teachings of Jesus for that immediate generation, which would be understandable. And it is also only Matthew who tells us of things that will happen in both sweeps, to the present generation, to some more distant generations in the persecutions that build up against Christians in the first three
centuries and which are so aptly chronicles in Acts, Revelation, and the FOX BOOK OF MARTYRS, and then beyond that to the final generation of the Falling Away. It is almost as if, by Jesus and when we consider all of His teachings at this event on the Mount of Olives, Jesus is making the cycle of time He gave to Daniel as “time, times, and half a time”. The time would correspond to what was left of the judgments of the abomination of desolation and of the 70 weeks with 69 weeks of Daniel, a precise one year before Israel’s salvation is cut off; the times of generations up to 2006 as we know from the history of Christianity and of the kingdom with all signs continuing, and then the final signs of the one half time of 45 years of the Falling Away, the time of Daniel when the power of the holy people will be completely shattered and the time with the man of sin of Daniel and II Thessalonians, with the subsequent Second Coming of Christ, DELIVERANCE and ETERNITY. You will see the differences in concern between what Mark and what Matthew record when you consider also that it is Matthew 24:10-14—about the stumblings of many, of hate and betrayal between many, of false prophets to lead many astray--is mentioned in Mathew before the “abomination of desolation” of Daniel, while in Mark it is the stumblings, hate, and false prophets leading many astray that comes after the abomination of desolation; and further only Matthew mentions “that because sin will abound, the love of many will wax cold {an obvious allusion to the Falling Away, and within itself a measure of the refinement of Daniel}, and further it is only Matthew who mentions these signs as related to the end, “But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:13).

We will have to give Mark credit for getting around to it after the abomination of desolation and in Mark 13:22.

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Mark 13:22)

Several observations should be made here before we quickly pass on: (1) we think more of the false prophets and false Bible teachers, so many of which we see being heaped up in our day that we easily think of them, while we have more trouble with sightings of false christs since we do not stop to think that a person or prophet, even an academic leader, can effective be a
false christs by offering a message of salvation that is anti- to or counter to the message, teachings, and salvation of Christ. Even an Osma Bin Laden is more a false christ than a false message in that he offers a message counter to that of Christ; (2) the false prophets and teachers have their own signs of “marvelous works” to counter Christ and to make disciples look for them, or see them, instead of the signs ordained and taught by Christ; and (3) this is certainly the Falling Away as even the elect almost deceived, although we must allow for this being a sign also seen by the first and second and third generation of disciples as the persecutions of the first few centuries, and the deceptions were also strong. \{Always remember that the book of Revelation, written near the end of the first century and a time of persecution, had to have a message for the people to whom it was written as well as to future generations that would read and listen to the Book.\}

Chapter 17: Signs for the Time, Times, and the Half Time.

If we are right in our interpretations of Daniel, and in the previous teachings of Jesus in Mark 13 as well as Matthew, then the time would relate to the generation of the four disciples who on Mount Olivet asked the questions about things to come, the times would refer to the generations after them of the history of the kingdom of Christ until 2006, and the half a time would refer to the 45 last years of the earth, the time of the Falling Away. What we really desire to look at is the remaining parables and teachings of Mark 13 and of Matthew 24, 25, recalling that more of this event of last teachings form Jesus on the Mount of Olives is recorded in Matthew 24 and 25 than in Mark 13. It is the same time and event, but Mark in the name of action and brevity has shortened the teaching time and content; and I think as stated before, that Mark is more concerned about his generation and himself than he is concerned about end times. That is understandable. Of course, we are much closer now, even perhaps in the 45 last years of earth during the Falling Away; and we naturally are more concerned about Matthew and all the teachings, yet we will stick with Mark in order to make our efforts more a condensed version and with comments. \{Anytime you wish you can read Mark, Matthew, even Luke and John;
and a good harmony of the Gospels, like Robertson’s Harmony is recommended as an assist in the paralleling of events in the life of Christ.

“...that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.” (Daniel 12:7b)

Time

We have learned from Daniel that the “time”, the first major division of time in the three divisions, would be from Daniel’s own generation until the Jews, like the Messiah are cutoff from the kingdom. 69 years after Restoration until the Messiah is cut off, and 70 years until the people of Israel are cut off. Remember Daniel’s incessant questioning about “what will happen to my people?” and “when will it happen?” It is the equivalent of the “How Long?” of the book of Revelation. Before praying for his people Daniel was reading from the Prophet Jeremiah, and of how the city of Jerusalem would be “desolate” for 70 years (Daniel 9:2). {What Daniel specifically read was 70 years of “desolations” in Jerusalem. This is more than deserted, a city and nation and land left homeless as the Jews are in Exile, but it speaks of desolations of worship in the Temple once selected by God, of spiritual desolation of the people from God with their rebellion, disloyalty, and unrighteousness.} Whatever period we see in Jeremiah, and it indeed appears to be the time of Captivity, it is neither the 69 weeks or 70 weeks of Daniel. God changes the focus from the nation of Israel and Jerusalem to the Messiah where He has ordained it all along. We have a new 70, this time a 70 weeks of 490 years in parable form as 70 weeks in Daniel 9:24-27 in the 70 weeks with the addition of a 62 weeks of 434 years as the “time” before the crucifixion of Jesus as the “Messiah shall be cut off” (9:26) for the world. This much is very clear, except for the little mathematical manipulation of numbers where 1 week is equal to 7 years, as Gabriel comes to give Daniel skill in understanding.

“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city...Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be
seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times...And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and sanctuary. (Daniel 9:24-25)

490 years is all the time the nation of Israel has left with God and the kingdom of God. It starts with the Restoration {recorded in Ezra, Nehemiah, and some of the Prophets} and continues until the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ {the words of Daniel are “Messiah”, Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word Christ, and “Prince”, for the Son of God}. This is a parable method of saying to Israel that you have one week of 7 years after you cut off the Messiah to get your spiritual affairs in order, and from then on through the times and half-a-time, there will be few conversions among the children of Israel. God needed them back in Palestine in order that Christ might be born as predicted in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, and the light seen throughout all Israel. God needed Israel to also see the extent of their rebellion in that they cut off His very own Son. However after they cut Him off, they had only one week of seven years {approximately 33 A.D. to approximately 40 A.D.} of conversions {approximately 100,000 with 3,000 alone on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension}.

That these little manipulations of time and numbers, like the one week of 7 years of Laban and Jacob {in Genesis 30:27} are justified is the historical evidence for (1) the decree for Restoration in 457 B.C.; and (2) the coming of the Messiah as announced by John the Baptist 483 years later {7 X 69} in approximately 26 A.D. {I am sure you are aware of the minor problems from Bishop Ussher’s dating method, whereby Jesus was actually born approximately 4 B.C.} During the 3 ½ years of Christ’s ministry, mid-way of the 7 years, Jesus Himself confirmed the covenant with many Jews. The finishing of the transgressions of Daniel, the same as the filling up of the measure of their—the point at which God said enough is enough, the original 490 years of the 70 weeks of Daniel above. Once again, if you take Restoration {several dates are possible when you look at the various decrees from Persian rulers that controlled the Jews}, as 457 B.C. then the end of any spiritual enlightenment of the Jews was approximately 33 A.D.
The “abomination of desolation”, alias the ultimate abomination of these desolations, the desecration of the holy of Holys in God’s own temple at Jerusalem---the ultimate as a symbol of how the people of God had let their God down—is mentioned twice in Daniel {9:27, 11:31 and 12:11} and once in Mark 13:14. {Matthew 24:15 is the equivalent of Mark 13:14.} More specifically the complete phrase is used in 11:31 and 12:11 while the wording is somewhat different in 9:27.

“But he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate. Even until the consummation which is determined is poured out on the desolate.” (Daniel 9:27)

On the wings of those abominations and desolations comes the Roman General Titus {called in Daniel a prince since later Titus will become a Caesar of the Roman Empire, having destroyed the city and the temple of Jerusalem, allowed by coming on the wings of Israel’s desolations, desecrated the temple; and the daily sacrifices were terminated. {Approximately 75 A.D.}} So centered around that great destruction of Jerusalem, Titus was mad after Jerusalem held out so long against his siege and the city and area was strewn with Roman crosses of the crucified, is the passage of Mark 13:14-23: (1) the abomination of desolation; (2) fleeing the housetops of Jerusalem and the cities of the area; (3) a period of great tribulation the record of which starts in Acts and goes on into Revelation, alias the rest of the first century, (4) and which continues for a couple of more centuries of “tribulation such as has not been seen since the beginning of time until this time, nor ever shall be, and unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days” (Mark 13:19020}

Times

Actually the Great Tribulation, as contrasted to the Final Tribulation of the half-time, belongs more to the “times” than to the time. Even as the preaching of the Gospel to every nation before the end of the age belongs to both the “time” and “times”
so it likewise marks the end of the Age with the Second Coming and the Gathering. With the desolations of the Jew complete as the chosen people of God, evangelism turns to the Gentiles, and under the control of God goes toward the Fulness of the Gentiles. The gospel is preached to every nation, and the United States replaces the nation of Israel as the chosen people of God. The Great Tribulation runs into the Final Tribulation in Mark more than in Matthew, but the “times” would include both, the Final being more a tribulation of the disentegration of nature, and as much on the elect as on the non-elect; but with the addition of the Falling Away as it passes from the “times” to the half-time. The false prophets and teacher of Mark 13:21-22 starts even in the time, gets worse in the “times”, and becomes extremely bad to the extent of the vast heaping up of an army of itching ear teachers in the half time of the Falling Away.

Things move fast in the predicted 45 years of the half-time: the period which Paul calls the Falling Away. The period where the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth, the final man of sin and son of perdition {beyond the king of the north of the Greek and Roman Empires} makes His appearance; and as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, Satan is released from his symbolic imprisonment of 1000 years which started on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Jesus. The man of sin, as king of the north, leads an army against the king of the south and defeats him. He makes his palace between the holy mountain of the Glorious Land and the seas; and after frightening news comes to him from the north and east, he is cut off with no one to help him. Although we have no real justification to look for the nation of Israel to again prosper physically and spiritually, apart from the consummation in heaven and of the new Jerusalem with the new earth lowered from heaven, we do have justification to look for a last giant battle be fought in the Glorious Land of the Middle East; and I think we can see how rapidly the sides between the Muslims on one side and the West of U.S. and Israel has built up in only 5 years, realizing how significantly it can change in the gigantic last battle in 40 more years. {Study it carefully and you will find that the references in the Old Testament where people look for a long period of unprecedented peace in Israel and in the world really refers to after the beginning of the new heaven
and the new earth, at the consummation or end of this Age.) And having cleared the board of fictious interpretations, and having laid a foundation in the ASI of the Bible, we are clear to speculate on the possibilities of only 40 more years for this earth since undoubtedly we are already in the Falling Away of “they will not endure sound doctrine...” {We are allowing for only 5 years of the 45 years already in the Falling Away, when in reality it would seem more like we have been in the Falling Away for 10 years, even 20 years when you consider the fundamentalists takeover of the SBC as a significant step into the Falling Away. And although you may consider some of this as pure speculation, surely you will at least treat it with the same respect that you treat the fictional studies of Tim LeHaye on the Second Coming and the End of the Age.)

The Key Is Whether You Can See in the churches and Kingdom Evidences of the Falling Away

I will not repeat all the arguments here of three of my previous books that include studies of the Falling Away: (1) SOME SOUNDS OF SOUND FAITH, (2) SOME MORE SOUNDS, and (4) volume 4 of the LEARN CHRIST commentaries, “Christ, Paul, and the Falling Away”, this last of which treats the book of Hebrews as the book of the Falling Away, of the First and of the Last in the Half-Time. It can be summarized in the words of Paul as “Beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God...” Never forget that all of the so-called children of God, the nation of Israel, that came out of Egyptian bondage, and over 20 years of age fell in the wilderness except for four; and furthermore that the Scriptures tell us that were forbidden from eternity in the eternal rest of God. Pure and simple that is the First Falling Away: and Paul speaks in II Thessalonians of the necessity of the Second Falling Away before the Second Coming of Christ. Like I say, I will not try to repeat the evidences in society and churches and the kingdom today that the Falling Away is well under way, but rather I will make a more general approach from the local church behaviors of II Timothy, in particular to explain the difference between the bad characteristic of church behavior in the “perilous times”, chapter 3, and the absolute intolerance toward sound doctrine of the Falling Away, chapter 4.
However for some perspective, a perspective that we obviously have not gained in today’s kingdom of Christ and God by the respect or toleration we have for the tares and goats, by a reminder about both parables. While we are looked at both, recall as Jesus interprets those parables, that Satan is actually planting traitors and deceivers inside the kingdom of God. Why do you think Satan would want to do that, and why would the tares, humans with freedom of choice, desire to get into the kingdom under the leadership of Satan? Well, I think we have the human motivations in the bad behavior of church members as recorded in II Timothy 3:1-9 where there a form of religion or “godliness” without the power of conversion; and where the motivations are factors like “love for self”, “love for money”, to be in a democratic and gracious crowd that will listen to their boasting and even accept their traitous doctrines from Satan, even like Satan despising the truly good people and good deeds that come their way, loving their pleasure more than the god they claim to serve when in reality they show that they are serving more the god of this world, Satan; headstrong and haughty as a diversion from their commitment to sound doctrine; blasphemers and unholy in their denials of the power of godliness, they nonetheless with unthankful, unholy, and unforgiving attitudes cover up their blasphemies with the sheep's clothing to look like any other kingdom or church member.

While we are told to give such a tolerance of no physical separation from the kingdom until God takes care of it at the end of the half-time, we likewise are told not to associate with them if they be called brothers, telling us in several ways and on several occasions in the Bible that we are more free to associate with the tares in the kingdom and the tares in the church than we are with the tares in the rest of the world, the tares that have made no public commitment to the kingdom and church.

“And from such people turn away!” (II Timothy 3:5b)

“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a
It may seem incongruous, at first, to think that we should have more toleration for the tares out there in the world than we do for the tares that are called brethren in the church, but that is the gist of the kind of TOLERATION OF THE TARES that the Word of God teaches. These tares are far more dangerous since they look like sheep and since they are hiding in among the wheat field of the kingdom. Our toleration, gone amuck to the extreme of the toleration of the American Democratic Faith, which is world and has a worldly goal, allows them to continue their dirty work of the Falling Away, and under the leadership of the great progenitor of the lie and of the Falling Away, Satan himself. Let us look again as a reminder of the parable of the goats and the sheep as explained by Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46, and part of an explanation of what happens after His Second Coming of Matthew 24,25 and Mark 13.

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory {this has to be the Second Coming, which is the subject under discussion by Jesus anyway, and since here Jesus comes in glory as contrasted to the humble way He came the first time}...and all the holy angels with Him {this shows it also to be the Second Coming since this time He does what He refused to do the first time, although the angels were available to Him, to bring them for assistance in the Separations of the sheep from the goats at the four corners of the earth, admittedly a very large job, and of the dead as well as the living to be identified by their names in heaven and their DNA’s, no doubt; although I think that with the names, the angel of that believer also has a specific location where they know to go for the body, and since the soul is already in heaven, where the angels will also gather sheep, that person can help in the location—right, it will be no small job, but much simpler than the Creation of the old heavens and earth}...then He will sit on the throne of His glory {well, we know that the Returning Lord is seated on the throne of judgment and rule}...All the nations will be gathered before Him {yes, the angels have been active in gathering all
the nations before the Lord Jesus Christ}...and He will separate them one from another {the Great Separation},...as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”...{even as according to Ephesians we are chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, so our kingdom inheritance has also been prepared}..."for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." {do we really believe that such simple acts of kindness can take a person out of the goat category and put them in the sheep category; yes, when it is a habit of life and belief that shows itself in many gracious acts}...“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and gave You drink’? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothed You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ {Well, Jesus answers as he told about the little child of faith or the little big child of faith, the least of the members in the kingdom of God, how any time you have done these acts of graciousness to the least in the kingdom, you have for all practical purposes also done it because of faith in Christ, and you have passed from goat status in your life to sheep status!}...And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren {I think they will see Jesus nod toward the sheep on the right hand}...you did it to Me.”

The judgments of Jesus turn toward those on the left hand, after the angels have gathered them from the four corners of the earth also, the living and the dead, toward the goats on the left hand; and it is not good, but it is all over.

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels…” {the company kept in life determines the company kept in eternity, if one is a servant of Satan—by definition any of the world not a servant of God—then that person will also share with the fate of Satan and
...for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ {what we do for other sheep in the kingdom of God and of Christ shows our faith and the reality of our faith, you know like James said “faith without works is dead”; it is non-profitable, and does not save, and it shows a certain respect of persons among the sheep, that is also a bad sign}...Then they {the goats of course have a spokesman, and the last chance to boast or complain in the kingdom}... also will answer Him {the tares or goats always have an answer until this final chance to answer, then they lose all control; as a matter of fact with the End of the Age and the Gathering of the Angels into the two groups, they have already lost control, and begin to think that as they see who their associates are now}... saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will also go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:31-46)
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