

The Gospel of Matthew

Chapters 24 & 25

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(1984–1985 study plus 1985 and 1997 discourses)

The following notes on the Gospel of Matthew, Chapters 24 and 25, were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1984–1985. In addition, notes are included from two discourses: “Comparison of Parable of the Talents and Parable of the Pounds” and “Leading Characters in the Closing Events of Jesus’ Life.” The notes should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
2. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study and the discourses, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
3. Finally, Bro. Frank has not reviewed the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1984–1985)

Matt. 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple.

This event took place the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry. In *Volume 4*, Matthew 24 is called "Our Lord's Great Prophecy."

Matt. 24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Jesus said, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." These words were fulfilled in AD 69–70 when the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed by Titus.

How would we answer the objection that the Western (Wailing) Wall still stands today? The part that dates back to Herod's day is a buttress wall built by Herod to enlarge the Temple area. Therefore, strictly speaking, the Western Wall is not the Temple proper of Zerubbabel but an addition by Herod. When the Temple was destroyed, it was leveled, and only the substratum remained. Even with the outer city walls, Herodian masonry still exists on the floor level, the substratum.

When the Temple was destroyed in AD 69–70, most of the rubble was cascaded or dumped down into the Tyropean Valley. As a result, the valley was filled up and the remaining wall was buried or covered.

Matt. 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

In order to view the Temple complex in its beauty, Jesus had to be on the Mount of Olives; that is, he had to be far enough away to see the Temple complex as a whole. The disciples admired the stones of the Temple (Mark 13:1). The stones were beautifully beveled in a way that was characteristic of Herod. (Herod rebuilt the Temple of Zerubbabel and further enlarged it.)

Luke 21:5 mentions "gifts" in connection with the Temple ("some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts"). From the Mount of Olives the disciples could see the Gate Beautiful (now called the Golden Gate) embellished with heavy gold leaf. Also, they could look over the gate to the Temple proper. The doors were a gift from Egypt. Both the embellishments and the fine stone work were being admired.

What caused the disciples (Peter, James, John, and Andrew) to state how beautiful the Temple was (Mark 13:1,3; Luke 21:5) and then to ask, "When shall these things be?" In other words, "When will the destruction of the Temple take place?" Previously, in advance of Matthew 24, Jesus had mentioned that the city and the Temple would be destroyed (Luke 19:41–44). As he beheld the city and wept over it, he said, "The days shall come ... that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy

visitation.” This advance clue pertaining to the destruction of the city had saddened the disciples, especially in regard to the beautiful, costly Temple.

Another factor leading to the disciples’ question is that Jesus had just said, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,” and the disciples considered the Temple to be the “house” (Matt. 23:38). These words also saddened the disciples, for the Temple was the pride, the jewel, of Israel—the Holy City and its Temple.

From verse 3 on, Jesus stressed other things and never did answer the disciples’ question regarding when the Temple would be destroyed. Why? Because they might confuse the destruction of the Temple with the Second Advent. They might think the end of the age had come, whereas the destruction of the Holy City was a separate incident that occurred much earlier.

There is an interesting parallel with the end of the age; namely, the feet members can say with certainty that Babylon is desolate and that the houses of idolatry will be destroyed. The Second Pyramid is to be leveled because it misrepresents and distracts from the value of the Great Pyramid (Zech. 4:7). The Dome of the Rock mosque and the Vatican will be leveled. Whatever structure of false religion that would distract from the true will be destroyed, whether great or small in the eyes of man.

The other two questions were:

1. What shall be the sign of thy presence?
2. What shall be the sign of the end of the age?

Although only four disciples “privately” asked Jesus these questions in a confidential mode, the other seven (minus Judas) were listening—or at least some of the others. Jesus’ voice in answering outdoors would have been easily heard. No doubt Matthew was one of those listening, for of the four Gospel writers, he gave the most complete account, especially when Matthew 25 is included.

As will be seen, Jesus’ answer to the first question “What shall be the sign of thy presence?” included both his *invisible* presence and the *imminence* of that presence. Incidentally, a sign would not be needed if Jesus were to return *visibly*, for all would then know it. But it makes sense for the question to mean “What shall be the sign of your *invisible* presence? How shall we know that you are here?”

Matt. 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

Matt. 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

In other words, before Jesus began his discussion, he warned the disciples against being deceived. Indirectly, the fact that *many* would say, “I am Christ,” implies or infers that the Kingdom was not imminent, that time had to elapse first. “Take heed, beware, lest you be deceived because *many* shall come” indicates that *before the true announcement* or occurrence would take place, there would be *many deceptions*.

Earlier the disciples had asked, “Wilt thou at this time establish the kingdom?” Jesus answered in effect, “No, the Kingdom will not come as soon as you think!”

Matthew states that the deception would consist of some actually assuming to be the Messiah, the Anointed One. They would claim *they* were Messiah. But Mark 13:6 and Luke

21:8 omit the word “Christ” and simply say, “Many shall come in my name, saying, I am; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.” Hence the deception would not always be that another would represent himself *as Christ* but would represent himself in a high capacity as *pointing to* the way of truth. Jesus was saying that these would be *false* announcements. The “man of sin,” which is the chief of the deceptive systems, is pointed out in 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4. Although Roman Catholicism says that Jesus is the Messiah, the system deceives, nevertheless.

Thus *two kinds of religious* deceptions are pointed out by the differences in the Gospels (“I am Christ” versus “I am”). The *Fourth Volume* gives examples of false Christs—*individuals* who claimed to be Messiah. Gamaliel’s advice (Acts 5:36,37) to the other Pharisees, etc., who wanted to put the apostles to death, was: “Such action is not necessary. If they really do represent God, we better not interfere, but if their words are false, their counsel and work will come to naught. Look at what happened to Theudas and Judas [false Messiahs in Jesus’ day].” The Pastor also named Sabbathai Levi, who was on the scene in Smyrna years later. A modern-day false Christ is Father Divine. He uses the Trinity aspect, saying that Jesus came first as the Son and that now he has come as the Father (*Father Divine*).

However, the religious *systems* have deceived many more than any individuals claiming to be Messiah. Jesus was saying that various deceptions, especially the religious institutions, would arise in the Church’s history before the Kingdom Age. The denominations—Roman Catholic, Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, etc.—all at one time taught that if you did not follow them, you were not in the Truth and were, therefore, doomed to perdition. Each of the denominations claimed to be the *only way*. Only in the last 30 or so years have the nominal systems realized the public was fed up with this type of reasoning, and they have since become more lenient toward each other. Nevertheless, others today have the same attitude that only they are right. The Jehovah’s Witnesses are an example. Some, like Armstrong, even claim to be apostles. Religious institutions in the past have deceived millions.

Instead of being dependent upon nominal Church membership, a Christian’s relationship is a personal one between that individual, Christ, and the Heavenly Father. The making of one’s calling and election sure is based upon faithfulness to Christ and to God, and not upon identity with a particular group.

The story of the Gospel Age is that deceivers as individuals and also as institutions would precede the end of the age. Verses 23–26 show that deceptions will also take place at the end of the age.

Matt. 24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Down through the Gospel Age, actual wars and rumors of wars occurred. These also had to precede the end of the age. Thus, later, after the Holy Spirit had been given and these words of Jesus were meditated upon, the disciples realized that much time had to elapse before the end of the age could come.

Basically, the Holy Spirit is the spirit of remembrance, the remembrance of spiritual things. It calls to mind the words of Jesus, the apostles, the prophets, and of course the Father in His Word. John 14:26 reads, “But the Comforter ... shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Thus when the disciples later thought back on what Jesus had said in Matthew 24, they realized that the Kingdom

was a distance away and that they probably would be off the scene. Peter especially realized this and so did Paul, who had a vision of the third heaven. However, the apostles did not realize that *almost 2,000 years had to pass first*.

Matt. 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

Many use verse 6 to describe conditions since World War 1, when the world became involved in conflict, plus the “famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” of verse 7. Today the news media and television make us more aware of these kinds of occurrences, whereas, in truth, such troubles have taken place endlessly down through the Gospel Age. Even in the Old Testament there was a seven-year famine in Israel at the time of Joseph versus a five-year famine in Ethiopia in recent times. The Apostle Paul took collections on his missionary journeys to send back to the Jewish brethren who were in famine in Israel and elsewhere during the years of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. (In fact, it would have been natural for those Christians living in the first century to consider the famine that occurred after Jesus’ death and resurrection to be a precursor to his Second Coming and the establishment of the Kingdom.) Then, too, a tremendous earthquake destroyed Pompeii, Italy, in AD 79. Therefore, verses 6 and 7 describe the story of the human race ever since the First Advent until our day. “In divers places” does not mean everywhere, but here an earthquake, over there a threat of war, etc. This has been the history of the Gospel Age.

Matt. 24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Mark 13:8 says, “These are the beginnings of sorrows.” “Sorrows” in the *plural* represents the *series* of spasms of a woman in travail. In contrast, 1 Thessalonians 5:3 refers to the *singular* birth pang: “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as *travail* upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” (See *Diaglott* interlineary, which has “the birth-pang” for “travail.”) This text refers to *the* birth (death) pain of the present order. Here in Matthew 24:8 the same Greek word *odin* is used in the *plural* form, signifying a *series* of travail spasms.

Verse 8 is a flashback to verses 6 and 7. Wars, rumors of wars, nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places are all the “beginning of sorrows,” for “the end is not yet.”

In verses 4–8, Jesus is saying, “Be careful! Do not be deceived! From my day on, there will be many false Christs, many wars and rumors of wars, many pestilences, etc. All these are the *beginning* of sorrows.” In other words, verses 4–8 are a synopsis of the Gospel Age not including the end time, for “the end is not yet.” Thus we are getting a picture of the Gospel Age *up to the end period but not including it*.

We are speaking of Matthew’s account here. The other accounts will be compared later.

Q: Have these things occurred ever since the apostles went off the scene *until* the Harvest, or will these things continue and increase in intensity right up to the great Time of Trouble?

A: These things will not necessarily get worse and worse, for the great Time of Trouble involves other factors. It will be of a completely different nature than just these things

occurring in greater and greater degrees. For instance, the mass materialization of the fallen angels will have to take place, as in Noah's day. The fallen angels are held in bondage until the judgment of the great day. Then they will be released as a test, that is, to see what they will do. The Scriptures show that they will inundate the earth, and certainly that is not a cumulative trouble but a unique experience.

Before the Flood the evil angels materialized and had children, who became great men in *brutality*. The population was evil and grew increasingly so day by day. But the *Flood* itself was the *great* trouble, and it wiped out the *evildoer*. The presence of the fallen angels on earth was a period of terrific trouble, but the Flood was far worse and completely different, for it was a divine *judgment* whereas the materializations were not. The angels materialized because they wanted to. Through *self-choice*, they left their first estate and preferred to be here on earth rather than in heaven. In contrast, the Flood was built into the structure of the earth and its atmosphere. It was designed by the Creator to occur when the ring of water eventually collapsed. The collapse was perfectly timed to occur as a divine judgment.

Q: Sometimes verses 6 and 7 are applied to the Harvest period but not to the very end of the age. For example, the frequency of earthquakes has greatly increased. Wouldn't that be a factor?

A: No one can make such a statement with certainty. Today we can measure earthquakes of all intensities worldwide, but up until a few years ago, man could not do that. In fact, past earthquakes were far more severe than those we have today. Entire civilizations were destroyed, as on the Isle of Crete. Moreover, when scientists examine evidences of earthquakes that occurred in the past and look into the history of various nations, their attempts to assign a year to a particular quake can be quite inaccurate because their chronologies are way off.

And consider the pestilences. Pestilences have been greatly reduced in the Harvest period through medications, antibiotics, etc. For example, the Black Plague was devastating. In Oxford University, England, two out of three students died, and half of the population of that nation expired. We have had nothing like that pestilence in the last 100 years. Right after World War 1, one out of ten died from an influenza, but those figures are far lower now. Also, in the past the mortality rate in time of war was much higher than it is today.

Our media—collecting news items from *around the globe*—make things sound worse today, whereas past civilizations suffered considerably more. A higher percentage of the population was affected. Ever since the flu outbreak following World War 1, the casualty rate has been decreasing.

Verses 4–8 provide a thumbnail sketch of the history of the Gospel Age from the time the apostles asked Jesus the questions (verse 3) up until the beginning of the Harvest. The Harvest is the end of the age, and that is Matthew's point (Matt. 13:39). However, based on what the other Gospels say, there is an extension *into* the Harvest period of wars, rumors of wars, etc. But Matthew's account is written a little differently. Matthew gives a picture of the history of the Gospel Age, whereas Mark and Luke include other things to bring us through the Harvest period to its end.

Verses 6–8 tell the problems that would exist *prior to* the Lord's Second Coming. Verse 8 indicates the Gospel Age would be a *period* of great sorrows that would precede the answer

to the two questions: “What shall be the sign of thy presence? What shall be the sign of the end of the age?” These sorrows (the series of troubles) are only the *beginning*, not the ending.

“Travail” is a *period* of suffering. The suffering of the Gospel Age has been caused by war, famine, earthquake, etc. The travail of verse 8 is a series of spasms, but in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, “travail” is an improper translation. The thought is of a “birth pang” (singular). It is unusual for that word in the Greek to be in the singular.

In regard to the “famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” of verse 7, some feel that the word “pestilences” is omitted in the oldest manuscripts. This is true in Matthew, but the word is found in Luke 21:11. The omission in Matthew 24 is probably due to a transcriber’s oversight. Also, in Mark 13:8, although “pestilences” is not used, the word “troubles” is there, thus broadening the picture.

Actually, the translators did not know whether to use “plagues” or “pestilences,” for although a disease is a plague, a plague is not necessarily a disease. For example, plagues include monsoons, sandstorms, floods, and other outstanding troubles. The broader meaning was intended, although “pestilences” were a common form of plague down through the Gospel Age.

Ancient manuscripts were written on lamb or goat skins that were dried and stretched. The Sinaitic was written continuously—that is, without punctuation or verses—and in all capital letters in Greek. Either a brush or a flat pen was used for the characters. A problem is that with age the letters tend to flake off or fade, making those portions difficult to read. “A,” “D,” and “L” in the uncial Greek look very similar, so that fading and flaking cause real confusion in certain instances. Only diligent study of grammar, context, etc., will straighten out the confusion.

In the Greek the words “famine” and “pestilence” are almost identical, the former being *limos* and the latter *loimos*. Furthermore, *kai* is used very, very frequently. A fatigued copyist could easily mix up the two words. And that is what happened in Matthew 24:7 in the Sinaitic Manuscript—a whole line was omitted: *kai loimos*.

Matt. 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.

This statement can be regarded two ways depending on the thought conveyed by the word “then.” “Then” can mean “subsequently,” or it can signify a flashback to what was just said, that is, a *review* in the nature of being *repetitive*. “Then” occurs a number of times in Matthew 24 and *usually* in this latter sense. Matthew 24 is not consecutive throughout. Therefore, *context* determines the meaning of “then.”

Matt. 24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Verses 9 and 10 pertain to persecutions and betrayals by family members and friends that occurred down through the age, especially at the hands of Papacy during the Inquisition. Hundreds of thousands were violently put to death during the terror of the Dark Ages. Jesus spoke these words to comfort those Christians who would suffer, so that when persecutions and betrayals happened, the brethren would not think it strange.

Matt. 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

The term “false prophets” reminds us of the false prophet of Revelation 16. The *Fourth Volume* couples verse 11 with verse 5; that is, some *individuals* would claim to be Messiah, and some false religious *systems* would arise and deceive. “Prophet” means “teacher.” In other words, “false prophets” are false religious systems that teach false doctrine, the chief system being Papacy, the “Jezebel” of Revelation 2:20. The Church of Thyatira was criticized because it “sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a *prophetess*, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.” The antitypical Jezebel was tolerated to teach the Christian Church *false* doctrine.

The fact that Matthew 24:24 again mentions “false Christs” and “false prophets” shows that this chapter covers different time periods. Verse 5 warned that the Christian should not be deceived when many would come saying they were Christ. Verse 11 warns of false prophets. But in a later period, *still future*, false Christs and false prophets would show “great signs and wonders” that would be deceptions to those not forewarned—deceptions related to a *geographic, visible* representation of what would seem to be Christ (Matt. 24:23,24). Matthew 24 contains both distinctions and generalities, and each must be put in the proper place.

Matt. 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Daniel 7:25, in different words, teaches the same thing: “And he [the little horn, ie, Papacy] shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, ... and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time [for 1,260 years, from AD 539 to 1799].” The little-horn power was very oppressive to those not in agreement with it, and for such a *long* period of time that many grew weary of well doing. God looked for those who persevered in *faith* to be part of the Little Flock. The experience was necessary back there because the consecrated had less doctrinal knowledge, and where there is a paucity of doctrine, the test is especially along the lines of character and faith, hope, and love.

Matt. 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

We will consider the use of the word “end” here versus its use in verses 3 and 6. “End” in verse 3 is *sunteleia*; the others (including verse 14) are *telos*. *Sunteleia* means “the full end (of the age)”; *telos* can mean either just “the end” or “the full end” depending on context. *Telos* means “tail,” which can refer to the whole tail or to just the tip of the tail.

From a *personal* standpoint, to “endure unto the end” means to be faithful *unto death*, to the end of one’s individual course or Christian walk. Or verse 13 can be considered as applying to the *class* back there who persevered through the great suffering of that long period of time. But the most practical application is the *personal* standpoint. In other words, because of iniquity, the love of many waxed cold—but *he who endured* to the end was saved.

Matt. 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Verse 14 gives us a *time* perspective. “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; *and then shall the end come.*” Verses 9–13 describe a

period of time until the gospel would be a witness in all nations.

When the disciples asked in verse 3, “What shall be the sign of your presence and of the end of the age?” Jesus did not just strictly answer their question but told them about the *whole* age. He used that occasion to give them an outline of the history of the entire Gospel Age. Thus he went far beyond their question by also telling them what would happen in the interim before the end of the age. This information was needed, for they themselves were soon to be hailed before synagogues, etc. In fact, all of the apostles had abrupt deaths except John. Many disciples also died through persecution. Jesus died in AD 33, and 33 years later Nero was on the scene persecuting Christians. Therefore, Jesus’ words here (and in Luke 21) were especially helpful to the early Church, as well as down through the age.

Verse 14 alerted the early Church not to expect the Kingdom very soon. (Although the import of Jesus’ words did not sink in at the time, the Holy Spirit later called them to remembrance.) Before the end of the age could come, the gospel had to be preached in all the world for a witness. Certainly the disciples in the first century knew that that had not happened yet. They realized the experiences described in verses 9–13 would take place up to the time the gospel would be preached in all nations for a witness.

Matt. 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

In Daniel 8:13,14, two saints were speaking: “How long shall be the vision concerning the daily [continual] sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” Answer: “Two thousand and three hundred [2,300] days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

Daniel 9:26,27 reads: “And after [seven and—verse 25] threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince [Titus] that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary [Temple]; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he [Messiah] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [the 70th]: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the [typical] sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for [because of] the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that [which is] determined shall be poured upon the desolate [AD 70].”

These two Daniel citations had a natural as well as a spiritual fulfillment. *Natural*: Those in the early Church knew about the natural application, but not the spiritual because the spiritual fulfillment was not then due. In regard to Daniel 8:13,14 saying that the “sanctuary” and the “host” would be “trodden under foot,” the early Church thought of an alien power coming in and destroying the Temple and trampling the people (suppressing them in bondage). Daniel 9:26,27 gives more specifics, ie, a definite time period of 69 weeks. In the *midst* of the 70th week, Jesus would be cut off in death, that is, 3 1/2 years after the end of the 69th week, the time when Jesus consecrated at Jordan.

Prophetic students tend to jump to conclusions based on the time period in which they live. Just as those living in the first century thought the trouble would come exactly at the end of the 70th week or AD 33, so those living at the beginning of this century concluded the great Time of Trouble would occur in 1914. Both dates are important—AD 33 and 1914—but not for the reasons anticipated in regard to the trouble.

Daniel 9:26 states that an alien power “shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” This prophecy would seem to harmonize with Daniel 8:13, which says that the sanctuary and the host would be trodden underfoot (be despoiled), but Daniel 8 is spiritual and natural, whereas Daniel 9 is *only* natural pertaining to the end of the Jewish Age. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 69–70 prefigured an experience to come upon Christendom. The trouble on natural or literal Israel foreshadowed the trouble to come on spiritual Israel.

Daniel 11:31 reads, “And arms shall stand on his [Papacy’s] part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.” This verse refers to a *spiritual* daily sacrifice being taken away in the Gospel Age and an abomination that makes desolate being put in its place. This occurred in 539, when the doctrine of the Mass (Transubstantiation) replaced the ever efficacious sacrifice of Christ. Jesus’ death on Calvary is remembered and thought about every day; it is “daily” in the sense of being ever fresh, ever efficacious. Papacy took the doctrine of the *individual’s* being able to pray to God for forgiveness of sin through Jesus’ name and said that one had to go through its priesthood, testifying sins before a priest in auricular confession. Based on prescribed “Hail Marys,” reading beads, and certain remuneration, etc., one could then be forgiven of sin—supposedly.

Thus attention was diverted away from Calvary to the doctrine of the Mass. In other words, the Mass became the focal point and not Jesus. The Mass is based on the premise that when the words “Corpus meum ...” are pronounced, the bread actually becomes Jesus’ body and the wine his blood. But the Scriptures say that Jesus died once for all and that he cannot be crucified afresh (Heb. 10:10).

The doctrine of the Mass was prefigured by what happened to Israel’s Brazen Altar, the altar where the people brought their offerings. Some kings made innovations, and one king actually had a new altar made for the people and then took the authentic Brazen Altar for himself personally. This substitution was obnoxious in God’s sight, for the simplicity of Christ in the plain altar was replaced with an ornate one. We are reminded of the statuary and candles of the Vatican, which are distractions from the real purpose of the Christian.

Daniel 12:11 states, “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” Daniel 11:31 prophesied that the abomination would be put in the place of the daily sacrifice, and this substitution took place in AD 539. Daniel 12:11 assumes that the starting point (AD 539) is known, so 1,290 is simply added (539 + 1,290) to obtain the year 1829, the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Notice the next verse: “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty [1,335] days.” The 1,290 and the 1,335 days are co-related, with the 1,335 days occurring a little later. Adding 1,335 to 539 brings us to the year 1874, the beginning of the Second Presence. In other words, “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the Second Presence.”

These time periods were not in the first century. Not until 539 was the doctrine of the Mass set up, empowered, and made more mandatory. In that year the pope was given great authority by the emperor Justinian, who said the Church of Rome was the *true* Church (as opposed to the Church of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople). The bishop of Rome was recognized as the head of the Christian Church. Hence the Church of Rome was *set up in power in 539*; it began to speak authoritatively from that year.

Therefore, when Jesus said in Matthew 24:15, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place,” we do not know whether he was referring to Daniel 8, 9, 11, or 12. Actually, all are involved. Luke 21 applies Daniel 8 and 9 to the *first century*. Matthew 24 is a later period of time.

Luke 21:20–24 has a *natural* application in the first century. “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

When Jesus gave his “great prophecy,” it probably took three to four hours, of which Matthew records the most. Each Gospel records what were *individually* considered to be the salient points—hence the differences. Mark wrote on behalf of the Apostle Peter. As amanuensis, Mark recorded certain details that Matthew omitted. And Luke wrote down still other details. Matthew uses the same words as Luke regarding “Let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains” (Matt. 24:16), and so does Mark 13:14, but Luke zeros in on the *natural* fulfillment. Clues are the following: “in *the land*,” “wrath upon *this people*,” and “*Jerusalem* shall be trodden down of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:23,24). Luke refers to Daniel to justify that this “desolation” was the trouble in the first century at the hands of the Roman armies.

Luke 21:9 says there will be wars and commotions, “but *the end is not*; [it is] by and by.” The Greek is very abrupt, so the translators correctly supplied the word “is,” and “it is” should also be supplied. (The Greek said, “The end yet by and by.”) In other words, “The end is *not yet*, but it *will occur* by and by.”

Luke 21:12 is significant: “But *before* all these [wars, commotions, nations and kingdoms rising against each other, and great earthquakes, famines, and pestilences of verses 9–11], they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you.” Luke *reverses* the order of Matthew 24 because the natural application of the first century is being discussed.

In addition, valuable thoughts are expressed whether this persecution occurred during the first century or *later*, that is, down through the Gospel Age. For example, we are not to meditate in advance on what we will say. However, we must get the background understanding *before* we are incarcerated. Then, if an opportunity is afforded for speaking publicly, the *Holy Spirit* will supply us with adequate and appropriate words for the occasion, that is, what to do and say under the given circumstances. “For I [the Holy Spirit] will give you *a mouth* and *wisdom*, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist” (Luke 21:15). Enemies will react the same way they did with Stephen, the first Christian martyr. His face was like that of an angel, and he testified eloquently, yet they put him to death. The enemies will not give in, but they will not be able to “gainsay” or offer a proper rebuttal to the words spoken.

Luke wrote his Gospel on behalf of the Apostle Paul. Since Paul had witnessed Stephen’s death, these thoughts from our Lord’s Great Prophecy particularly impressed him. After his

conversion, Paul went to see Peter and James, the Lord's brother, for 15 days to find out more information about Jesus. From Peter he learned about the details of Jesus' ministry. From James he gleaned details of Jesus' family life prior to his baptism at Jordan. Paul gave that accumulated information to Luke to write down. In addition, Luke accompanied Paul on many of his missionary travels and kept an up-to-date diary.

In Luke 1:1–4, Luke said that he was on hand as an eyewitness from the beginning and that he would set everything in order accurately. Then Luke tied in events with historical facts and dates (for example, Luke 1:5 in regard to the days of Herod). In the Book of Acts, Luke did the same thing. Therefore, Luke had his own personal experience plus Paul's enlightenment.

Compare Luke 21:16,18. After saying that some of the consecrated would be put to death, Jesus added, "But there shall not an hair of your head perish" *as a new creature*. "Hair" symbolizes consecration.

The expression regarding wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, etc., embraces a *long* period of time. Luke zeros in on the natural application, Matthew and Mark on the spiritual. When all of the Gospels are pieced together, it becomes apparent that a *double* fulfillment was intended in these pictures.

In both Matthew 24 and Luke 21, a valuable *clue* is given. Matthew 24:14 tells the importance of the gospel being preached to all nations *before* the end comes. In other words, this condition had to be attained *before* the end period could begin. The Luke clue is 21:24, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Also a time period, this verse refers to the "seven times" or $360 \times 7 = 2,520$ years from 606 BC to AD 1914 (see Leviticus 26). Thus the two clues, one along one line and the other along another line, bring us up to a period of time roughly commensurate. Altogether, we are told about the first century, the middle of the Gospel Age, and the end.

The gospel being "preached in all the world for a witness" does not mean all nations would be converted prior to the end of the age (Matt. 24:14). Therefore, this verse would be fulfilled sometime after the Bible societies published the Bible in all languages in the early 1800's. Furthermore, this verse does not mean that present truth had to be preached before the end could come. It was the *Bible* that had to be preached. Pastor Russell said these conditions existed before the Harvest began; that is, the conditions *made possible* the Harvest because by the printing of the Bible, people could become familiar with the Scriptures and thus be in a position to certify the truth. They could "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21). Thus the Bible societies *preceded* the Harvest message itself.

The "gospel" pertains to being a follower of Jesus and hoping to be in heaven; that is, it refers to the high or heavenly calling. The Scriptures clearly say that the Christian who is obedient to Christ and faithful will reign with him. All Christians down through the age grasped the concept that if they suffered with Christ, they would reign with him and be given great honors (Rom. 8:17). That is the "Kingdom" class, not restitution. The New Testament (and especially Jesus in the Gospels) says *very little* about restitution—the emphasis is on being a follower of *Jesus*. Incidentally, if restitution were included in the "gospel" preached to all nations, the Harvest would have begun *later*, for restitution is the lost coin found *after* 1874.

Review of Luke 21:9–24

Verses 10 and 11 say that nation would rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and that earthquakes, famines, and pestilences would occur in diverse places—plus fearful sights and great signs from heaven. However, verse 12 tells that *before* all of these, severe persecution would come upon the Christian. The advice was that the Christian was not to unduly premeditate what he would say or do because in that hour the words would be given by the Holy Spirit.

The trouble referred to in Luke 21:20–24 occurred in AD 69–70. Verse 23 reads: “Woe unto them that are with child [that is, pregnant], and to them that give suck [infants and young ones who breast-feed, for older children would suffer like the adults], in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.” Notice the end of the verse: “There shall be ... wrath upon *this* people”; that is, God’s wrath would be upon the nation of Israel because of their rejection of Jesus. Verse 24 continues: “And they [*the Israelites*] shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and *Jerusalem* shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Thus the emphasis in Luke 21 is on the *natural* picture, whereas Matthew 24 and Mark 13 stress the *spiritual* aspect primarily.

Let us consider again the expression “the times of the Gentiles,” which refers to the “seven times” of Leviticus 26, which are calculated as follows: 7×360 (a lunar year) = 2,520 years from 606 BC to AD 1914. In 606 BC the Temple of Solomon was destroyed as well as Jerusalem and the Jewish polity with the removal of the crown from Zedekiah. Notice, the account does NOT say that the treading down of Jerusalem and the Times of the Gentiles commenced in AD 70, even though the same things happened at that date (ie, the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed, and the Jewish people were led away captive into all nations, the Diaspora having begun). In other words, while Gentile Times began in 606 BC, they were still counting in AD 70 and beyond—until their expiration in 1914. The AD 70 trouble was just an additional experience *during* the Times of the Gentiles.

Because the Jewish people subsequently suffered so dreadfully under Hitler and the Nazis, some brethren have a problem seeing that Gentile Times ended in 1914 and that “Jerusalem” is no longer being trodden down. Notice, however, that Jesus was not speaking of the *Jewish people* but of *Jerusalem*. As a result of British commander General Allenby’s being in the Middle East in 1914, there was a confrontation with Turkish authority. In 1917 Jerusalem was captured without a battle, as it were, and a treaty enjoined so that Jerusalem was no longer in a downtrodden condition and the Jews could return to Palestine en masse. The foreign yoke was broken!

Back to Matthew 24

Verse 14 states that after the gospel was preached “for a witness” in a *worldwide* fashion, then “the end” would come. With regard to the “abomination of desolation” of verse 15, four texts in Daniel were examined: 8:13,14; 9:26,27; 11:31; and 12:11. The first two citations (especially the ninth chapter) are more related to the AD 70 destruction when the Roman army encompassed Jerusalem. But the eleventh and twelfth chapters are emphasizing a higher picture, a spiritual one.

Matt. 24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

In Luke 21:20 the fleeing was *literal*—the Lord advised Christian Jews to flee to distant mountain refuge when they would see Jerusalem surrounded with armies. And those

outside the city were instructed not to enter back into Jerusalem but to flee also. This advice, so specifically given, was followed by those with faith back there in AD 70.

Now the *spiritual* application will be considered in Matthew 24. Regarding verse 15, in AD 539 the “abomination of desolation” (the doctrine of the Mass or Transubstantiation) was established in power. It had existed previously, but in 539 the Mass became more entrenched and powerful. The 1,260 days (years) date from that point, and the year 539 is a focal starting point for many of the Daniel prophecies.

From the spiritual standpoint of verse 16, what does it mean to flee from Judea into the mountains? Judea is a symbol for Christendom, and particularly the nominal Church systems. Thus the flight would be out of the nominal systems into a different condition. The ones who are being asked to flee are the Lord’s people in the systems who recognize that the “abomination of desolation” is the Mass and that it is standing “in the holy place” (Matt. 24:15). This message was especially pronounced in 1878 when the Pastor pointed out that Papacy was the Man of Sin, etc., and the call went forth to come out of Babylon: “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4).

What “mountains” are to be fled to? (This term is an allusion to a mountain complex and hence is in the plural.) In Hebrews 12 the Apostle Paul suggests that Christians should flee to Mount Horeb in connection with their covenant and the end of the age, and he mentions that there will be a great earthquake. The apostle points out that back there in his day, Christians had not yet come to the condition of eternal security that would occur at the end of the age. Therefore, the spiritual “mountains” to be fled to are the Kingdom of the Lord, that is, the *holy* mountain.

The Bible refers to both Mount Horeb and Mount Sinai. This mountain actually has two primary peaks, like the toe of a boot and the high back. From the front, however, *three* peaks are seen. On the higher peak in back—400 feet higher—Moses received the tables of the Law and then read them from one of the three peaks, the one called Ras Susafeh. Yet the peaks are all *one* mountain complex styled “Mount Horeb” in Scripture. A two-mile road circuits this whole complex. Somewhat similarly, the Adirondacks and the Catskills are mountain complexes. Also, Mount Ararat consists of two peaks: Greater Ararat and Lesser Ararat. Therefore, either the singular or the plural form can be considered here in Matthew 24:16, for this is just a general flight. “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help,” the Psalmist says (Psa. 121:1). That “hill” or mountain is the Lord Himself and His Kingdom, His direction.

Matt. 24:17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

Who is on the housetop? Who is being instructed not to go down into the house to get any possessions? What *principle* is involved here? If one sees a *proper* course in life (ie, if one sees that the Lord has condemned a particular system or arrangement), then the longer one delays decision-making and action based on that decision, the greater the danger that action will not be taken. If one procrastinates, he may never come out. A delayed response leads to rationalization and hence *inactivity*. The point is that when the Lord issued the command to come out of Babylon and it was recognized, those who obeyed *promptly* were more apt to be rewarded than those who hesitated because of wanting to make arrangements whereby there would be a minimum loss of friendships. Along natural lines, if one wants to

minimize his losses, he tries to preserve his most precious possessions—as in a fire, for example. But *spiritually speaking*, to delay is dangerous.

The “housetop” in olden times was a prime position where one could go to commune privately with God in prayer. Also, from there one could watch and have a good vantage point. Thus those “on the housetop” are the “cream of the crop.” One illustration is that Peter was on a housetop praying when he had a dream related to the call of the Gentiles into the Gospel Church. It was customary for the Jew to pray two times a day, morning and evening, at the highest elevation available. Jesus did that by climbing a mountain. Verse 17 is saying that from the housetop position, the Christian was (or is) to *flee*.

Matt. 24:18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

The “field” is the Christian world. Hence this verse is a call to the evangelist, the active Christian, the mission worker, to flee to the *truth* recognized and to obey it accordingly. Physically, one can stay where he is, but he should disassociate himself spiritually from the system of Babylon.

Matt. 24:19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

Why did Jesus say, “Woe unto them that are with child”? Because such Christians feel a responsibility to nurture the spiritual babes, and to flee would leave the babes unattended. For example, if a Sunday School teacher has a class of adolescents and is attached to them and is trying to nurture them in the Lord and in knowledge, it is extremely difficult to separate under that circumstance and to obey the call to come out of Babylon (Rev. 18:4). The Master is suggesting that obedience (flight) is much harder for those in such positions. Those in the field are also nurturing spiritual babes and will, in addition, have to accept a severing of financial ties if they obey.

Jesus is suggesting that many would be like the rich, young ruler who could not make the one decision that the Master required and went away sorrowing. The implication is that obedience under the condition of being with child and giving suck is much more difficult.

Matt. 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

The “sabbath day” is the 1,000-year period of the Seventh Day, beginning in 1874. It is the “Seventh Day” since the fall of Adam. The usual literal sabbath is 24 hours long, but a sabbath can also be seven days long, and here it is 1,000 years in length.

Matt. 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

When verses 20 and 21 are combined, the thought is, “Pray that your flight will not be in the time of great tribulation, which will occur on the ‘sabbath day.’” In other words, “winter” is the “great tribulation.” The opposite of winter is summer. In Hebrew the day was divided into two parts: morning and evening. And the year was divided into two parts: winter and summer. At the time the Lord was speaking, it was “summer” under the favor of the gospel sun. In Jeremiah 8:20 the Great Company speaks of summer as being over: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” When that time comes, the Great Company class will recognize that the summer of special favor has terminated,

and the winter Time of Trouble, darkness, and clouds has come.

The point is that the great tribulation will occur (1) in the winter (2) of the Sabbath Day. These *two* conditions are necessary to pinpoint when the great Time of Trouble starts. It will begin when summer has ended. In other words, in the 1,000-year sabbath period, there will come a point in time when “winter” will start. Pray that your flight will occur prior to that “winter.” Luke 21:36 says, “*Watch* ye therefore, and *pray always*, that ye may be accounted worthy to *escape* all these things [the Time of Trouble] that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” In this regard Jesus warns us to WATCH and PRAY ALWAYS!

Matthew 24 and Luke 21 discuss two *different* times of trouble. In AD 70 Vespasian surrounded Jerusalem in a siege. But when the emperor in Rome died, Vespasian returned to Rome. Of the several contenders for the throne at that time, Vespasian emerged the victor. When Vespasian departed for Rome, he left his son Titus in charge. With this change of authority, the siege around Jerusalem was temporarily relaxed, allowing those who believed Jesus’ words to flee. The length of this interim period is unknown—it may have been only one week or even one day. Those who hesitated and/or did not seize this opportunity to flee were doomed once the cordon was again tightened. None escaped after that time.

The point is that in Luke 21 Jesus gave *advance notice*, and those who took his advice, acting on faith, were able to escape with their lives. Matthew 24:20 identifies an even greater Time of Trouble as occurring *future*, down here at the end of the age (“in the sabbath day”), and Jesus’ instruction is to flee *before* the “winter” Time of Trouble.

Q: We have been discussing these verses the way Bro. Russell explained them, which certainly is valid, but wouldn’t an *additional* urgency to flee be seen by those who are on the scene *later* in the Harvest period, that is, when Papacy, Protestantism, and the civil powers croak the unclean message in unison? At that time Papacy will again be elevated and thus “stand in the holy place.” Wouldn’t this *future* application be a *third* way of interpreting verses 15–20?

A: There is no harm in so viewing these verses, and certainly the principle would apply. *Urgent* action will be taken by the faithful—they will take a stand. And that is where problems will occur. The Great Company class will suffer, but not for Christ’s sake in the sense of being part of the sin offering. They will not be quite as alert and responsive as the feet members. Which is worse—to be taken out by the civil authorities and shot against a wall or to be in a period of mob violence? The first condition would be preferable, and there would be joy in knowing that one had been responsive to the Lord’s dealings and that the sufferings were meritorious. The Little Flock suffers voluntarily, whereas the Great Company will be *forced* to suffer under very distressing conditions of anarchy and injustice, that is, in a time of *no* law and order.

The great Time of Trouble is still future. In verse 20 the word “flight” is very important. The call since 1878 to come out of Babylon has been an *invitation*. There is no compulsion. One must make that decision *himself*. But the “flight” in the “winter” will be a *forced* flight. The Great Company *will have to flee* when the nominal Church systems *fall*. When the Harvest or summer is over, those in the systems will be forced to flee. Thus it is advantageous to flee earlier, while it is still summer. Those who do not immediately flee

from the housetop position but go down to take things out of the house, spiritually speaking, are those who are too self-centered in their possessions in the present life.

Just as we can extend certain principles of Matthew 24:15–19 into the future based on the knowledge that Papacy will come into power, so we can say that “Babylon” is not just the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations but that it will even be, in time, the Bible Student movement itself. As individuals, we should follow the Lord’s leadings and not be wed to an institution, organization, or individual. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil [and the good too] thereof” (Matt. 6:34). We are to take things day by day, step by step. Consecration is a *daily* matter. If we are truly following the Lord and matters develop unfavorably, we must take a stand no matter what is involved—the immediate family, the immediate fellowship we are identified with, the ecclesia, etc. We must take the same action as we would for “Babylon.” “These [the 144,000] are they which follow the *Lamb* whithersoever he goeth” (Rev. 14:4). True, the Lord has used, and still uses, institutions and individuals to a certain level or extent, but *none* of them are on a par with *obedience to Christ*. Reverence to God, to His Word, and to Jesus are *inviolable*.

The spiritual flight at the end of the age is a *progressive* matter too. At consecration we make a vow to follow the Lord from that moment until the end of our course. And that consecration is progressive, just like baptism. Until we finish our course, our consecration is not finished, and neither is our baptism. Thus consecration is ongoing and progressive from the moment our vows are made. Similarly, the *invitational* “flight” has a chronological beginning and then continues so that, hopefully, we will not have to “flee” after the “winter” Time of Trouble has begun. It is like saying that even though we fled Babylon and are consecrated, we should keep seeking out the best sources of meat. We are to get more and more instruction from God’s Word and never stop. We must keep on fleeing to more and more truth, devotion to the Lord, obedience, character, etc. We should keep growing in knowledge and grace. Both are needed to get to maturity as a Christian (that is, as far as we are capable of doing, for we each have limitations).

Matt. 24:22 **And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.**

What is the thought of “for the elect’s sake”? “*By means of*” or “*through*” the elect, these days will be shortened because the Church, glorified and with Jesus at this time, will stop the trouble. The word “sake” is not in the original Greek—it should be italicized in the King James as a spurious word. “But through the elect those days shall be shortened” or “But if it were not for the elect ...” In other words, the elect, the Church, as well as Jesus, are the *instrument* who will cut short the trouble. Obadiah 21 reads, “And saviours [plural] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD’S.” This prophecy about cutting short the trouble is addressed particularly to Israel, but by inference the stoppage will be worldwide. The trouble will be stopped in connection with the rescue of Israel at the end of the age. If that rescue did not take place, not only would Israel be destroyed but all mankind; that is, “no flesh [would] be saved.”

The Greek word *dia*, translated “*for* the elect,” can be rendered “*by* the elect” or “*through* the elect.” This Greek word, which can be used with the ablative or the accusative case, has various meanings. Therefore, it should be translated with the word that best fits our vocabulary according to the meaning of the context. The word “but” has a larger thought; namely, “If it were not for the elect shortening those days, there would be no flesh saved.” It is *through* or *by* the elect—and not on their behalf—that the days will be shortened. The

Church will be the benefactors, and *not the recipients* of the benefaction. The elect class will be the *instrumentality* for cutting short those days and thus terminating Jacob's Trouble by delivering Israel.

"Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." This trouble is yet future. It will occur after all the elect are beyond the veil. The trouble we see in various locations in the world today is not the great Time of Trouble, for the real trouble will shatter the nations like a potter's vessel, causing the *complete* destruction of the social order. Troubles to date are merely an overthrow of one Satanic government and its replacement by another Satanic government. When the true smiting occurs, it will be accomplished by the *Lord's* stone (The Christ). Hence the Church will be instrumental in the trouble as well as the salvation. As we look around the earth today, we see evil men crushing other men. This is not the Kingdom. After the stone smites the image, it will start to GROW. At present, things are getting darker. When the stone smites, it will get still darker—and then lighter as the stone grows. In addition, many Scriptures stress the suddenness of the trouble. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then *sudden destruction* cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:3). "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus *with violence* shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found *no more at all*" (Rev. 18:21). Papacy will be lifted up as a millstone and then *hurled* into the sea. Today we see Papacy being lifted up and the Protestants too, not their being cast into the sea. And Satan is getting stronger every day too, with more and more influence in the church systems. When the trouble comes, it will be greater than anything before or since, including the French Revolution, Noah's day, the Jewish trouble in AD 70, the Holocaust, etc. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21).

The simplest illustration is the Flood. In those days the fallen angels materialized and took human wives, and violence was in the earth. In other words, incidental to and preceding the Flood, there was the prevalence of evil, but all that evil was not *the* trouble. *The* trouble was the Flood. The big difference is trouble caused by men and/or fallen angels versus trouble caused by *nature* as *ordered by God*. In exactly the due time, the Flood cascaded and drowned the entire human race except for Noah and his family. The hybrid race was all destroyed, and the fallen angels dematerialized and left the earth; however, they were not allowed to return to heaven. Thus, to the fallen angels, the door down here was closed (no more materializations) and also the door to God's holy heaven. They were confined in earth's atmosphere called *tartaroo*. It was like the great big genie of Aladdin's lamp being reduced and squeezed into a little bottle. And so all of the fallen angels have been squeezed down around this tiny planet.

The future antitypical "flood," a *miraculous* display, will be the destruction of the corrupt system. The anarchy will be terrible, but God will not rise up to the prey with mighty demonstrations of power until the setting of Jacob's Trouble when He delivers Israel. At that time, Isaiah says, darkness will be on all people, but God will arise "upon thee," that is, on Israel (Isa. 60:2). The first world ended with the loosing of water in a *literal* flood, and it was the *God of nature* who had so timed this flood. God said *He* would bring the Flood, but He would wait awhile—120 years (Gen. 6:3,13,17). Even the *loosing* of the fallen angels will be something God does. They are imprisoned in chains of darkness *until* the judgment of the great day. When that prison door is opened and the incorrigible fallen angels are loosed and cascade into the earth, that will be like a flood. *God* will do that—it will be a *supernatural*

occurrence. The *materialized* fallen spirits, just like the Flood of Noah's day, will be *the* trouble.

"The enemy shall come in like a flood" in Jacob's Trouble (Isa. 59:19). The forces of Gog will spread out over the land like a mighty cloud, but more is implied than just the people from the north coming down against natural Israel. The fallen angels will be loosed en masse, and an evil thought will come into the mind of Gog. What is the first thing the fallen angels will do when they materialize? They will go after the Lord's people—first the Great Company, who may die in just one day. The fallen angels will go after anyone called a "Christian," anyone who maintains that stand.

When Babylon falls, the people will leave the churches for one reason or another. Some will be "burned" as tares, not wanting persecution. Tares claim to be Christians out of prudence, not moral conviction, whereas the Lord's people who remain after the Little Flock is complete will flee for moral reasons. The Great Company will have to obey to even get life.

After the Great Company, the fallen angels will go against *natural Israel*, the natural people of God, wanting to completely exterminate them. Therefore, it will be necessary for the elect to step in—not only to save the Holy Remnant but also to prevent all flesh from being destroyed. Only eight people survived the Flood of Noah's day. In the coming "flood," more will be saved. A billion? more?—we do not know. But *if the trouble were not cut short, all would die*. Incidentally, a nuclear holocaust feared by many—as terrible as it would be—is exaggerated as regards killing all flesh. The materialization of the fallen angels is *worse by far* than bombs or plagues.

The fallen angels will first direct their efforts at the Great Company, who will die as a class *suddenly*. Of course some individuals will die in the interim between the completion of the Little Flock and the sudden execution of the remainder (the majority) of the Great Company at the hands of the fallen angels. The feet members will also die as a class suddenly, but earlier. At the end of the age, the nominal systems will cut them off so that none will be left. The faithful, zealous feet members will put their own heads in the noose, as it were, by speaking out. This is like Jesus—he *intentionally* went to Jerusalem at the end of his ministry, knowing the Pharisees were lying in wait to kill him. He went to the slaughter as meek as a lamb, for he knew it was God's will and he was ready to die under that circumstance. It will be the same at the end of the age when Babylon is in power. Those who stick their heads out will be targets right away.

Although the coming trouble is an unpleasant subject, that is what these verses are saying. The trouble will be "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." The future trouble will be worse than *anything* in the past or *anything* to occur subsequently.

Q: Would the three backgrounds of the feet members be portrayed—and clues given as to their identity—by Matthew 24:40,41 and Luke 17:34–36 in regard to the rapture? In each case two are on the scene, and one will be taken from (1) a "bed," (2) "grinding," and (3) the "field."

A: We will look into that suggestion subsequently.

Mark 13 describes a similar situation, but notice verse 18: “Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter”—period! The emphasis is clearer than in Matthew 24. Verse 19 is interesting too: “For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.” This makes the matter very plain, for Matthew 24 might convey the thought of “age”; that is, that the Flood of the first age is not included. Mark 13 plainly includes *all* dispensations—past, present, and future.

“And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days” (Mark 13:20). In this verse we have the liberty of understanding the tense as *future*. This technique is commonly used in the Old Testament where many prophecies yet future are spoken of as already fulfilled. The *context* determines the perspective in which the *future* event is being viewed. Sometimes the prophet is transplanted in time as if he were living in our day; then he states a future event as if it is already in progress or already past.

Matt. 24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

Matt. 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

When will verses 23 and 24 take place? In the *Harvest* period—when “the end” comes (verse 14). The Harvest is the end of the age.

If we compare verses 5 and 11 with verses 23 and 24, we see that verses 5 and 11 applied more to *systems* than to individuals and took place *down through* the Gospel Age.

Verse 23 does not follow verse 22 timewise because verse 22 discusses the height of the Time of Trouble. Signs, wonders, and deceptions will *precede* the trouble. Therefore, in verse 23, the word “then” means a *flashback and review*, for the deceptions will occur *just prior* to verses 20–22.

The warning of verse 23 is especially directed to the Little Flock, for verse 24 shows that some of “the very elect” will still be on the scene at this time. In other words, the feet members will be here during the deceptions of “false Christs” and “false prophets.” Stated another way, verses 23 and 24 describe incidents that will occur just prior to the great Time of Trouble and just prior to the rapture of the feet members.

In verse 24 the word “very” is spurious, but the thought is correct and the meaning is the same either way.

Matt. 24:25 Behold, I have told you before.

Matt. 24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

Matt. 24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

The thought in the Greek is “For as the *sunlight* rises out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the presence of the Son of man be.” The reference is *not to the orb* of the sun but to *sunlight*. The sun arises in the east and makes its transit west. If the actual

physical body of the sun were being referred to, there would be a contradiction with the advice given, for we are being told not to expect something we can point a finger to and say, “There it is!” Jesus will NOT appear in a “desert” (a geographic place or location) or in a “secret chambers” (a room or seance). Thus verse 27 refers to the bright shining, not to the sun itself. As the sun arises in the east and diffuses its light over the whole horizon unto the west (half of the globe is always in sunlight), so shall the presence of Jesus be.

In present truth we have been beautifully indoctrinated as to why Jesus will not appear visibly in either a *physical* sense (“in the desert”) or a *mystical* sense (“in the secret chambers”). Our risen Lord is no longer the man Christ Jesus but a glorious spirit being on the divine plane. We have been alerted not to expect a visual body in Jesus’ Second Coming. (See the chapter in *Volume 2* entitled “The Manner of Our Lord’s Return and Appearing” for a comprehensive explanation.) Since we have been so indoctrinated, what is Jesus telling us? It will *seem as if he is visibly appearing*. Jesus is forewarning us not to be deceived, for *he will not appear visibly* in a geographic location or elsewhere. The suggestion is that *startling* deceptions will occur in the future—so startling that unless we are *thoroughly* indoctrinated otherwise (that is, regarding the true manner of the Second Advent of Jesus), we will be at least *partially deceived temporarily*. The deception will be *so magnificent to see* that all except the Very Elect will be deceived.

It is also suggested that this deception will be accompanied by miracles. Hence not only will there be a *visual* appearance but *miraculous, supernatural, occult* powers will accompany it—as if the appearance is coming from another planet. When something is “supernatural,” normal logic cannot explain it away.

What is the distinction between a “sign” and a “wonder”? A “sign” is something spectacular and more visual—a *visual display*. A wonder refers to the *miracle-working power* accompanying the visual demonstration. Thus the deception will have a *double* force.

In verses 25–27 Jesus is saying, “Lo, I have told you before that I will not appear in the desert or in the secret chambers.” Hence there is the possibility of a *purported* occurrence of the Messiah’s making his appearance as coming in the desert. (In the past many came from the desert such as John the Baptist, Moses, Elijah, and Jesus.) We are not told specifically that the visual display of Jesus’ supposed coming will cover heaven or be seen in the desert. Instead the account gives a *double* warning—that *whatever arises* and purports to be the Messiah, the Christ, whether it appears in the “desert” or is visible in the heavens, BELIEVE IT NOT, FOR IT IS A DECEPTION!

It is impossible for us on this side of the veil to see Christ here or there; that is, it is impossible for him to be visibly identified with a geographic location or place. Jesus communicates with his people through the Word of God. God told Moses, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exod. 33:20), and Jesus is now the express image of the Father. If Jesus came in his power and glory, the appearance would be too overpowering for man to see. The people would be knocked down and blinded. If in Daniel 10:7–12 just the appearance of an *angel* caused the prophet to lose strength and fall down, what would be the effect of the appearance of a spirit being with the divine nature? The appearance would be so much *more glorious* than even an angelic spirit being that a human being could not stand it. The point is that Matthew 24 is hinting of a visual deception in the future accompanied by *miracle-working power—a deception so powerful* that all will be deceived except the Very Elect. This means that, at least temporarily, even the

Great Company will be deceived. Only the Very Elect will be grounded well enough not to be deceived.

In Detroit a vision of Mary appeared on the side of a *Protestant* church. Mary appeared weeping and the vision lasted intermittently over a period of several weeks. People kept vigil night after night outside the church from 1 a.m. to 4 a.m. "Mary" wept in connection with future events. The brethren in that area had good opportunities to witness. An emergency tract was prepared, and for a while they held meetings near the location.

The possibility of an "angel from heaven" appearing is also brought out in Galatians 1:8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The suggestion is that an angel will appear as a guide, as Christ, but the appearance will be identified as a deception because of the preaching of another gospel. The Little Flock will not be deceived at all. However, the Great Company will be momentarily deceived and then subsequently enlightened by the activities of that supernatural power. In other words, that supernatural power will produce certain effects or results, and when those results are seen to be negative and out of harmony with the Scriptures, then those of the consecrated not as thoroughly grounded in truth will understand—but *not initially*. The deception will be so powerful that all will be deceived except the Very Elect. This Scripture in Galatians suggests the possibility of *Satan himself* coming and being mistaken for Jesus. We are not to marvel if "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Moreover, of Jesus it is said, "Whose coming [presence] is after [during, alongside of, or accompanied by] the working of *Satan* with *all* power and signs and lying wonders, And with *all* deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that *perish*; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 2:9,10). The Greek word *kata*, translated "after," has two basic meanings: "during" and "alongside of." In other words, the Adversary is operating during or alongside of Jesus' presence. Stated another way, two opposing forces, Christ and the Adversary, are operating contemporaneously but separately. The *Second Volume* explains this Scripture along one line and gives an excellent translation based on the Greek. Other translations do not catch the exact thought because the translators did not expect Jesus to be an *invisible* being at his Second Advent. The point is that Satan will be involved in the Lord's Second Advent in a very dramatic fashion with *all power, all manner of lying signs and wonders, and great delusions and deceptive power*.

2 Thessalonians 2:11,12 is also good: "And for this cause God shall send [permit] them *strong* delusion [a *frenzy* of delusion, a working of error], that they should believe a lie: That they *all* might be damned [condemned] who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." This text brings us down to the end of the age and also shows that *even among the consecrated*, those who are reckoned as being unfaithful (and thus will go into Second Death) will believe a lie and thus be condemned. In the Old Testament there is evidence that Satan will be personally involved in the deception. Isaiah 14:16,17 reads, "They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" (The Revised Standard Version is especially good for Isaiah 14:12–20.) In the beginning of the Kingdom, the world will be apprised of Satan's influence in order that it can be contradicted. Psalm 52:7 is related: "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness." (See also Psalm 52:1–6). The inference is not just that Satan will deceive but that he will be the

embodiment of that deception (2 Thess. 2:9). He will pose as an angel of light in a special sense, as it were, coming down from heaven.

Verses 23–26 suggest that there will be *multiple* deceptions. Notice the plural words: false Christs, false prophets, great signs and wonders, and deceptions in *both* the desert and secret chambers. For example, some will be deceived by a supposed appearance from another planet. But the capping deception—the deception to supersede all others—will be the one by *Satan himself*. Down through the Gospel Age, Satan has used many forms to deceive those groping after God. To the intellectual class, he appears in one manner, to the superstitious he appears in another manner (weeping icons, for instance), to the irreligious he uses the Ouija board, etc. (Incidentally, the Ouija board is a very powerful deception, for it leads step by step until one is deeply entrapped with occult powers.)

If we knew all of the particulars of the coming deceptions in advance, they would lose some of their powers. However, it helps to consider *all* possibilities. For one thing, we must know the *true manner* of our Lord's Second Advent—that it is *invisible* and that when the Kingdom comes, the Church will be glorified and *with Jesus*. Consider again the warning of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 24:25 (“Behold, I have told you *before*”) and Mark 13:23 (“But *take ye heed*: behold, I have *foretold* you *all* things”).

In verse 26, what does “go not forth” mean? Do not pursue *either physically or mentally* any deceptions of Jesus *visibly* appearing in a geographical location or *mystically* appearing in a seance or other occult setting. *Do not investigate* the matter when you know it is a deception of the Adversary. Do not get involved. Notice: “secret chambers” (*plural*) and “*all* power and signs and lying wonders” and “*all* deceivableness of unrighteousness.”

Some personality will appear in the desert—a maharajah type perhaps. In the secret chambers will appear a mystical vision or apparition of some sort that talks and communicates. One would have to enter into a seance-like arrangement in order to be in a conducive climate to see this miraculous power demonstrated. Also, to be protected, we should keep in mind that the ones who recently sought after the vision in Detroit did not enter into a room but merely went to the place where the vision of Mary had been purported to occur. We must avoid all such investigation. Fortunately, mankind so far has been safeguarded to a certain extent because the visions have been few and far between and people forget, BUT *in the future* these great deceptions *will be continuous and overpowering and will take control*.

Hence the value of the Vow: “I vow to Thee that I will be on the alert to resist everything akin to Spiritism and Occultism, and, remembering that there are but the two masters, I shall resist these snares in all reasonable ways as being of the Adversary.” We are to have NOTHING to do with occult doings, not even out of curiosity.

The public has been conditioned to be ready for—and to be gullible for—“someone” to communicate with them from outer space. Any supernatural being is *assumed to be wiser* than a human being and more apt to bring peace. However, spirit beings can be *fallen* just like us. Not only is the human race composed of imperfect beings, but the spirit world has fallen spirits who are also *imperfect*. Our government is constantly sending beams out into space, fully expecting, sooner or later, to get some kind of communication from a more intelligent form of life elsewhere in the universe. Thus the people are primed for a deception from the fallen angels. Scientists say we are fools to think we are the only ones,

the only life, in the universe. The Russians are also sending signals into outer space, trying to receive a response from afar.

It is significant that more and more women have been entering the clergy. They would be especially susceptible to occult powers and deceptions, as has been true of women ever since Eve succumbed in the Garden of Eden.

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” The fact that the light shines from east to west (verse 27) shows that it is related in some way to the sun. The Greek word *astrape*, translated “lightning,” means “bright shining.” *Astrape* is usually translated “lightning” but should not always be so rendered. See Luke 11:36, where it refers to the “bright shining” of a candle. “If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the *bright shining* of a candle doth give thee light.” The Greek *astrape* can also refer to the countenance of angels: “His countenance was like *lightning*, and his raiment white as snow” (Matt. 28:3). However, this is a mistranslation, for the account says the angels appeared as “young men.” How could one look at an angel’s face and see that it was like that of a young man if the face were like lightning? The features would not be discernible because the lightning would be overpowering. But if the thought were a “bright shining,” the features could be seen as being young. Thus, depending on the context, “lightning” may or may not be the correct thought.

To think of the *physical sun* as being the analogy (instead of *sunlight*) would nullify the previous argument where Jesus said, in regard to his Second Coming, that pointing to a specific location, vision, etc., would be a deception. He was saying, in effect: “You should not believe the cry, ‘Lo, here is Christ’ or ‘there,’ or ‘Behold, he is in the desert’ or ‘in the secret chambers’; rather, my presence will be like the sunlight, which shines from east to west.”

Matt. 24:28 For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

The “carcass” or carcass represents the dead humanity of Christ. One of the cardinal features of the Harvest message is the understanding of the necessity for Christ’s death to offset sin. The dead humanity of Christ explains this beautifully. The Harvest message explains the doctrine of the Ransom. The reference is to the *freshly slain* Lamb, not to a *putrefying* carcass. Job tells us that the eaglets drink up the blood of a freshly slain carcass (Job 39:30).

Characteristics of an Eagle

Job 39:27–30 presents God’s view of the eagle. “Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.”

The narrative could not be referring to an old carcass. Otherwise, the blood would coagulate and dry up. The eagle prefers *freshly slain* meat (as opposed to a vulture or a crow, which will eat putrefied flesh). Only if there is a scarcity of food will the eagle feed on decaying meat.

The eagle sees “afar off,” suggesting prophetic vision in the Christian, an interest in prophecy. The eagle is well known for keen eyesight (having an “eagle’s eye” is a saying).

Also, an eagle can look *directly* at the sun.

An eagle is *perpetually hungry*. Every day it has to eat several times its own body weight in order to survive. *Hunger plus keenness of vision* go hand in hand. “Blessed are they which do *hunger* and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be *filled*” (Matt. 5:6). The sight is related to the appetite. Hunger seems to accentuate vision, to clarify vision.

An eagle lives on the rock, the strong place. Symbolically, the Rock is Jesus. This dwelling place provides a high vantage point, that is, seeing things from the *divine* standpoint (as opposed to using natural human wisdom or understanding).

The little eaglets want to grow up. Paul said that as babes, we should desire the sincere milk of the Word. Why? So that we may GROW. The “milk” of the Word would be the basic doctrines that give us life and nurture us, but the meat goes beyond to *stronger* truths.

The mother eagle builds the nest with downy feathers and thorns so that as the young eaglets get more and more active, the thorns will prick now and then. Think of Jehovah as the Great Eagle and the little eaglets as representing us. The eagle mounts up and spreads her wings—she stirs up her nest and then stretches abroad her wings. The allusion is to the adult eagle who realizes the time has come for her young eagles to fly. Therefore, she removes the down of the nest so that the brambles will be exposed. The young eagles, wanting to escape the thorns and get more comfortable, climb to the edge of the nest.

Let us consider the nation of Israel for a moment, for God dealt with natural Israel along these lines. He made Egypt uncomfortable for the Israelites by letting Satan have more say. The taskmasters were so severe and unmerciful that the Israelites cried to the Lord for deliverance from the “iron furnace” of affliction (Deut. 4:20). True, they were delivered into a barren land, but they were fed and clothed as well as being independent from the yoke of bondage. God likens His dealing with Israel to an eagle’s removing the down from the nest to make it uncomfortable.

The eaglets climb to the top of the nest and then tumble out into space until the mother catches them and bears them up, returning them to the nest. (The wings need to be exercised to increase the blood flow and gain strength.) As the eagle bears its young, catching them as they fall through the air, so God assisted Israel. Also, as a nursing mother nurtures a baby, giving it milk, so God helped Israel. He dealt with them tenderly.

All of these lessons apply to the Christian as well. The eagle pictures God’s Providence and instruction and also shows that discipline is needed. God does not baby the Christian.

Matt. 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Compare the parallel verses in Mark 13:24,25. Notice the words introducing verse 29: “*Immediately after* the tribulation of those days ...” What “tribulation” is being referred to? It is the tribulation of the great deceptions, which will end with the feet members being taken home through persecution.

The Pastor gave a different application to verse 29. He applied the signs and wonders from two standpoints: (1) a *natural* occurrence and (2) a *spiritual* happening. In the natural

application, he cited a tremendous eclipse of the sun on May 19, 1780, and later a spectacular shooting-star display on November 13, 1833. These occurrences were very startling (see the chapter entitled “Our Lord’s Great Prophecy” in *Volume 4*). Some of the falling stars were as large as a full moon—imagine! The meteoric shower was most impressive. The eclipse and shooting-star phenomena took place here in this country, especially in the Northeast. And this is the Land of Liberty where the Bible had special prominence and where Bible societies particularly flourished. These signs and wonders tended to alert the Christian that something would happen. They were helpful in stirring up men to investigate the Bible. Some even thought the end of the age was coming. Thus an interest in prophecy was stimulated.

But there is *a problem* in giving such a fulfillment to verse 29; namely, the sun, moon, and falling-star phenomena occur AFTER the tribulation, not before. For this reason the Pastor tried to show that the signing of the Declaration of Independence in America in 1776 was a great event and that the French Revolution (1789–1799) was an outgrowth of the American Revolution. Other Scriptures do point out the time of the end as dating from 1799 rather than 1776. The year 1776 was like a trigger, for it is true that when the French masses saw the example of America seceding from Britain, they took courage and precipitated a revolution that was much more violent. We had war in this country, but France had anarchy. Several Scriptures point out 1799 as the end of the 1,260 days.

The Pastor was probably disposed to thinking this way because the dark day was such a startling event, but he could not place it *after* the trouble of 1789–1799. That is why he put such emphasis on the date 1776—because the dark day occurred in 1780, which was *before* the French Revolution, not after. From the standpoint of 1776, the eclipse and the shooting stars both occurred right after the tribulation, relatively speaking. But since the trouble was really from 1789 to 1799, the chronological order of verse 29 does not fit the Pastor’s interpretation.

Therefore, we would conclude that the “tribulation of those days” will be the time of the false Christs, false prophets, great signs and wonders, the claim “Behold, he is in the desert,” etc.—deceiving all but the Very Elect. This interpretation fits the sequence of the rest of verse 29, as we will see.

When the Little Flock is gone, what will happen? Babylon, the ecclesiastical heavens, will fall. Papacy (the “sun”) and its canon law (the “moon”) and the hierarchy (the “stars”—cardinals, bishops, etc.) will cease (“be darkened,” “not give ... light,” “fall”). The pope himself is the papal (“sun”) light. In contrast, the *true* light is in the face of Jesus Christ and in the gospel, and the *true* Church is likened to “stars” (the seven messengers of Revelation 1:20) and “candlesticks.” The *false* light is the pope, who claims to be the vicegerent of Christ (that is, in Christ’s stead). In fact, in some places he says he is in *God’s* stead. “Who ... exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as [a] God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thess. 2:4).

Thus Babylon will fall “immediately after the tribulation of those days [upon the Lord’s people],” the tribulation being the deceptions with great signs, wonders, and all manner of lying powers. The sequence is: deceptions, death of feet members, fall of church systems. The Apostle Peter tells us the same thing in saying that “the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved” (2 Pet. 3:12).

Q: Could there not also be a *future natural* application based on Zechariah 14:6, Joel 3:15, and other Scriptures?

A: Yes! The natural sun and moon will also undergo strange phenomena. For instance, there will be one day where around the clock it will be neither day nor night. Thus, while the earlier (1780 and 1833) natural occurrences awakened an interest in studying the Scriptures, the *real* thrust of verse 29 is *still future* (both natural and spiritual).

Q: Will the Great Company be gone at the time verse 29 is fulfilled, for there will be no light in the world?

A: No, they will be here. These heavens being darkened are the false heavens, not the true. Moreover, just as there were literal signs in the natural heavens when Jesus died (for example, the sun was darkened), so there will be when the feet members go off the scene.

Actually *both* the *true* (gospel) “sun,” etc., and the *false* (papal) “sun” will be darkened in the coming days of anarchy. During the anarchy there will be no respect for God, although the primary anger will be directed against “*their* king and *their* God.” “And they shall pass through it [the land], hardly bested and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse *their* king and *their* God, and look upward [to the *true* God]” (Isa. 8:21). The people will be completely disillusioned by the efforts of man. The suggestion, too, is that the world will be given *false* hopes previously, but those hopes will be dashed to pieces. Great famine will occur because of the disorientation of all society. We are so organized today that if food is prevented from getting to the supermarket, we will go hungry. In the old days people just went to the backyard to pick vegetables or to the chicken coop, but not today. Today we are dependent upon mass transit. But the operators of mass transit will not convey food unless they get money, and the money will become worthless. And there will be no police force, no fire department, no truck drivers, etc. What a dilemma for mankind! They will have to go back to primitive conditions. If in Ethiopia the people had to eat grass and green leaves, so it will probably happen in some of the wealthy countries. Isaiah 8:21 stresses a venting of anger at “*their*” institutions, not against the true ones.

Basically, we should take a negative view of the sun, moon, and stars because the true Church will go off the scene in the trouble immediately preceding. The “tribulation of those days” is different from the time of anarchy (the “great tribulation, such as was not ... no, nor ever shall be” of verse 21).

Severe trial will come on those who do not succumb to the deceptions. In “those days,” after the tribulation on the feet members, will come the real Time of Trouble, in which all institutions fall. Not only will the people curse their king and God, but when they are hungry and starving, they will not be interested in studying the Bible. They will be thinking of their own immediate families. The whole focus of attention will be different. The people will be angry at the dashing of their hopes by false religious and civil institutions. (They will not be angry at Jesus—they just will not be interested at that time.) Eventually the people will look “upward” to God—like a drowning person yelling “Save me! Help!”

The true gospel will be darkened. A time (an “hour”) will come when no man can work and the true Church will be imprisoned (John 9:4). However, this darkening will occur earlier, when the nominal Church is in the ascendancy. At that time the truth will be

darkened, and it will *seem* as if all the powers of evil are triumphing over the power of good, the true light. But, actually, when that experience has had the effect of developing the Little Flock, then next will come the collapse of the false lights (verse 29).

Matt. 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

After the institutions have fallen, after the Time of Trouble, the next outward event will be the establishment of the Kingdom. In the *Volumes*, Pastor Russell gave one interpretation of Matthew 24:30, but a *later* and different thought appears in the *Sermon Book*, page 420, in the chapter "The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven." In other words, he *changed his view* on this verse, as follows:

"Various suggestions have been made by scholars respecting the import of this prophecy by the Master. Some guessed that the sign would be a Cross in the sky. Others thought that it would be Christ Himself, who would appear in some wrathful form to humanity, causing fear and dismay.

"We cannot say that the sign of the Son of Man in heaven will be His Parousia. [Earlier, in several places, he had said it was the *parousia*; therefore, he was changing his view here.] On the contrary, the Parousia of Christ will not be known to the tribes, or families, of the earth in general, but will be known only to the most saintly ones of the Church of Christ. Consequently, the sign of the Son of Man must in some sense stand related to His Epiphania, or shining forth in the 'flaming fire' of judgment, which the whole world of mankind will recognize."

Thus the Pastor plainly stated later on that the sign of the Son of man is not Jesus' *parousia*. Unfortunately, the majority of brethren think that part of verse 30 has had a fulfillment.

Now to show the matter another way. "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Who are "they"? The tribes of the earth. When Matthew 24 says, "*you*," it is talking to the *Christian*. But in verse 30, the emphasis is on "*they*," not "*you*." Therefore, this verse is given from the *world's* standpoint—when they recognize the establishment of the Kingdom. In speaking of this time, the Prophet Isaiah said (40:5), "And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." When Jesus appears to the world, it will be *in power and great glory*. Certainly that is not true now!

Verse 30 is a *more direct answer* to the question asked earlier in verse 3, namely, "What shall be the sign of thy presence?" Jesus gave two answers:

1. One answer was for the *Church* while the Church is still here in the flesh. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (verse 14). This answer helps the Church to be prepared.
2. The other answer pertained to the *world's* recognition, which will come later. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (verse 30).

Thus there are two periods of the presence: the *parousia* and the *epiphania*. We are still in the *parousia* period where Jesus is invisibly and secretly present, as revealed to us through the

Word of God. The *epiphania* period applies to the subsequent revealing to the world.

Verse 30 ends another sequence. Verses 1–14 are the first sequence. Then come reviews of what happened during the Gospel Age and some advice, with an updated application to the end of the Gospel Age (verses 15–19). Verses 20–22 discuss a future event. Verses 23–28 are a flashback telling what happens *prior to* the great Time of Trouble. Verses 29 and 30 pertain to the trouble on through to the establishment of the Kingdom.

Matt. 24:31 **And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

“And he [the Son of man] shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet.” Since a “trumpet” is a message, “a *great sound of a trumpet*” is a *prominent* message.

The “angels” of the Son of man are sent with a prominent message to gather together the elect “from the four winds,” “from one end of heaven to the other.” The elect are gathered from the four corners of “heaven,” from the *entire* “heaven,” as it were, for a square with its four corners is a symbol of *completeness*. Or it could be said that the “four winds” signify the four cardinal points of the compass, again showing the whole “heaven.” With the elect being gathered “from one end of heaven to the other,” the emphasis is on the four extremities, the *entire ecclesiastical heavens*.

The “trumpet,” which pertains to the message of truth about Jesus’ Second Presence, gathers the elect from different sectarian groups. Christians leave their respective denominations and are attracted to the Harvest message. They are extracted from the various branches of the spiritual or ecclesiastical heavens.

Mark 13:27 reads, “And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.” Matthew 24 stresses the two ends of “heaven,” whereas Mark 13 mentions “earth” and “heaven,” and thus provides further understanding. Matthew 24 is talking about the nominal spiritual heavens (this is lateral or horizontal), while Mark 13 emphasizes the vertical aspect. In other words, the elect in the nominal systems, who are on the higher plane (such as on the “housetop”), as well as those who are on the lower plane (not in churchianity but outside the systems in earth’s society), are all gathered during the Harvest. When the two accounts are combined, the emphasis is not on the beginning of the gathering but on the *completion or accomplishment of the gathering*.

In connection with the gathering of the elect, there are various stages. The call to “Come out of her, my people” is a gathering (Rev. 18:4). God’s people come to, and feed on, the Harvest message or the “carcase” (Matt. 24:28). But that is not the end of the story. The Christian is called to come out of Babylon to a message, but from this message, each is to make his calling and election sure. When this happens, the Christian is gathered to the “barn” condition; that is, he is fully harvested beyond the veil (Matt. 13:30). Therefore, the emphasis is on the accomplishment of the gathering *in its entirety*. The elect are gathered from one end of heaven to the other, and from top to bottom—the gathering is a *fully accomplished work*.

Notice verse 30. Chronologically, the fulfillment of verse 30 regarding the “Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” will occur after verse 31. Verse 31 is a flashback. The apostles asked Jesus when his Second Presence and the end of the age

would be. Verse 30 answers *part* of this question, the part pertaining to the “they” class (the tribes of earth, the world, the unbelievers), who will *mourn* when the fiery judgments reveal Jesus. Verse 31 is saying that *almost contemporaneously* with the appearance of the sign of the Son of man in heaven, the elect will all be gathered. When he appears, we shall appear *with him* in glory (Col. 3:4).

Luke 21 shows even more clearly that the Church will be complete just prior to the great Time of Trouble and Jesus’ revealing to the world. Luke 21:26–28 reads: “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” If the word “begin” had been omitted, the thought would be quite different, suggesting that the trouble would *precede* the Church’s deliverance. Many in the nominal systems believe that when Jesus appears in heaven as a literal sign, then all the saints will be caught up bodily to meet the Lord in the air. But the word “begin” is in the text: “when these things *begin* to come to pass.” The Church goes *before* the appearance of the sign of the Son of man in heaven.

Who are the “angels”? The answer depends on what is meant when the text says that the Son of man shall gather his elect. If the gathering is primarily to the Harvest message, the “angels” would be human messengers. But if the gathering is to the barn of heaven, the “angels” would be *literal*. The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares emphasizes the beginning and the progressing of the Harvest, but Matthew 24:31 tells of the *results* of the Harvest, when *all 144,000 have been reaped*. We are told in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 that the feet members will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air (to join the saints already raised and with Jesus). The last members will be *collectively* caught up—as Elijah was caught up in the chariot of fire by the whirlwind. Being “caught up” means being “gathered.”

Also suggested is that the last members at the very end of the age will be attracted to the truth not as they originally were but in a different sense. The bulk of the Harvest is over, complete, but the gleaning work remains. A great message was involved in the gathering of the bulk. For example, “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then [afterward] we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:16,17). These two verses cover the whole Harvest: (1) from 1878 when the dead in Christ were caught up, (2) through the living members who remain, and (3) down to the rapture of the feet members later. The words “first” and “remain” are extremely significant, for they indicate that some *remain* and are still here. A *time period* occurs between the dead being raised and the feet members going home. Revelation 14:13 adds more detail: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow [continue with] them.” This text applies to the individuals who die(d) since 1878 and up until the rapture. “Blessed are the dead which die [as individuals] in the Lord.”

Thus the picture is comprehensive. The sleeping saints were raised first, in 1878. Blessed are the faithful individuals who have been dying ever since. The climax will be when the feet members who remain are caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. “Together” means both *collectively* and *at the same time*. That way no one will have the honor of being the last saint. The Elijah *class* are caught up at the end, not individuals.

The “great ... trumpet” of verse 31 will complete the gathering work, and the feet members will go beyond the veil to complete the Church. Just as in the general Harvest a worldwide, very pronounced message attracted people to the truth, so at the *very end* of the age, a worldwide message—loud and great—will alert Christians to the conditions at hand and their corresponding responsibilities to not get the mark of the beast. Just as Gideon led *three* bands of 100 each, so at the *very end* of the age those who rightly respond, including some who will come out of Babylon at the last minute, will comprise the feet members. Thus the “great sound of a *trumpet*” is still a message, and the *last* message will be prominent just like the *first* Harvest message.

Matt. 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

The “fig tree” represents the Jewish nation, as shown by several Scriptures. Jeremiah 24:15 mentions two baskets of figs, and Jeremiah 8:13 also connects figs with the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus cursed the fig tree, picturing the nation of Israel.

“When his [the fig tree’s] branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves” refers to the year 1878 when the first Jewish colony, Petatikva (meaning “Door of Hope”), was established in Israel under the Zionist movement. Leaves come out in stages starting with the green bud, and this was the earliest sign of green life. In 1878 the Jew could purchase real estate in Palestine for the first time in almost 2,000 years. As a result of General Allenby’s victory, which broke the Turkish yoke, England encouraged the establishment of a homeland for the Jew in Palestine via the Balfour Declaration of 1917. And in 1948 Israel was recognized as a nation once again; this was the “blossoming,” not the initial putting forth of a leaf. A “blossom” signifies fruit.

Luke 21:29,30 includes an additional thought: “Behold the fig tree, *and all the trees*; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.” Notice the phrase “and all the trees,” meaning the springing forth of other nations too. When Cordell Hull and others started to form the United Nations, the number of existing nations was far more limited than today. A ratio was figured out to keep the superpowers (England, France, Russia, and the United States) as the top echelon. In the General Assembly, every nation, large or small, had one vote. But the organizers never foresaw the number of new and additional nations that would develop afterwards, thus upsetting the balance of power. All the little nations in Africa want their independence; they are really tribes, but each gets one vote in the United Nations. These Third World new nations keep clamoring for their rights with tremendous squabbling, confusion, and deafening noise so that the UN is unworkable today. This modern phenomenon—that in a relatively short time so many little nations have blossomed forth with their independence just as Israel did—is a sign of the nearness of the Kingdom (“summer”). “So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand” (Luke 21:31). This verse in Luke is telling us that the Church will still be here in the flesh when “the fig tree, and all the trees” shoot forth. Since 1948 we have seen the development of many new nations (“trees”).

Luke 21, Matthew 24, and Mark 13 are now beginning to narrow down and constrict to more specific information pertaining to *our* day. We are living in the time when these things are happening.

Matt. 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even

at the doors.

The progression in Matthew 24 is “summer” (when the Church is still here), “winter” (the great Time of Trouble when the Church is gone), and “summer” (when the Kingdom is established)—see verses 20 and 32. The “summer” of favor at the end of the Gospel Age is followed by a “winter” of trouble and then the “summer” of the Kingdom.

Luke 21 is the same sermon as Matthew 24 except that Luke’s narration stresses some different aspects. Luke 21:33 shows the emphasis Jesus placed upon statements uttered earlier in the chapter. “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.” The ecclesiastical heavens and earth’s present social order will pass away, but Jesus’ words stand and *will be fulfilled*. This prophecy is of the *utmost importance* and all the *minutiae* of detail *will come to pass!*

Luke 21:34 warns, “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.” To repeat, Luke warns us to *take heed against surfeiting, drunkenness, and the cares of this life*. “Surfeiting” is dissipation, a “hangover” from gluttony. The Lord’s people are cautioned *not to be distracted* from the momentous occasions about to take place, from the nearness of their own change, and from the need to be more zealous in making their calling and election sure. In other words, we are admonished not to let the spirit of the *world* become the spirit of the *Church*. The world is dedicated to sports, pleasure, music, etc. The minds of the people are occupied with worldly things and distractions of one kind or another. “Cares of this life” would be anxieties over family or business (for example, worry about the status of a job). We must take heed lest these things distract us.

Jesus is warning: “Do not let the spirit of the times become the spirit of the Church. Do not be intoxicated with the pleasures of this life.” In the phrase “cares of this life,” “this life” refers to the daily, normal life of the flesh. It is normal to have some cares, but do not let them become overburdening.

Luke 21:35 reads, “For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.” Jesus is referring to a contagious spirit that affects the whole human race except a Christian who takes heed. The implication is that this spirit could creep into the Church unless one is on guard against it.

And Luke 21:36 states, “*Watch* ye therefore, and pray *always*, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” “To stand before the Son of man” means to have his approval as one of the 144,000, as one of the saints. This would be standing intimately in Jesus’ presence—an honor the Great Company will not have.

Matt. 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

What “generation”? The generation that sees “all these things” (verse 33). In Scripture a generation can have various time lengths: 38, 40, 70, 80, 100, and 120 years. Which time length is applicable here? In the Wilderness, 40 years was a generation to the Israelites. In David’s day, a generation was 70 years. In Genesis 15:13,16 a “generation” was 100 years. “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them *four hundred years*; ... But in

the *fourth generation* they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." In other words, if four generations are 400 years, then one generation is 100 years.

However, none of these time spans fit except the "120," for the others, dating from 1878, have all come and gone without these things being fulfilled. The year 1878 is the date the fig tree put forth its leaves, and thus it is the point from which to reckon the "generation."

Genesis 6:3 identifies 120 years as the "generation." "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be *an hundred and twenty years*." At the end of the 120 years, the Ark was to be built and *completed*, it was to be *entered*, and the *Flood* would come, causing the destruction of the social order. That this 120 years is the time applicable to the "generation" of Matthew 24:34 is further corroborated in Matthew 24 itself, as well as elsewhere. "But as the *days of Noe* were, so shall also the coming [*parousia*] of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37). Verse 37 is a valuable clue, for it suggests that that which happened in Noah's day is a close analogy to the end of the Gospel Age, to the time of Jesus' presence.

Elsewhere in Scripture the "120" is suggested in connection with this completion work. Jesus said in John 4:35, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." The 30 days in a lunar month are calculated thus: $30 \times 4 = 120$ years (a day for a year). Moses died in the *prime* of life at age 120; that is, he did not die a natural death, but his life was terminated at the height of physical strength (Deut. 34:7). Since Moses pictures The Christ, he could not physically enter the Promised Land because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). In the flesh Moses could see the Promised Land from Mount Nebo (Pisgah), but he could not enter it. Thus the Lord's people look forward to, and see by the eye of faith, the "Promised Land" of heaven, but they must cross Jordan (die) first before entering (inheriting) the Kingdom.

Matt. 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Matt. 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

At *that* time even Jesus did not know the day and the hour, but he did know the *year*, and so can we know the year now in the end of the Harvest. We can be quite sure Jesus knew the year back there because of the detailed information in the chapter. (To have plainly stated the year, day, and hour would have allowed the *enemies* of righteousness to capitalize on the information for selfish purposes.) We need to (1) search the Scriptures and (2) watch prophecies being fulfilled. We should not interpret Scripture in the light of prophecy, but prophecy in the light of Scripture. Otherwise, all kinds of bizarre fulfillments will be predicted.

Matt. 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the *presence* [Greek *parousia*] of the Son of man be." Jesus' "presence" (*parousia*) is compared to Noah's 120-year presence before the Flood. (Noah lived *after* the Flood and *before* the 120 years began to count, but the reference is only to the 120 years.) "And the LORD said [of Noah], ... yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3). In other words, man would survive for another 120 years.

In the verses next to be considered, verses 38–44, Jesus narrowed down the picture from the year to the day to the hour. As the end draws *nearer*, we might even be able to *almost* calculate the day, but not the hour. Verse 42 mentions just the “hour”: “Watch therefore: for ye know not what *hour* your Lord doth come.”

Matt. 24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

Matt. 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matt. 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

The “field” is the missionary field. Those employed in the Christian field are very *zealous* to give their life in such sacrifice. They are more than just nominal Christians, generally speaking, for they are putting their lives on the line.

Matt. 24:41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

This verse pertains to grinding out spiritual food in various ways (for example, Sunday School teachers, elders, those who print literature, etc.).

In verses 40 and 41, *two* are on the scene; *one* is taken and *one* is left. What are these verses saying? One will be taken to be of the Little Flock, and the other will be left to, hopefully, then end up as Great Company. (Note: Even the true Christian is a “nominal” Christian from the standpoint that he is a professed Christian who bears the name of Christ. However, among nominal Christians, there are both wheat and tares, both true and false.)

All during the Harvest period one has been dying here and there and been raised to be part of the Little Flock. But why, here, does the ratio break down to one and one? *Two* are there, but *only one* is taken. The suggestion is that one might be taken, but not his best friend. A husband could be taken, but not his wife—or vice versa. The two are supposedly working in the “field,” “mill,” or “bed” (see Luke 17:34–36) *together*; one will make his calling and election sure and one will not.

And where are the “more than conquerors” taken? Verse 28 mentions the “carcase,” but that had to do with coming away from nominal relationships to a more serious identity with Christ. That condition continues until the elect, the feet members, are gathered to the *very source*: to meet the *Master* himself *in the air* (1 Thess. 4:17), to come into *his very presence*. First comes the attraction to the Harvest spiritual food down here. There follows a period of development, and finally comes the *sudden rapture* of the feet members. Thus verses 40–42 pertain to the rapture, which will occur during “clouds” or sudden trouble. The last members will be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

The analogy of a “snare” in Luke 21:35 also signifies the suddenness of the trouble. “For as a snare shall it [the trouble] come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.” A snare takes an animal suddenly by surprise.

Matt. 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Matt. 24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch

the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Matt. 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

“In such an *hour* as ye think not.” Notice that verse 44 does *not say*, “in such a *year* [or time].” The “hour” is stressed rather than a year date.

There will be no last single member of the body of Christ but a *collective* group, so as not to detract from the Head. A group will die *at the same time* at the *very end* of the age. However, this does not preclude individual feet members dying a month earlier, five months earlier, a year earlier, etc. The point is just that the very last members will die collectively. Therefore, an individual does not know whether he will die as part of the last group or earlier (assuming he is one of the feet members). In other words, a *year date* could be known in advance (1998?) but not an hour or a day.

The suggestion is that a *surprise* will come on those Christians who are put to death at the very end of the age. Consider John the Baptist from the standpoint of a *principle*, not necessarily as a type. While in prison he had some doubts until Jesus reassured him. John wondered why he was there and if Jesus was really the Messiah. Subsequently, a party was going on, during which a request was made for John the Baptist’s head. John did not know the precise hour. He was probably sitting in a dungeon with no light when all of a sudden the prison keepers came, opened his cell, removed him, and took him to be beheaded. Similarly, certain individual feet members will experience surprise. Jesus warns us to be ready, but there will still be an element of suddenness and surprise.

“For in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” What “coming” is Jesus referring to here? It is when he comes to get the last members to complete the Church for the marriage. In other words, this “coming” is not the *parousia* but the rapture.

Incidentally, when the *parousia* began, it was not understood as a subject—not until several years later. The Lord *having come* found a faithful and wise servant. The *precise hour* that the *parousia* began is not as important as the fact of Jesus’ arrival. The same priority was demonstrated at the First Advent. At that time, for one to be used by the Lord, it was important for him to identify Jesus as the Messiah, but it was not as important to know the hour of Jesus’ birth or even the hour of his baptism at Jordan.

The word “cometh” is *erchomai* (not *parousia*). There is *only one* Second Presence but *several* “comings.” Jesus comes on a white horse, with a chain in his hand, seated, standing, etc. He comes to break into Satan’s house, he stands at the door knocking, etc. All of these activities are different aspects of the Second Advent. Similarly at the First Advent, there were various “comings”: Jesus came at his birth; he came at Jordan as Messiah the Prince (Dan. 9:25); he came as a king meek and lowly, riding upon the foal of an ass (his entry into Jerusalem at the end of his ministry); etc. Hence a number of prophecies pertain to *different events* occurring *during* the First Advent. Various events are also prophesied regarding the Second Advent, and they cannot be distorted or bent to all begin in 1874—any more than all the events of the First Advent could be forced to a fulfillment in one year. In other words, the *parousia* has various “comings.” In verse 44 Jesus comes to take his Bride (to steal her as a thief).

The “coming” in verses 37–39 is *parousia*, which is *different* from the “coming” of verse 44. “But as the *days* of Noe were, so shall also the *presence* of the Son of man be. For as in the *days* that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until *the day* that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the *presence* of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37–39). There is a distinction between “days” (plural) and “the day” (singular).

The *days before the Flood* were the 120 years that Noah was building the Ark. When the Flood came, Noah was 600 years old—600 *full* years (Gen. 7:6,11). Thus Noah was 480 years old when God instructed him to start the Ark (600 – 120 = 480). God told Noah that He would tolerate man’s evil and corruption for yet 120 years and then He would terminate the situation. For the next 120 years Noah actively preached righteousness and prophesied of the coming Flood, that is, from his 480th year to his 600th year.

Genesis 5:32 says that Noah was 500 years old when Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born. In other words, the three sons were not born until *after* God had given the pronouncement to Noah regarding the Flood coming in 120 years, and Noah started to build the Ark *before* his three sons were born. Thus they grew up under the influence of Noah’s preaching of righteousness, and the plans for building the Ark were given *solely* to Noah. As his three sons grew up, they participated in the construction. Noah needed their help to lift the heavy beams into place, but first, a number of years were required to gather the lumber, dress it, prepare it, provide the tar, etc. Just as stones for the Temple were quarried *in advance* of the assembly, so the trees for the Ark were probably all cut and prepared first. The three sons came along at the right time to assist Noah in assembling the parts for the Ark.

Comment: The fact that the plans for building the Ark were given only to Noah and before his sons were born fits the antitype of Jesus’ getting the scroll *before* the Church was legally recognized and developed.

The sons were schooled in righteousness and in selecting upright wives. Noah, his sons, and the wives were all “perfectly generated”; that is, they were of pure Adamic stock. Thus there was a screening or Divine Providence with regard to the selection of their wives. With the fallen angels taking wives of their own choosing, violence filling the earth, and the giant hybrid race domineering over the human race, the inference is that in connection with preparing the Ark, a shield of protection surrounded that area. Noah and family were in the circle of God’s providence. On their own they would have been *no* match for any fallen angel, so we know that an “iron curtain” protected them from being unduly disturbed. Nevertheless, Noah could hear through that curtain the jeers of those who made fun of him. Any fallen angels or their hybrid progeny who wanted to harm Noah and family were thwarted in their efforts. Other examples are Job and Israel, who had a “hedge” around them (Job 1:10; Isa. 5:5). With Job, Satan said sarcastically, “Just let me do a little here and there, and I will show you how good Job is!” In Noah’s case there was noninterference all the way through.

Verse 38 tells that the people went right on doing the normal activities of life—eating, drinking, marrying—and there is nothing wrong with these activities. The emphasis is not on the debauchery aspect, which Peter brings out. Jesus is simply saying that the people were *unaware* of the impending Flood. It was a reality; it was *really coming!*—but the people were oblivious. Noah preached about the coming Flood, but the people contradicted and mocked him. They found the fact amusing that Noah was building an Ark on dry land

when it had *never even rained before* (Gen. 2:5,6).

If the people in Noah's day had had a foreview of what the atmosphere would look like after the Flood and could have compared it to the heavens that existed prior to the Flood (the hothouse effect), they would have seen the contrast. After the Flood there was a clarity of vision instead of the previous translucent, hazy atmosphere. But the people were willingly "ignorant" or unaware (2 Pet. 3:5). After the ring of water broke, the atmosphere was clear. Before that, the hazy atmosphere was "normal" to the people, for it was what they had grown up under and was all they knew.

Even the angels probably did not know the Flood would occur, for there was no precedent. True, they had witnessed rings of minerals and materials cascading down on the earth in earlier eras. In the Vailian theory, the heavy minerals collapsed first, then the less heavy minerals, and finally the lighter ones. As these rings kept collapsing, water was left, but the angels did not think of the water ring collapsing. A satellite going at the right speed can theoretically stay in orbit forever if there is no friction. However, the obliquity of the sphere earth (the flattening at the poles) causes an imbalance, an imperfect orbit, so that rings could collapse according to God's timetable.

Verse 38 contrasts the days of Noah (plural—a *period* of time) and the day (singular—a *point* of time) that he entered the Ark. Genesis 7:1–4 says that Noah went into the Ark for seven days. The thought is that Noah *fully* entered the Ark on the *seventh* day. For the first six days, he went in and out, leading animals into the Ark, stocking food, etc. But on the seventh day he entered into the Ark and *God* closed the door (Gen. 7:13–16). (Evidently there was no handle on the door, so God shut them in.) And so, at the end of the age, God will shut the last members into the Church; that is, Jesus will do this as God's representative, for Jesus "openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Rev. 3:7).

The logistical problems regarding the Ark are greatly alleviated if we realize that *baby* animals were loaded—baby elephants, water buffaloes, rhinoceroses, lions, etc. They were more docile and thus easier to load than adult animals. Also, *much* less food was needed as well as space. Even after a year in the Ark, the animals were not fully grown.

Another point. The Flood was not universal. It covered the entire *civilized* earth, not the whole planet. Reasons for the Flood not being universal are as follows:

1. The water was 15 cubits over the highest mountain. If the entire earth had been covered, the water would have been more than five miles deep in many places, for the Himalayas are more than 27,000 feet high. Where would all that water drain to?
2. The earth *sank* in the localized area at the same time that the rains came. Thus the Caspian, Black, Mediterranean, etc., seas all drained into the sunken portion to, with the rain, cover all the civilized cities. The 15 cubits of water above the highest mountain means that the Ark could float freely and not scrape land even though loaded with cargo.
3. Had *all* of the planet been covered with water plus 15 cubits, the oxygen level would have been so thin that man could not breathe.
4. Some fish cannot live in saltwater; other fish cannot live in fresh water. Therefore, if

the Flood had been universal, all fresh-water fish would have died with the mixing of the waters. The large oceans would have caused all water to be predominantly saline. Since fish were not taken into the Ark, they would have died. In fact, some did die, but only in the *localized* area where the Flood was.

5. In many places in Scripture, the word “all,” as in “all the earth,” means “*part*” (for example, “all the kingdoms” in Matthew 4:8).

6. The usual thought with regard to the Ice Age is that ice 10,000 feet high gouged out the Grand Canyon and went across the United States to Long Island to the ice shelf. However, this could not have happened in Noah’s Flood or the temperature would have been too cold—all would have frozen to death. Also, all that ice could not melt in one year—and where would the water go? (The rain cascaded down on the poles and ran into the designated area.) Therefore, the ice gouging took place in *previous* floods—before man was created.

The mastodons lived under very warm, carboniferous conditions (carbon dioxide hothouse conditions). They can still be dug out of the ice and snow in Siberia, which is the location of a huge graveyard. Water that came in and inundated large animals quickly froze, turning to ice. Subsequently God created animals that are familiar to us today.

Not only was the earth flooded with water above, but much water rushed in down here. In other words, there were *two* sources of inundation, namely, (1) rain plus the collapse of a ring or veil of water from above and (2) water rushing in from ocean beds down here (2 Pet. 3:5,6). The level of the earth in the Flood area changed radically, causing a great depression into which the water rushed. (That principle is shown today by little islands appearing and disappearing overnight in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Earthquakes cause the land topography to change.) It is a marvel that the Scriptures are terse and yet so comprehensive!

Comment: The antitype will also have *two* sources of inundation: (1) trouble arising from the anarchistic people down here and (2) trouble caused by a flood of fallen angels materializing.

See Young’s *Analytical Concordance*, page 11, “Hints and Helps to Bible Interpretation,” Item #29, regarding “all” meaning “part.”

In verses 40 and 41, the two are together; one is taken and one is left. These verses apply especially to the *very end* of the age when certain ones will be selected to go when the Lord comes to take his jewels home. In a general sense this has been true since 1878, but in a special sense the verses are applicable to the rapture, when the whole “family” goes into the Ark together.

Q: Luke 17:34–36 lists *three* categories of those who will comprise the feet members to be taken collectively at the end: (1) Two will be in *one bed*; one shall be taken, the other left. (2) Two will be *grinding together*; one shall be taken, the other left. (3) Two shall be *in the field*; one shall be taken, the other left. Could these be clues as to the *three* backgrounds of the feet members? Perhaps the “one bed” is a description of those in the Bible Student movement, for these brethren are more doctrinally agreed on present truth. Possibly those “in the field” are those outside the systems in a more independent condition. Then “grinding” would be those under the auspices of the systems who leave at the end, in the nick of time, so as not

to submit to the Church-State system.

A: This interpretation seems harmonious and may be the case. Off the top of our head, we do not see anything to contradict the thought.

Comment: It is interesting that the translators supplied the gender; male and female (men and women). The original just says “two shall be” in one bed, grinding together, in the field. The lack of gender is more appropriate.

Matthew 24:39 reads in part: “And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.” The *period* of time will come to a *terminal* point in the future just as it did in Noah’s day. It was a 120-year period of time—*until* the Flood came. That was a 120-year *parousia* period in the days of Noah. The Lord’s coming to take his Bride class home (verses 42 and 44) corresponds to an antitypical terminal point of the 120 years, which started with the beginning of the *parousia* in 1874. Thus there are two comings with regard to *parousia* and two comings with *erchomai*.

Luke 17:26,27 is similar to Matthew 24. “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.” However, verse 28 introduces another picture pertaining to Lot. In substance verse 28 is very similar to that which pertains to Noah, except that additional points are brought in about buying and selling, and planting and building. Verse 29 confirms the thought in Matthew 24 regarding the *day* the Flood came. “But the *same day* that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from *heaven*, and destroyed them all.” Here a *sudden* point of time is contrasted with the *days* of Lot. Before, it was the *days* of Noah being contrasted with the *day* the Flood came. Here the *days* of Lot are contrasted with the *day* that fire and brimstone cascaded from heaven on Sodom.

In Luke 17:30 the Lot picture substantiates what Matthew 24 is saying, but in addition, a new word is introduced: “when the Son of man is *revealed*.” Matthew 24 contrasts *parousia* with *erchomai*, whereas Luke 17 contrasts the presence (“the days of Noah” and “the days of the Son of man”) with *apokalupto*. The Greek *apokalupsis* is quite different from *parousia*. *Apokalupsis* is *future*—when the Son of man is revealed to the world in the Time of Trouble, in “flaming fire” (2 Thess. 1:8). *Judgments* will reveal that a new power or control is taking over. “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9). The fiery judgments will reveal to man God’s displeasure.

Q: Is there a distinction between Noah and Lot? Noah was plainly shut in the Ark *before* the rain ever started, but Lot was leaving Sodom *as* the fire and brimstone were occurring, so wouldn’t Lot picture the Great Company?

A: Yes. And Lot’s wife pictures the Second Death class because she looked back; that is, she was sorry she had left Sodom and longed to return. The antitype would be the consecrated who regret having taken that stand and thus turn aside or away from their consecration. When we make our decision for the Lord, we are not to turn back. Consecration is a reasonable service. Once the hand is put to the plow, we must leave it there. Consecration is a contract unto death.

Sodom and Gomorrha picture, respectively, Catholicism and Protestantism—or just

Babylon. We know they picture a nominally religious class because of the following:

1. Revelation 11:8 mentions Egypt and Sodom. “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” The account is telling about the situation or interplay between Christendom and God’s true people that occurred during part of the Gospel Age. The two witnesses (the Old and New Testaments) suffered mistreatment much as Jesus did, and also the Church, for 3 1/2 “years.” The Bible was kept in sackcloth and ashes for 1,260 years, Jesus was crucified at the end of his 3 1/2-year ministry, and the Church was persecuted for 1,260 years by *spiritual* “Sodom”—the *nominal* Christian element.

2. In Isaiah 1:10 God likened natural Israel to Sodom because they were sick from the top of their heads to the soles of their feet. In *Old Testament* times the Israelites were the nominal people of God. However, the Book of Revelation speaks of Sodom and Egypt from the Gospel Age standpoint, for there has been a *nominal* equivalent in the *Gospel Age*. Both Israel in Old Testament times and the nominal Gospel Age Christian elements are spiritually compared to Sodom in the days of Lot.

Lot’s fleeing in Luke 17 is a parallel to Matthew 24:20, “Pray that your flight be not in the winter[time] of the sabbath day” (paraphrase). The flight of Lot is quite different from that of Abraham. Abraham witnessed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha from afar off—that is, *from above*, looking down. He looked down and saw Sodom being destroyed.

Matthew 24 and Luke 17 do not emphasize the sinful conditions that prevail. The activities are eating, drinking (not drunkenness), marrying, planting, building, etc. In Luke 21:34 where Jesus said to “take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares,” he was speaking of the *innocent* things of life. The Christian should be more awake and aware of the urgency of the times.

Comment: Abraham desired Lot to be saved, and yet Lot lingered and held back. Lot is an appropriate type of the Great Company.

Reply: Lot was practically pulled out of Sodom. The two angels hurried him out of the city.

Luke 17:33 reads, “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.” This is a *very strong* verse coming right after the allusion to the Great Company and the Second Death class. Those consecrated who remain after the Church goes off the scene will witness the fall of Babylon. Those still in the system will come out as Babylon collapses. Verse 33 is directed primarily to the Lot class, who must realize that they are consecrated to the Lord and that flesh and blood cannot inherit even a secondary place in the Kingdom of God. They must die and be changed to get spirit nature. Not just the Little Flock but all those who have dedicated their lives to the Lord will realize that the time is coming when they will terminate their course on earth. They should not anticipate living through the Time of Trouble. Therefore, those who unduly seek to preserve their lives in that sense will lose *all life* in the final analysis. Prudence will be very dangerous at that time. The consecrated remaining should expect a change and realize that they are like the scapegoat class in the wild wilderness condition. If they make strenuous efforts to preserve their lives, it will show that the spirit of their consecration is not thorough. Those who seek to save their lives (and thus lose them) will *remain* dead—they

will have no resurrection. Those who seek to save this life inordinately will in effect, by pursuing such a course of prudence, lose all life. It will be a very sobering situation. The consecrated who remain after the Church is gone should realize they can still be at the marriage supper, and they should look forward to that event as their goal and destiny.

The words introducing Luke 17:34–36 are significant: “I tell you, in THAT NIGHT ...” Jesus is referring to the trouble that will come on the Church *ahead* of the world’s trouble. Jesus said, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: THE NIGHT cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). The nominal systems will put a clamp on the promulgation of present truth just as they did with Jesus. He was apprehended (1) to stop him from talking and (2) to put him to death. The religious authorities wanted to effectually minimize and stop his ministry and shame him with an ignominious death, thus sending his entire ministry into disrepute. They felt his followers would forsake him if they dealt with him in this way, but they underestimated the POWER of Jesus’ message—that his followers were willing to die too. That was the right attitude. Satan thought the whole religion would collapse with Jesus’ crucifixion, but it did not.

While the principle has been true during the Harvest period that two could be close companions and only one would be taken with the Harvest message, these Scriptures have a further primary dispensational meaning. As we get closer to the end of the age, we are approaching the nighttime, the time when the truth will be stopped and the feet members will go home. This is a more *specific* application than the general principle applying since 1876 or so. These verses refer to the change of the last members of the Church. The three mentions of *two* being together, one being taken, the other left, suggests the feet members will be taken *collectively*. There will be a *collection* of individuals from different sources.

The question arises “Where, Lord, will they be taken?” Jesus replied, “Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together” (Luke 17:37). It is true that *during* the Harvest period the eagle class are attracted to the carcass, the doctrine of the Ransom (of how Jesus’ death will be efficacious for the salvation of both the Church and the world). They are attracted to what others consider repulsive: the death of Christ and what it entails. But the *context* of verse 37 shows the attraction is to the *Lord in heaven* (in the *air*). The One who did die, the One whose dead humanity as the man Christ Jesus was sacrificed forever, is the One our consecration is based upon and the One whose death, having a value, is fed and acted upon in this life. However, the time will come when the last members will actually meet the risen Lord in the air. This time is referred to here, for verse 37 is talking about the rapture of the Church.

Comment: The Scriptures are marvelous! The order of Matthew 24 shows plainly that there is a feeding on the carcass *during* the Harvest, but by climaxing Jesus’ thoughts in Luke 17 with a similar expression, the account provides the further (or later) meaning of the rapture. The Scriptures unfold more and more unto the time the daystar arises (2 Pet. 1:19).

Comment: Noah was prepared in advance. God gave him instructions and *for 120 years* he did as he had been told. On the other hand, Lot waited until the last minute to flee Sodom, and so does the Great Company in antitype.

In Luke 17:29 the emphasis is on a judgment coming from God. “But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone *from heaven*, and destroyed them all.” There is a difference between *divine* wrath and the wrath of *man* (man’s inhumanity to man).

Divine indignation will be the real Time of Trouble, even though God may use man to accomplish it in some instances. The trouble is more than just the law of retribution.

Matt. 24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

We intentionally repeat Matthew 24:43 in order to consider it in detail at this time. The “goodman of the house,” the householder, is Satan. The “thief” in this instance is Jesus. Verse 43 is saying that if Satan knew in what hour Jesus was coming, he would not let his house be broken into (see RSV—paraphrased). The Pastor assumed this verse applied to the *initial* coming of Jesus in 1874, to the beginning of the presence, but such an application has several problems. The word “coming” can refer to any of *several* events during the Second Advent, just as it did at the First Advent. Which “coming” is referred to here?

First, however, let us consider what “house” is to be broken into. It is Satan’s *personal headquarters* in earth’s atmosphere where his power is especially entrenched. Here is an example: Russia and the United States both exist on the same planet earth with two entirely different philosophies. Yet the two countries with their citizens are thousands of miles apart. Satan, the prince of the power of the air, and his angels are in earth’s atmosphere, confined to *tartaroo*. The returned invisible Lord is also in earth’s atmosphere. How can two antagonistic powers occupy earth’s atmosphere at the same time? There is no problem—they do this the same way that two antagonistic powers can simultaneously occupy the surface of the earth. Just as Russia has its capital, Moscow, in a certain area of earth’s surface and the United States has its capital, Washington, DC, in another area, so Satan and his angels have their headquarters in one part of earth’s atmosphere (probably over Rome), and Jesus and his angels have their headquarters in another part of earth’s atmosphere (probably over Jerusalem). Thus two alien powers coexist above, and two alien powers coexist down here.

Jesus had no problem returning to earth’s atmosphere in 1874. Satan could not in any way have prevented his coming here. And all down through history, holy angels have materialized off and on, even though Satan was the god of this world. Consider the Apostle Paul, for instance. Angels appeared to him and he had visions. Also, at the time of the French Revolution, Jesus came here to stabilize conditions lest worldwide anarchy break out prematurely (Rev. 10:1,2). The fact that Jesus ascended to heaven after his resurrection did not mean he could not come here at any time if he so desired, but his *abode* was in heaven (“whom the heaven must receive [*retain*] until the times of restitution”—Acts 3:21). It wasn’t that Jesus could not come, but that he could not come for any length of time. Now that he is here for his 1,000-year Second Advent, it does not mean that he cannot go back to see his Father for the entire period. The following illustration is helpful. We have an ambassador in Moscow who represents our country. That ambassador is in Moscow most of the time, but he can return for vacation and consultation. Similarly Jesus’ being in earth’s atmosphere for 1,000 years does not mean he is in prison down here. He can return to the Father just as an ambassador goes back to headquarters to get further instruction. Jesus can go back and forth, but Satan, being confined in chains of darkness, cannot. He is limited as to what he can do.

In other words, it is very difficult to see how the Adversary could be a deterrent force to the personal coming of Jesus. Therefore, the usual explanation of this verse does not fit. The point is that the “house” Satan would not have allowed Jesus to enter is *his own personal*

headquarters—the area in earth’s atmosphere where Satan and his evil angels are resident. That area is to be broken into and Satan bound for the duration of the Millennium, until the Little Season when he will be loosed.

Verse 43 cannot refer to Jesus’ coming in 1874 because he came into earth’s atmosphere on other occasions in the past when Satan, the god of this world, could not stop him. And holy angels likewise have come during Satan’s operation as prince of this world. Daniel 10:13 says that the prince of Persia (Satan) withstood Gabriel for 21 days until Michael came to assist Gabriel and overpower Satan. Thus there is no problem in Jesus’ coming here, or for the Logos or Michael.

The point is that if Satan could know in advance the very moment Jesus will come to his personal headquarters to bind him, the Adversary would be prepared and would put up a strong fight, thus throwing off God’s timetable. The timing of the divine plan would be disrupted by such a confrontation. Therefore, Satan will not know in advance the moment his house will be entered.

See Matthew 12:29 in regard to Satan’s binding. “Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he *first* bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.” If this verse were a reference to 1874 and the beginning of the *parousia*, then Satan would have to be completely bound now, for Satan must be bound *before* his goods can be spoiled. If Satan is bound, then why are we cautioned to put on the full armor of God to withstand his wiles at the end of the age (Eph. 6:13)? And if Satan’s binding is not a personal binding but a binding by the influence of the truth, then how can he be loosed for the Little Season when the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Rev. 20:3,7,8; Hab. 2:14)? The view that the *parousia* is referred to in these verses (Matt. 12:29; 24:43) does not hold water. But to see these verses as a *future* event eliminates the problems.

Also, if Matthew 12:29 refers to the *parousia*, then Satan had to be bound before the seventh messenger was ever selected and before the Laodicean period began. How nice it would be for Christians of the Laodicean period to make their calling and election sure without the Adversary tempting them because he was bound! It is only logical that if Satan’s spiritual domain is first entered and broken up, then his influence down here is subsequently negated.

To get around these problems, some have tried to say that Satan’s binding is *progressive*. They say Satan is not bound but that he is *being* bound. However, if he is being bound, he must be getting progressively curtailed. Otherwise, the English language is a mockery. If Satan is being bound, it would mean he is more and more bound as time goes on, yet Matthew 12:29 makes very clear the fact that Satan is bound *first*, that is, *before* his house is broken into. “First” means *first*.

Moreover, the parallel Scripture in Luke 11:22 shows there will be a personal confrontation between Jesus and Satan. Jesus will *personally* overcome Satan, bind him, and then destroy his house. “But when a stronger than he shall *come upon him, and overcome him*, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.” Revelation 20:1–3 reads, “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having ... a great chain in his hand. And he *laid hold on ... Satan, and ... cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him.*”

The progressive application does not make sense. Its proponents reason that the house is *being* destroyed and Satan is *being* bound, but the word “first” cannot be ignored. Satan is bound *first*, and the progressive view changes the English language. This in-between explanation is not satisfactory.

Actually no one down here knew (or knows) exactly when the *parousia* occurred. It took place in the fall of 1874 between September 25 and October 3, so the Pastor took a date in the middle: October 1. The brethren learned about the fact that Jesus *had arrived* rather than being aware of the *moment* of his initial presence. Thus Jesus was here for a little while before his presence was revealed or made known through the unfolding of prophecy.

In Luke 12:36–38 *three* time periods of expectation are suggested: “second watch,” “third watch,” and an implied first watch. “And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the *second watch*, or come in the *third watch*, and find them so, blessed are those servants.” There was a time when many of the Lord’s people thought that the Church would be gone in 1914. Let us call that the “second watch”—not that it necessarily was, but just to establish the principle. Obviously, the expectations were not realized at that date. Inferentially, then, Jesus will come to take the last members home in the “third watch.”

Nighttime

1st watch as a point of time = 9 p.m. (1878)
 2nd watch as a point of time = 12 midnight (1914)
 3rd watch as a point of time = 3 a.m.

The Millennial day began at midnight, but 3 a.m. is *predawn*, *before* the sunrise, before the Sun of righteousness arises. At 6 a.m. the Kingdom will be inaugurated—at dawn, at sunrise.

Mark 13:35 gives *four* times of expectancy: (1) “even,” (2) “midnight,” (3) “cockcrowing,” and (4) “morning.” “Morning” (dawn, sunrise) would be too late for the Master to get his last members in the rapture, so it can be eliminated. Three other times remain, but two have passed, so again the third is when Jesus will come in this sense.

Note: The four times should be considered more from the standpoint of a *year*, not a day or an hour. A lot can happen in one year.

The four quadrants of time break down as follows:

Even = 6–9 p.m.
 Midnight = 9–12 midnight
 Cockcrowing = 12–3 a.m.
 Morning = 3–6 a.m.

Notice that 3 a.m. in the “third watch” is the *point* of time common to both the Mark and the Luke accounts. (In the Mark 13:35 text, 3 a.m. occurs at the end of the third watch and the beginning of the fourth watch.) At that point in time Jesus will come for the last jewels.

Back to Luke 12:36–38. Some are troubled as to how the Church can be likened to servants awaiting the Master’s return *from the wedding*. They object because the Church is supposed to be *at the wedding*. However, the emphasis is on the *readiness* of the household. In order to please their Master, the servants watched *very diligently* for his return so that they could give the Master a warm welcome. Thus there is no contradiction. The emphasis is on watching, waiting, and praying—on being *ready*. Mark 13:34–37 confirms this thought by presenting it just a little differently. “For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”

An alternate explanation of the four time periods in Mark 13:35 is as follows:

Even	=	6–9 p.m.	(1844)	(1844–1878)
Midnight	=	9–12 midnight	(1878)	(1878–1914)
Cockcrowing	=	12 midnight–3 a.m.	(1914)	(1914–1998?)
Morning	=	3–6 a.m.	(1998?)	(1998–2001?)

Here the *beginning* of the fourth quadrant and the *end* of the third correspond to the “third watch” of Luke 12:38. At any rate, Jesus is saying to WATCH, for we will not know ahead of time the hour for the invisible rapture.

“Cockcrowing” represents an important testing, for at that time Peter, who pictures the Great Company, denied Jesus three times. Also, in the beginning of the fourth watch (again this was 3 a.m.), Jesus walked on the water. Peter walked out to meet him amidst the angry, raging sea and started to sink. When he reached out, Jesus saved him, picturing the rapture. The waves symbolize the time of trouble on the Church.

The pressures on the feet members will be very great. Just as Jesus was betrayed by Judas (the Second Death class), denied by Peter (the Great Company), and crucified (put to death by Satan), so the feet members will have similar experiences. Knowing this *in advance* should be helpful. If these subjects are not being studied ahead of time, how can we be prepared?

The term “time of trouble” is too nebulous. *Which* time of trouble is being referred to? The true Church’s (the heel members)? The nominal Church’s destruction? The trouble on the Great Company when they wash their robes in the tribulation? The world’s trouble? Jacob’s Trouble? Jacob’s Trouble is the climax of the world’s Time of Trouble—the two merge together. The trouble will be focalized in Israel.

Matt. 24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Matt. 24:46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

We say that this “faithful and wise servant” is an *individual*, Pastor Russell. Suppose someone brings up the argument, based on Luke 12:37, that the “servant” of Matthew 24:45 is a *class* of individuals (plural). Luke 12:37 is *clearly plural*: “Blessed are those *servants*, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make *them* to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve *them*.” How

would we answer the argument? Moreover, in the Revelation promises to each church, the matter is stated in the *singular* but means a *collective plural* (the whole Church): “To *him* that overcometh ...”

For the following reasons Matthew 24:45 refers to just *one* individual:

1. Even in Luke 12, if we continue on to verses 42–44, the matter is also presented in the singular. The fact that plural is contrasted with singular shows that *both* are true, but there is *one unique individual*.
2. Luke 12:37 says that the servants (plural) *will be served*; they will be fed. On the other hand, Matthew 24:45 says that the servant (singular) will have charge of all the goods and *will do the serving* of meat in due season.
3. Revelation 3:14 shows that there is a seventh messenger. If all of the previous six messengers were individuals, the seventh would also be an individual.
4. A ruler over a *household* (of others—plural) must be an individual. This ruler (singular) gives *them* (plural) meat in due season.
5. The mention of servants (plural) in Luke 12:37 occurs in a context dealing with a time later on in the Harvest when the advice is to watch for the Lord to come for the rapture of the feet members. *One* individual who is selected in the *beginning* of the Harvest is contrasted with *servants* (plural) who are studying and being served *during* the Harvest.

Unfortunately, many have been swayed by the thought of a *class* of individuals (plural) and thus reject the concept of *one* individual dispensing food uniquely. *One* individual serves *others* (plural). There is *one* ruler over the household of *servants* (plural).

The sooner a Christian can recognize that there is *one* individual and then partake of the food being served, the better. It helps to consider conditions at the First Advent. Some made their calling and election sure without knowing Jesus personally. They lived contemporaneously with Jesus but never saw him. It was sufficient to merely recognize him as Messiah. However, if they had the *opportunity* of knowing him but deferred further exploration or contact, their chances of making the Little Flock grew more and more minimal as time went on. In other words, the longer a person defers, the greater the chance that *mañana* will become permanent, for “tomorrow never comes.” Thus it becomes important to recognize that there would be an unusual ministry of an individual at the Second Advent and that others would be blessed by it. Jesus would make an individual a steward over all his goods, and that individual would, in turn, feed the household.

In principle, others during the Harvest period may do something like this but in *localized* areas. The “faithful and wise servant” was a steward over the “*household*,” which is a larger ministry. The Lord has used remarkable servants besides the seven messengers—for example, Tyndale in Luther’s day. However, the Lord particularly used Luther, and Luther’s ministry had a more widespread effect *worldwide* while Tyndale’s ministry pertained especially to England. Pastor Russell had a *general* stewardship, not a localized, one-nation stewardship. Thus individuals other than the seven special ones were used down through the Gospel Age but not as rulers in a stewardship arrangement that was more widespread in influence. In principle, an elder is responsible to the ones he exercises an influence with.

Matt. 24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

“He [the Lord] shall make him ruler over all his goods.” This Scripture has been grossly misunderstood. Many brethren use as a cliché the statement that Pastor Russell was not only the seventh messenger and a steward with a worldwide ministry, but that nothing is due to be understood except what he said, that we should not search any further or have any other ideas, for he was ruler over all of the Lord’s goods. The “goods” are considered to be all the truth. This very subtle error has bound many to close their minds to any reasoning on multiple subjects. Moreover, experience shows that many do not even know the Pastor’s thoughts, as in the *Reprints*, for example, or even the *Volumes*.

“Stewardship” means a responsibility for publishing truths abroad, but *not the whole Bible*. Several arguments support this statement:

1. We are to live by *every* word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, and the Pastor did not write on every Scripture (Matt. 4:4).
2. The Pastor was not an apostle. Although he had the honor of being the special seventh messenger, we cannot equate his words with those of the Apostle Paul or any of the other apostles. Therefore, in order for us to accept his writings, they must be verified by a “Thus saith the Lord.”
3. In the second foreword to the *Fourth Volume*, he said that the Book of Revelation would become meat in due season. Originally he intended to write on Revelation, but he realized that the book had not sufficiently opened to him as a whole and thus stopped with the *Sixth Volume*. He firmly believed from the Scriptures that Revelation would become meat in due season, yet some brethren have ridiculed a study on Revelation because the Pastor did not write on it. They think the six *Volumes* are all that we need. Others say the Pastor wrote on Revelation piecemeal and we have to put all of the fragments together. Yet the Pastor even made the statement that *someone else* would have to write on the Book of Revelation.

Pastor Russell did not have a monopoly on the light of truth. Proverbs 4:18 tells us that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth *more and more* unto the perfect day.” The light *continues* to increase. However, the type of ministry the Pastor introduced is unique in that he literally furnished the keys to open up Scripture. His suggestions opened *so many topics*. He did not explain all the details, but he supplied clues to enlarge the concepts previously fettered by sectarianism.

Sometimes the Lord blesses an individual who is yearning to understand a particular Scripture and has been applying himself diligently—even for years—by opening that Scripture to him. The understanding is a reward, yet others tend to regard it as pride. Such an attitude is foolish, for the Lord does reward various individuals by opening their minds on certain points of truth, doctrine, etc. A systemized teaching is one thing (where *many* Scriptures are taken and woven into a pattern), but the clarification of individual Scriptures is another matter. Nourishing, succulent tidbits are available to those who hunger and thirst for understanding.

The Pastor was a faithful and wise servant whom others, if they were wise, discerned for his superiority. During his ministry many were awed, but as soon as he died, problems

occurred and the Truth movement became fragmented.

The Pastor often collated or put forth thoughts from other individuals. For instance, one chapter in the *First Volume* is not his, and in the “Man of Sin” chapter in the *Second Volume*, he freely took the thoughts of Gratton Guinness. He said this himself, and he encouraged brethren to send thoughts and comments to him, many of which were published in the *Reprints*. Pastor Russell introduced the Great Pyramid as a Biblical subject, but John Edgar, coming along a little later, used these keys and had *far more knowledge* of the subject. The Pastor wrote that the Pyramid was a confirmation of the Bible and that it proved many points of the chronology already advocated. He was the pioneer even though the Edgar brothers corrected him on some points. The *pioneer* in any great endeavor should be respected, be it Russell, Sir Isaac Newton, or whoever. But others came along subsequently and were very braggadocio with regard to their claims for fame.

In Young’s *Analytical Concordance* the word “goods” means “the thing existing.” In other words, the Pastor was ruler over the truths existing *in his time*, that is, *concurrent* with his ministry. In his day, the Pastor was the most dominant personality in connection with the Truth movement—and properly so.

Matt. 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

Matt. 24:49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

If the “faithful and wise servant” is an *individual*, then so is the “evil servant.” Although there was literally an evil servant, an individual—for example, Judge Rutherford?—the way verses 48 and 49 are worded suggests that the one who was faithful and wise could become an evil servant unless he took heed along this line. And Pastor Russell regarded these verses as a warning of what could happen to him—that he must be careful to maintain the status of a faithful and wise servant—whereas actually the application was to someone who followed him.

By omitting the word “evil,” Luke 12:45 sounds even more like a warning to the faithful servant: “But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken.” However, enough details are supplied about the evil servant that we can identify him.

Where or how did the evil servant say, “My lord delayeth his coming”? The evil servant did this in his *heart*, for he did not directly state that he did not believe the Lord was present. This verse reveals his *inner thinking*. The JW movement today is an offshoot of this wrong thinking.

Matt. 24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

Matt. 24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Weeping and gnashing of teeth” means disappointment. Those who followed the teaching of the evil servant and were led astray only to later awaken to the truth of the

situation experienced great disappointment. It is hard to see why some brethren stayed in the Watchtower Society so long. For one thing, the Judge said character development was not important, the Pyramid was a wives' fable, and the Tabernacle was of the devil.

The weeping and gnashing of teeth does not necessarily apply to the Judge. The effects of his ministry were such that it resulted in others having a terrible experience. The Judge said the faithful and wise servant was neither an individual nor a class but an *office* (like the presidency). Therefore, when the Pastor died, the Judge supposedly came into the office and became the wise and faithful servant. This thinking was contagious because Johnson reasoned similarly. He agreed that the faithful and wise servant was an office and claimed to be the third or epiphany servant. Moreover, he was supposed to be the last, all the others coming afterward being of the Levite, Jonadab, etc., class.

In regard to the weeping and gnashing of teeth, many identified themselves with the Watchtower by giving over all their belongings and money and then living and working there. When they realized error was coming out, they had no independent means of support. One prominent brother cried because he was old and, not having a penny to his name, could not take a stand. Many were like prisoners—without money or profession—and could not get out. The mistake was in not keeping a measure of reserve.

No matter how helpful, brilliant, or holy in walk an individual is, we always need to have a measure of reserve, and no one should be offended. We should have this reserve even in regard to an individual we feel we are being blessed by, for our first responsibility in our consecration is to be a follower of *Christ*. If that is our sole guideline, then our respect for others is predicated on their *nearness to Christ*. The moment one deflects, we should disassociate ourselves. That would be having a proper reserve. Some do not want others to have any reserve—they want others to be 100 percent for them or their organization. We should be careful of *anyone* who has this attitude. Sometimes the thought is not expressed in these words, but instead a person will say he wants 100 percent *cooperation*. Others are expected to be blind robots. Back there the Judge instilled such an idea, and many were caught in the net. Later the error and evil were revealed, and those involved could not help but see certain things. They had wasted time, effort, and money in being *wed* to the individual or institution.

Probably the judgment of the evil servant is more severe than the “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” which applies to those under his influence for a time but not associated with his practices. The evil servant was cut asunder and appointed a “portion with the hypocrites.”

Although the evil servant did not speak audibly but *in his heart* that the Lord did not come in 1874, he did try to change the Jubilee cycle, which pointed out the Lord's presence. He said the terminal date of the Jubilee cycle was 1925. In other words, he did not say anything, but by making that change to 1925, he was automatically revealing what was in his heart. He thought the Ancient Worthies would come then, and he began the Seventh Day (the 7,000 years) there.

Q: Concerning the starting points of the 120 years in antitype, does Matthew 24 teach *two* starting points (1874 and 1878) and hence *two* completion points?

A: Yes. There are two aspects with regard to Noah's going into the Ark: (1) when he entered the Ark and (2) when the Flood came. The first aspect pertained to the specially approved

class (of eight individuals) being shut in the Ark (comparable to the Church going home), and the second aspect pertained to the trouble (or Flood) on the world (comparable to the great Time of Trouble when the fallen angels will be loosed en masse just before God's deliverance of Israel and the establishment of the Kingdom). In the end of the Gospel Age, there will be a time period between the rapture of the feet members and the trouble to come on the world followed by the Kingdom Age.

NOTE: The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins appears below as it progressed during the class study. In Part 1, the usual interpretation of the parable was presented and discussed, but during the week that followed—and in answer to prayer—further understanding and enlightenment were forthcoming. The result, Part 2, is an updated interpretation that proved to be a great blessing for those who were present.

Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins - Part 1

Matt. 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

This chapter, Matthew 25, is still a part of "Our Lord's Great Prophecy." It is a continuation of the *long* discourse Jesus gave on the Mount of Olives when the disciples were looking at the Temple and asked him the questions of Matthew 24:3. Therefore, just by reasoning on the unfolding of Matthew 24, we can conclude that this parable has its setting down near the end of the Gospel Age. And the marriage of the Church is the highlight of the parable.

The time setting is the Millerite or Adventist movement. In 1844 the "ten virgins ... went forth to meet the bridegroom." The Millerite movement lasted from 1829 to 1844, at which time those following its teachings expected the Lord to *physically* return. In showing their sincerity, they sold their homes and property in anticipation of that date. They were great Bible readers, but when they "went forth to meet the bridegroom" in 1844 and Jesus did not return as expected, there was great disappointment. It was a process to a culmination.

Verse 5 tells us what happened. *The Bridegroom tarried*—he did not come at the anticipated date. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." When did the ten virgins slumber and sleep? Between the disappointment of 1844 and the realization of Jesus' secret invisible presence around 1876. (Jesus returned in 1874, but his return was not discerned for about two years.) Matthew 24:46 indicates this delayed realization in the Greek: *Having come*, Jesus found a faithful and wise servant to distribute food to the household. "*Having come*," not "just arriving," shows Jesus had already been here a little while.

"They *all* slumbered and slept." Elijah's sleep in 1 Kings 19:5–8 is comparable to this sleeping. After the 1,260 days of drought, Elijah went down to Mount Sinai. Near Beersheba he fell asleep. When he awoke, he was given a meal that was to last him 40 days.

Matt. 25:2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Matt. 25:3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

Matt. 25:4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

The difference between the wise virgins and the foolish virgins is that the latter had an insufficiency of oil. Along with their lamps, the wise virgins took *separate* vessels; that is, *in*

addition to their lamps having oil in them, the wise brought along an extra supply of oil in separate containers. The foolish virgins had lamps containing oil *but not the additional supply*.

Matt. 25:5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

But when the Bridegroom tarried, *both* the wise and the foolish virgins—*all of them*—slept. In other words, all Christians are interested in the Second Advent, but some are more diligent in examining the prophecies and preparing. Some are more eagerly expecting Jesus. This attitude is shown in the parable by the wise having “vessels” containing an additional supply of oil.

“Oil” represents the Holy Spirit. To have an additional supply of the Holy Spirit means to have additional enthusiasm and interest above the ordinary amount of zeal, plus an understanding of the Bible itself.

Q: If the wise virgins had more zeal and more of the Holy Spirit, why did they become drowsy and sleep?”

A: The sleep is mentioned from the standpoint that *all were disappointed* when Jesus did not return physically in 1874. All were in expectation and all were disappointed. The difference is that the wise continued to trust the Lord and went back to the Scriptures for more understanding. The foolish were consecrated, in a sense, to a date, and their disappointment had a corresponding loss of zeal. However, for all, the disappointment was such that they sorrowed. In their remorse and discouragement, the subject of the Lord’s return lay dormant. They were “turned off” because of their disappointment. Nevertheless, the wise class continued to believe that at some time Jesus *would come to take his Church home*. Realizing that the mistake was in their expectations for the date 1844, they kept pressing on and continued to examine the Scriptures. Some subsequently realized they had made a mistake of 30 years. Those who saw the mistake (the “wise” class) were the ones who were looking for fresh evidence.

Matt. 25:6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

What is “midnight”? It is the end of one day and the *beginning* of the next. Specifically, “midnight” is October 1874, the beginning of the seventh 1,000-year period.

An announcement occurred at midnight with regard to the beginning of Jesus’ Second Advent, the *parousia*—an announcement that the Bridegroom was present. (The word “cometh” is spurious.) But, nevertheless, there was a *time interval*, for the virgins were to go forth to meet him.

Jesus also announced his presence to the Church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” In this last period of the Church, Jesus is pictured as knocking at the door. To do this, he would have to be *present*, not coming at a future time. At the First Advent John the Baptist said, “There standeth one *among you*, whom ye know not” and “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:26,29); that is, Jesus was right there—*present!*

Following the disappointment of the Millerite movement, a magazine was published called *The Midnight Cry*; it pointed out the date 1874. This journal was associated with the Truth movement in the early days when the Pastor and a few other individuals were the nucleus.

Matt. 25:7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

Consider the experience of the brethren at the beginning of the Harvest. All of the virgins were asleep. Then at midnight a cry went forth: "Behold, the bridegroom!" Hearing the cry, all arose with their lamps and trimmed them. However, the period of "trimming" covers a *long* period of time—from 1876 when the brethren first became aware of Jesus' Second Presence right up to our day and even a little beyond.

Matt. 25:8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

The foolish virgins' comment "Our lamps are gone out" should be "Our lamps are *going* out" (see King James margin). Their lamps were flickering and giving a feeble light because of insufficient oil.

Matt. 25:9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

What does "trimming" a lamp mean? After an oil lamp burns for a long time, the wick carbonizes. That end needs to be broken off lest it retard the flame. A brighter illumination is the result. All of the virgins woke up and wanted to go forth to meet the Bridegroom following the announcement of his presence. However, the foolish virgins found they were having a problem; namely, the oil supply was inadequate and their lamps were flickering. The illumination was weak because of a lack of fuel. Not having an extra reservoir of oil in separate vessels (as the wise had), the foolish virgins found that their lamps were going out. Thus they asked the wise virgins for some of their oil. The answer was "No," for the wise needed all of their oil for themselves. In addition, the wise virgins suggested to the foolish ones that they go to the marketplace to buy some oil.

Matt. 25:10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

This verse says, "The bridegroom came." There are different "comings," and this one refers to the rapture, when Jesus comes for the last members. Other "comings" include Jesus' initial arrival and his sitting down and feeding the household of faith with truths new and old. Thus there are several aspects of the Second Coming, just as there were at the First Advent. Jesus "came" when he was born as an infant. He "came" at his baptism at Jordan and again, later, riding on the colt of an ass, etc. In other words, the prophecies of the First Advent pertain to certain *points* of time. The Second Advent began with the initial act of Jesus' coming, but some years later it will be marked by the closing of the door and the taking of his Bride. In the near future the wise virgins will go into the wedding.

Matt. 25:11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

Matt. 25:12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

The door is still open. To date Jesus has not made the announcement "I know you not."

Therefore, we are still in the period *between* the midnight announcement and the closing of the door and going into the marriage. The lamp trimming takes place during this entire time, and the wise and foolish classes both exist at present. *Both* anticipate the coming marriage. The distinction between the two classes is the amount of oil each has.

The trimming of the wick would be the trimming of the dross of the old nature. *Both* classes trimmed. However, in the trimming, not only was the carbonized portion cut off but oil was added. In the Tabernacle the lamps of the lamp stand were trimmed daily and supplied with oil for the ensuing day. The priest did this at 9:00 in the morning and again at 3:00 in the afternoon so that the lamps were burning around the clock. Although the foolish virgins in the parable trimmed their lamps, they lacked a sufficiency of oil. Or, stated another way, all of the virgins trimmed, but only the wise had enough oil to refill their lamps.

Q: What are the “lamps”?

A: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). In other words, the “lamp” is the Word of God.

The Candlestick or lamp stand in the Tabernacle had seven branches. The lamp stand could be considered the “lamp,” but so can the little almond-shaped vessels on top of the branches that contained the oil and had a wick protruding from their snouts.

Zechariah 4:1–3 also describes a lamp stand with seven lamps on top of seven branches. Suspended over the lamp stand was a bowl of oil that served as a reservoir. From the bowl seven pipes extended downward. Each pipe was a conduit for the oil to go to a lamp, there being seven lamps in all. The oil from the two olive trees (picturing the Old and New Testaments) went through seven pipes to seven lamps on the seven-branched lamp stand. The “bowl” represents Jesus, who, as the *Head* of the Church, supplies the oil. (In Revelation 1:12,13 Jesus is seen walking amidst seven separate candlesticks.) Down through the Gospel Age, he supplied oil to each of the seven messengers to the Church. The two olive trees, which are *of God*, are the *source* of the oil, the Holy Spirit, which is supplied *through Jesus*. God’s Spirit is in the Word; it is *His* Word. The Holy Spirit has gone to Jesus, who opened the scroll and enlightened his Church down through the age with regard to things to come.

The seven little vessels on top of the lamp-stand branches represent seven individuals, the seven messengers, who received dispensational enlightenment through the seven pipes. The seven pipes are the seven channels of distribution of information to the Church. Seven messengers were used down through the Gospel Age, and a pipe came from Jesus to each of these seven churches.

The lamp, then, can be the *individual Christian*. Each individual is the container, and the Holy Spirit is *in* the container. The wick represents the human nature that is to be consumed, purged away, as the new nature of enlightenment develops. The lamp *stand*, then, can be thought of as the Word of God, the “lamp” unto our feet (Psa. 119:105). From this different perspective, the Word is supplied to the vessel (lamp) on each of the seven branches. The information comes from God’s Word. “Our lamps are trimmed and burning” are words in a hymn. God’s Word does not need trimming—it is the dross of our old nature that needs trimming. Thus there are different ways to view the “lamps,” and it

is a *complicated* subject based on a coordination of the Tabernacle, Zechariah 4, and Revelation 1.

Back to the viewpoint of Matthew 25. Verses 3 and 4 state that the virgins took their lamps with them. What do those “lamps” represent? The “oil” is the Holy Spirit. *All* of the virgins had a lamp and a supply of oil, but the wise had *more oil*. The “lamp” is the Word of God in the Christian as an individual—that is, each Christian’s *understanding of the Word of God*. The parable is a simplified picture with just virgins, lamps or vessels, and (by inference) an additional reservoir of oil. (Wicks are not mentioned.) When the lamps of the foolish virgins were going out, what were the wise virgins doing? It is inferred that the wise were filling their lamps with oil from their extra supply. All had the *same* problem—the wise and the foolish. They *all* woke up and they *all* trimmed their lamps and they *all* needed more oil—but the wise had an extra supply of oil and were thus able to replenish their lamps and keep them burning steadily and brightly.

A *Manna* comment deals with this subject: What does it mean to say our lamps are trimmed and burning? The wick is likened to the human nature, the oil is the Holy Spirit, and the lamp is the Bible. September 9: “It is the duty of every child of God to be very active in the dissemination of the Truth—in letting his light shine, and in keeping it trimmed and burning. ‘Trimmed and burning!’ What does it mean? It means that we must give very close attention to the words of life that we may come to an exact knowledge of the Truth, and that we must carefully and faithfully trim away every vestige of error as fast as it becomes apparent to us—whether it be an error in doctrine or in our daily walk and conversation—so that the pure light of divine truth may shine out with as little obstruction as possible through the medium of a clear and transparent character.”

Verse 9: The foolish virgins were told to go to the marketplace of experience to buy the extra oil. “The wise answered, ... go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.” Verse 9 refers to the difficult experience at the end of the age where some will sell the truth. Their actions will shock the foolish virgins into a realization of their need for more of the Holy Spirit so that they themselves will not betray the Lord. Those who “sell the truth” in the Time of Trouble on the Church will desert the truth and go into the world—and even worse, there will be a Judas class. Others will just be drowsy, and the Time of Trouble on the Church will alert them to the need of cleansing themselves, of washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb. As a result, this class will become reinvigorated with truth and zeal, and thus be aroused to fulfill their consecration vows—but after the door is shut. This period is equivalent to the wilderness experience of the scapegoat (Lev. 16:10,21,22). What happens will shock the Great Company into a realization that they have been tardy and negligent in connection with their consecration vows, which they will renew. The Great Company will be given an invitation to come to the marriage supper. “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9).

“And buy for yourselves.” We *each* have to work on our *own* faith and character structure, and not depend on others. Others may be used by the Lord to alert, to inform, to instruct, etc., but each has to work out his *own* salvation. *Each individual* has to make the truth *his own*.

When one realizes he has been overcome with the cares of the world, family, business, or whatever, it is just like a new conversion and he becomes very zealous. For instance, knowing what would happen with Peter, Jesus said, “When thou art *converted*, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). Peter *had been* converted—he had consecrated and followed

Jesus for 3 1/2 years *before* this incident. But, nevertheless, Peter still needed a certain realization. He had been a little too confident about what *he* could and would not do—and then he denied the Master three times. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead resulted in such a transformation in Peter that he became the *leading* apostle until Paul came along. Thus there are different types of conversion: (1) the *initial* giving of one's heart to the Lord, and (2) sometimes later on if one realizes he has been slack or negligent along certain lines that are quite serious and then takes the proper step of repentance. This latter "conversion" is like a complete renewal. The foolish virgin class will go to (that is, be shocked by) those who "sell" and become renewed. They will "buy" the necessary oil and return—but too late to be of the Bride class.

Verse 10: "And while they [the foolish virgins] went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready [the wise virgins] went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." To be "ready," we need to know not only types, shadows, chronology, etc. (the letter of the Law), but also faith, obedience, character likeness to Christ, etc. (the spirit of God's Law in Christ).

The shutting of the door is still future, so this parable is very informative about what is happening at present. Both the wise and the foolish virgins are trimming their lamps (verse 7). Incidentally, *all ten virgins* heard the announcement "Behold, the bridegroom!" but of them only a certain portion go into the marriage—the "wise" who are "ready," having extra oil in their vessels.

Verse 11: "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us." This event will take place *after* the door is shut—and after the foolish virgins *realize* it is shut. However, the pleading "Lord, open to us" means they *want* the door to be *opened*, which is quite different from those in the Johnsonite movement, who *blithely* accepted the supposed fact that the door is shut and had no desire for it to be opened. The JW's are another group that is not concerned. Its members are wed to the organization and thus are indifferent to the supposed close of the high calling. They do not see the necessity for a personal relationship with Christ. For many years they did not sing hymns at their meetings, believing that singing was a form of idolatry. Their writings lack tenderness. They say "King Jesus." The organization has no emphasis on the high calling and being with Jesus.

In short, verse 11 is showing that an emotional trauma will take place. The foolish virgins will *plead* to get in when they realize the door is shut. That is a *big* difference from anything that has happened to date! This very sad time ties in with Song 5:6 where the Great Company opens too late to the Beloved. "I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." The little sister (picturing the Great Company) made excuses when Jesus came to the door—the cost was too great to bestir herself. When she finally arose and did what she had been debating, it was too late. She came to her senses, but after her Beloved had left. However, the fragrance of his having been there lingered on the handle of the door lock. Then she went out and tried to find her Beloved. Here, then, are a class who are *not satisfied* when they are too late. They will plead, "Lord! Lord! Open to us!" *Disappointment* is registered and *desire to get in*. This event is not yet fulfilled.

The expression "gnashing of teeth," which means *extreme bitter disappointment*, applies to three categories depending on context (see Matt. 8:12; 24:50; 25:30; Luke 13:28; etc.). The

phrase can apply to those who are *utterly* rejected or to those who are partially rejected.

Comment: In verse 12 Jesus answered and said, “I know you not.” He knew the foolish virgins but not in the sense of their being Little Flock.

Reply: Yes. He was saying, “I do not recognize you as being part of that class.”

Comment: Does verse 12 tie in with Matthew 7:21–23, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.... Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [*lawlessness*].”

Reply: Many feel that to be of the Bride class depends on *works*. With too great an emphasis on works, the tendency is not to listen to the Lord’s instruction. Works are important, but to be of the Little Flock includes much more. By belonging to a particular group, fellowship, or organization, many wrongly feel they will be judged faithful and get into the marriage. To be faithful, we cannot follow an individual or an organization, and we cannot justify ourselves by works. “Though I have the tongue of angels and give my body to be burned and give all my goods to the poor, that alone will not profit my attaining the Little Flock” is the thought. The “lawlessness” of Matthew 7:21–23 is not strictly listening to Jesus’ advice.

Q: Does Matthew 7:21–23 apply to the Great Company?

A: That question must be studied as a subject. Two classes will experience such disappointment. Matthew 25:1–12 goes into only one class: the foolish virgins, who will be saved. In other Scriptures a Second Death class is treated.

Verse 11 shows that the foolish virgins *are virgins*—they are *really dedicated* to the Lord, and Jesus is their Master. “Lord, Lord, open to us” is an honest, true confession, but the foolish virgins will not be worthy of the marriage because they do not strictly listen to all of Jesus’ commandments in detail (called a “law” in some cases).

Notice that Jesus opened the door and he will close it. The door was opened at Pentecost. When it is closed, the fact will be known—and by just as startling an event.

Matt. 25:13 **Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.**

Verses 1–12 are the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Verse 13 comes back to Jesus talking. Paraphrased: “I have just given you the parable. Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour when I will come to take the Bride home.” This warning about the rapture is a repeat of what was said in Matthew 24:42,44. Verse 13 is a verification that Jesus is not referring to the beginning of the secret presence in 1874 in those verses.

What a *long* discourse Jesus gave: all of Matthew 24 plus the three parables of Matthew 25!

Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins - Part 2

“Part 1” treated the “orthodox” view of the parable. However, certain points in the parable merit reconsideration.

One point is that ten virgins went forth and the Bridegroom *did tarry*. After the tarrying, all of the virgins slumbered. Next came the midnight cry followed by all of the virgins arising and trimming their lamps and the admission by the foolish virgins that they did not have a sufficiency of oil. Then came a separation between the wise and the foolish virgin classes—the foolish went to the marketplace, the wise into the wedding. When the wise went into the wedding, the door was shut. The foolish virgins returned and found that the door *had been shut* in their absence; they remonstrated and tried to get in.

Since the study last week, a question was brought up as to whether this parable could be advanced forward somewhat in time from the usual interpretation. The suggestion was made that the wise and foolish virgin classes are contemporaneous throughout the parable—that the *same* virgins are involved in this parable from beginning to end. In approaching the parable from that standpoint, Bro. Frank did not see such an application. In the Parable of the Penny, the time periods are succinctly mentioned, and all of the laborers have to be contemporaneous because all receive the reward at the same time at the end. Another problem that arises instantly if the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins is advanced is that the year 1914 occurred *more than 80 years ago* and, therefore, cannot be considered a contemporaneous picture with all of the participants still being on hand.

However, the question did provoke a lot of thinking during this past week. There was a reserve with regard to changing anything in this parable because of what seemed to be a *strong* application, but some points have to be considered more carefully.

The following was one reason for the reserve. In the Old Testament Elijah (picturing a class) slept twice under the broom tree. (The Elisha class is not pictured there.) After the second sleep, the angel said, “Arise and eat because in the strength of this meal, you will go 40 days to Mount Sinai” (1 Kings 19:7,8 paraphrase). The 40-day (year) time period seemed to fit in with the sleep of the wise and foolish virgins. (The parable mentions only *one* sleep, whereas the Elijah picture tells of *two* sleepings, and it was the *second* sleep of Elijah that had been equated with the *one* sleep of the wise and foolish virgins.)

The reserve for changing the parable was also based on the fact that a newspaper called *The Midnight Cry* appeared shortly after October 1874. This newspaper was equated with the parable, which tells that at midnight there was a cry, “Behold, the bridegroom!” Also, on the covers of the monthly *Watch Tower* magazines, underneath the name *Zion’s Watch Tower*, was the phrase “Herald of Christ’s Presence.” For 40 years the magazine was published that way. Thus it was like saying the cry pertained to Christ’s *presence*. This thought beautifully dovetailed with Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” This application of the cry “Behold, the bridegroom” fit in so powerfully with other pictures that it seemed it just could not be changed.

Another point: If the Parable of the Ten Virgins were pushed forward, there would be, in effect, a *third* slumber. This fact, with all of the aforementioned reasons, served as a brake in not changing the parable. But now let us consider some other points from another standpoint—from the standpoint of TODAY.

Here is the question: Could these happenings of the past have providentially occurred *to lock this subject* until a later date? The answer seems to be yes, and the reasons will become

apparent as we proceed.

Matthew 24 tells about a faithful and wise servant. The Lord, having come, made this servant a steward over all his goods. In other words, the Lord *had already come*, and *then* he found the servant and made him his steward. Next the account talks about an evil servant. Thus in the *previous* chapter—that is, prior to the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew—the Lord’s presence is clearly indicated.

In last week’s study the ten virgins who went forth to meet the Bridegroom at the beginning of the parable were assigned to the Millerite movement, and that is the so-called “orthodox” view. The *Fourth Volume* tells about how thousands expected Jesus’ physical return in 1844 but were disappointed. Notice, however, that in the parable, the closing of the door is still future. Therefore, if the parable began with the Millerite movement and has not yet ended, it covers a *long* period of time, and in the middle of this time period, some *very extraordinary* events occurred that are not even mentioned if the orthodox interpretation is given. If we meditate on this point, it is rather striking, and it definitely raises questions. For instance, *MORE virgins went forth in 1914 to meet the Bridegroom than in 1844.*

Notice that in Matthew 24:42,44 the “coming” of the Lord that is referred to is the *rapture*, the marriage. Notice, further, that in the Matthew 25 account of the wise and foolish virgins, the announcement is not “Behold, the *Master* [is present]” but “Behold, the *bridegroom* [is here].” In other words, we are suggesting that the midnight cry refers to the *wedding* rather than to the *parousia*. *The parable can be advanced.*

The Millerite movement is still taught in Scripture in regard to the 1,290 and the 2,300 days. The movement began in 1829 (the 1,290 days) and ended with the cleansing of the sanctuary in 1846. Therefore, since the Millerite movement is taught elsewhere in Scripture, an advancing of the Ten Virgins Parable does not change the chronology aspect the least bit. Moreover, the presence is still taught in Scripture based on chronology and the 1,335 days or the year 1874. In other words, an important consideration is that if the parable is advanced, what would the update lead to or violate? For years there was a reserve, a reluctance, to advance the parable, and yet nothing would be violated by so doing.

Next point. In 1914 there was a great disappointment; that is, in the Truth movement there was a *bigger* disappointment than in the Millerite movement because more people were involved. The brethren expected to go into the *wedding* in 1914; they expected the *marriage*. But what happened? The *Bridegroom* (not the presence) *tarried*. Jesus is still present and has been since October 1874, but the time for the marriage to take place is another matter.

Whether or not the word “cometh” is inserted in verse 6 really does not change anything. If the word is used, the thought would be “Behold, the Bridegroom is now coming in connection with the *wedding*” (rather than referring to his arrival in 1874).

Advancing the parable does change some pet ideas. For example, it was unusual that for 40 years the magazine went forth entitled *Zion’s Watch Tower, Herald of Christ’s Presence*. Even the *Dawn*, around the early 1940s, added the subcaption “Herald of Christ’s Presence,” so the cry is still going on in regard to the *presence* of our Lord. The Millennial Age began in October 1874, and the reasoning was as follows: October 1874 was the “midnight” hour, the technical beginning of the *Millennial* day, just as midnight literally begins a new 24-hour

day. That premise is still true, but the reasoning was so interwoven with the Ten Virgins Parable that it was hard to consider the parable separately and thus advance it. However, the parable itself contains certain clues that are shockers when we meditate on them. Therefore, we set forth the following reasoning.

The “*midnight cry*” could be the twelfth hour of the Parable of the Penny (Matt. 20:1–16). Technically, 6 p.m. was “even” back there, but it was also the end of the working day. Some laborers entered the vineyard as late as the eleventh hour, but the twelfth hour ended the workday. At “even” the lord of the vineyard came to give the reward. (The twelfth hour ended the day under Roman reckoning, as opposed to 6 p.m. under Hebrew reckoning.) The twelfth hour of the Parable of the Penny *just precedes* the time when no man can work. The use of the penny will constitute a *fatal* witness, which is not the popular message but the message that involves the death of the Gideon (last members) class. Another factor is the hour of power of the beast and the Adversary. Just as it seemed that Satan was supreme when he had Jesus nailed to the Cross and the disciples were scattered, causing confusion and disheartenment, so it will be with the feet members. Through additional liberty the forces of evil will seem to utterly prevail not only with the Church but also with Israel later on. Satan will appear to have the upper hand, and men’s faith will be tried right to the core in regard to their relationship to God, but this seeming defeat will turn into a *glorious* triumph—for the Church *and* for Israel.

Verse 7: The very first thing to happen after the midnight cry is that the virgins awoke. (They had been slumbering—see verse 5.) All of the virgins “arose” (awoke) and trimmed their lamps. The hour of the beast is fast approaching when the nominal Church will come into power. Soon we will see the forces gathering in a *very realistic way* (not in an imaginary or theoretical way). The end of the Church will really be in sight. When this occurs, *all* of the virgins will know that the end is *very close*. Even those who *now* do not believe the nominal Church is coming back into power will see that they had a misconception regarding the whole subject. All of their consecrated lives, they have denied and preached against the nominal Church’s return to power, but when it is actually happening, they will *know* they were wrong. Wouldn’t that make them search their hearts as to how and why they have been deceived on the subject? Thus there will come a *trimming of the lamps*.

Verses 7 and 8: When the wise class see this event happening, they will want to make sure they are in the proper heart condition too—not just the foolish virgins. The wise virgins will also want to hone the truth. Thus all of the virgins will trim their lamps, but the perspective and attitudes will differ between the wise and the foolish classes. In trimming their lamps, the foolish virgins will find an *inadequacy of oil* because they have not sufficiently studied the subject of prophecy. Because they *do not anticipate* the Church-State system, it will come upon them *suddenly*. Consequently, they will need information. They will have to be indoctrinated in regard to what they missed during the many years that they stressed the importance of character to the *neglect* of prophecy.

Verses 10–12: Later on, the foolish virgins will come back with the oil, only to find that the *door is shut*. They will try to get in, crying, “Lord, Lord, open to us,” but Jesus will not open the door for them. In the fulfillment, when Babylon falls, it will be obvious that the door *had PREVIOUSLY been shut*. The fall of all the nominal churches will be evidence that the door was shut earlier. People will no longer go to church. Angry and disillusioned, they will be preoccupied with trying to get food and the necessities of life. In effect, it will be like a voice from heaven saying to the consecrated left behind, “The Bride has made herself

ready, but there is a blessing if you come to the marriage supper” (Rev. 19:7,9 paraphrase).

The point is that if the whole parable is advanced, it fits beautifully. In fact, it seems to fit even more pointedly in that the parable is brought a little closer in connection with the time period that is involved. For instance, we have the Millerite movement, the Elijah pictures, and the Daniel prophecies. And then in the parable, instead of the going forth to meet the Bridegroom being from 1844 to 1874 (verse 1), it would be from 1874 to 1914, followed by disappointment. An advancement of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins dovetails with the Parable of the Penny and with the four places (Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan) that Elijah went after the cave experience of seeing the wind, earthquake, fire, and still, small voice. The disappointment of the parable, then, would be the 1914 date rather than the Millerite movement.

Comment: We use Psalm 119:62 to show that the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies will occur at a *crisis* or *turning point*: “At *midnight* I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.” Therefore, “midnight” can also signify a crisis or turning point in the parable and *does not* have to pinpoint 1874 as the start of a new day. “Midnight” will be a crucial turning point for the feet members.

Comment: Advancing the parable makes more sense in regard to verse 7. Otherwise, that *one verse* covers such a *long* period of time (from 1874 to a date yet future). The advancement makes the parable move more quickly right up to the climactic action.

Reply: Yes, from the announcement “Behold, the bridegroom cometh” to the completion of the parable is a shorter period of time if the parable is advanced.

Comment: And advancing the parable gives more emphasis to the more recent explanation of “go ... to them that sell.” It puts everything later in the Harvest period and thus makes the parable *very dramatic* at the end of the age.

Reply: “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Prov. 23:23). Many will sell the truth in that crisis period. They will not have made their consecration valid enough to endure the fire, the trial of that experience. The Great Company will retain their integrity *but under pressure*, whereas the Little Flock will do so voluntarily.

Comment: Advancing the parable gives more thrust to verse 13, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” Verse 13 is almost identical to Matthew 24:42,44, which refers to the rapture.

Reply: Yes. Consider the date October 1874. That date came and went, and nobody knew of Jesus’ secret presence beginning at that time until a few years later. Therefore, if Jesus is saying, “Watch lest that day come upon you suddenly,” he must be referring to a *later* “coming.” Not until 1876 did anyone realize the presence had begun, and not until 1878 did the Pastor even begin to write, so how could there be a watching for the “coming” of the October 1874 *parousia*? The *parousia* was understood *after* Jesus came, not before. Verse 13 is telling us to watch regarding the *wedding*—that day and hour we know not.

Comment: It has been a puzzle how the “bridegroom” could come *before* the Harvest message had even been given. Advancing the parable gives time for the Harvest message to go forth before Jesus’ appearance as the *Bridegroom*. Jesus came in October 1874 to give a *message*.

Later he “comes” as the *Bridegroom*.

Reply: Yes, the “virgins” would thus have more understanding before the parable takes shape. There would be more indoctrination, for which the virgins are responsible.

Q: Please explain what “selling the truth” means.

A: As one illustration, advice is given to the Laodicean Church: “Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich” (Rev. 3:18). Among other things, “buying the truth” is giving our heart to the Lord and surrendering the right to life on the human plane in the next age. In that surrender we get the “gold,” the hope of immortality. We are to feed on the precious promises whereby we become partakers of the divine nature. “Selling the truth” would be changing our mind, forgetting our consecration, and going back into the world. Therefore, Proverbs 23:23 instructs us to “buy the truth, and *sell it not*.”

The feet members will have an experience based on what happened in Jesus’ day. When Judas betrayed the Master, he sold the truth. For a miserable 30 pieces of silver, Judas betrayed Jesus, thinking Jesus would escape and he could retain the money. But the betrayal did not turn out that way. When Judas saw that a just man was being condemned to die, he went out and hung himself. This indicates that, based on other Scriptures, a class will turn against the truth at the end of the age. Originally, this class is *of* the truth, but they will turn *against* it either to avoid persecution or to gain new friendships or whatever. This opposition to the truth by those who had *previously* consecrated will be witnessed by the Great Company class and shock them into renewing their consecrations. Even now, when we see a consecrated person go back into the world, we are greatly saddened. But when *betrayal* occurs (not just going back into the world but being an *enemy* of the truth), it is a different matter.

When the foolish virgins go back to the marketplace and see others betraying the feet members, they will be shocked into making a decision. Questions will confront them: “What are you going to do? Are you going to follow their example and likewise betray the consecrated, or are you going to revitalize your consecration and get reinvigorated?” Some will fall by the wayside, and others will become just as zealous as the Little Flock ever was. They will try to get in the door to the marriage—but *too late*. Because they fail to heed the admonition not to get overcharged with the cares of this life and not to let their hearts get overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, the Great Company will pay the price. Later they will come back and rejoice. First, however, they will try to get in the door but find it is too late, for they cannot change events. After their disappointment, comfort will come from messages such as the one about the marriage supper in Revelation 19:9 and Habakkuk 3:17–19. “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.” This text shows a reinvigoration and rededication by the Great Company. They *will get life* on the spirit plane, but first, they will have to be pressurized into making their decision. They will have to go to “them that sell” in the marketplace in order to get the oil.

When we read the Bible, sometimes we are told what *to do*, and sometimes we are told what *not to do*. Both types of instruction are needed. And so the Bible gives the wrong

course as well as the proper course for rounded-out instruction and development.

Parable of the Talents

Matt. 25:14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

Matt. 25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Matt. 25:16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

Matt. 25:17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

Matt. 25:18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

Matt. 25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Observations for verses 14–19:

1. A *long* period of time is involved. A man traveled to a *far* country and did not return for a *long* time to reckon with the servants.
2. *Different* amounts of talents were distributed. The amount was according to each servant's *ability*; that is, not only were the talents distributed *unequally*, but they were distributed *justly* (according to each man's ability).
3. The man distributed the talents to his servants for the purpose of using and multiplying them. In other words, the servants were *stewards* of the talents.

Verse 14: If the supplied words are deleted, this verse reads, "For as a man travelling into a far country called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods." Since verse 14 seems to tie in with the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, does not this relationship suggest that the hiding of the one talent and the one pound represents the conduct of the foolish virgin class? The end of the Parable of the Talents corresponds to the end of the Ten Virgins Parable, but the starting point of the Parable of the Talents is much earlier. With the terminal points being similar, two *different perspectives* are given for the *same ending* time period.

Verse 13 says to *watch*, for neither the day nor the hour of the Son of man's coming to take the feet members will be known in advance. Then abruptly the Parable of the Talents starts. In other words, Jesus' "coming" will occur as the Parable of the Ten Virgins is ending—when there is a *reckoning*. Of course, the Parable of the Talents starts way back in the beginning of the Gospel Age, but it leads up to a reckoning day, when the Lord will come and inquire what has been done regarding the stewardship of his goods.

Verses 15–18: Five talents, two talents, and one talent are mentioned. The servant who was given five talents gained five more for a total of ten. The servant given two talents ended up with four. But the servant who got one talent, instead of doubling it and having two

talents, ended up with only the original talent he was given. He “went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money.” Certainly one lesson is the *importance of some type of ACTIVITY in the Lord’s service.*

Verse 15: What is the meaning of the talents being distributed “to every man *according to his several ability*”? Why did the servant with only *one* talent hide it? Wrong as well as right conclusions can be drawn. Wrong: All wealthy brethren will get into the Kingdom and not the poor. Wrong: All the poor will get into the Kingdom and not the wealthy. The lesson is to show the *importance of having even one talent.* If the person with only one talent is responsible, how much more responsible is the one who has five talents! The responsibility increases for those who have more talents. (A “talent” was a monetary value, a metal weight in coinage.)

What is “ability”? Example: One person can play the piano beautifully while another person can hardly distinguish one note from another. Thus there are different types of talent. One person excels at public speaking, while others have money, time, the ability to exhort, etc. But another type of “ability” is the *opportunity* to do something. One might have the capability, a certain natural talent, but lack the opportunity to use it. For a talent to be used, the Lord must open the door (grant an opportunity).

The suggestion is that each of the consecrated is endowed with *something* by nature, *some kind of talent*, and then given opportunity to use it. Our zeal, enthusiasm, and interest are big factors with regard to the opening of the door of opportunity. If we are uninterested, the Lord will not give special opportunities. Some who are not given an opportunity consider that to be the Lord’s providence for them. Well, yes and no! Many of the consecrated have *forced* the door of opportunity to open prematurely. Instead they should have said, “O! to be nothing, nothing, only to lie at his feet,” and then waited for the Lord to open the door. That is a different attitude from a “salesman.” It is not always easy to discern God’s providence, but each individual should try to detect the Lord’s leading because things can be forced. For example, a brother can be very popular and well esteemed yet not be following the Lord’s leading.

Therefore, a “talent” is a natural yet God-given capability along some line and the opportunity to use it in the Lord’s service. A talent can be drawing, music, speaking, teaching, singing, etc. There are all kinds of talents, and each has its place—in its place.

Q: What is meant by the one-talent person burying his talent in the *earth*?

A: He used his talent in a worldly pursuit—either for selfish purposes or in another direction, but *not in the Lord’s service.* A “burying” circumstance would become overcharged with the cares of this life and with “surfeiting” and “drunkenness.”

Q: Can the talent be thought of as a treasure the Lord gives us? For instance, can a talent be an understanding of truth? Some are better able to grasp truth right in the beginning, but if they do not use it, they will not continue to progress at the same rate. If we hide what the Lord gives us, we will not get any more.

A: That statement is true in principle. See verse 29: “Unto every one that hath [used] shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not [used] shall be taken away even that which he hath.” A “talent” involves a lot of things. Some people have

money or a position of authority whereby they can benefit the Lord's people.

Comment: The one with five talents lost no time. He went right out and traded and got five more. The two-talent servant acted likewise, but the one-talent servant went immediately to bury his talent. He hid it until such time as he would have to give it back, and expended no time or effort on it.

Reply: The one talent was hidden for safekeeping rather than for use.

Comment: This parable seems to deal exclusively with *outward works* rather than character growth or an increase in spirituality in the Lord. The servant buried his one talent in the earth, that is, in the *world*. One cannot do something spiritually minded in the world, but he can use a talent in a worldly activity. The Parable of the Talents pertains to the natural abilities we have that can be developed and used in the Lord's service. We are to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, not on earth. Back in Old Testament times there were no trusted banks in which to deposit money, so a person's "bank" was where he buried his money. The purpose was for *self-preservation*, as opposed to using one's talents outwardly.

A lesson is that everyone has at least *one* talent even if it is not obvious. Each person should examine himself and ask what it is. A "talent" may not be spectacular (and usually is not), but everyone can do a little something. For example, visiting the sick requires effort, sacrifice, and time. If someone is really sick, not much can be said to him or her—it is too hard for the brother or sister to concentrate—but prayer can be offered at the bedside, a hymn can be sung, etc. The principle of "faith without works is dead" applies to the one-talent servant who buries his talent.

Matt. 25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

Matt. 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Matt. 25:22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

Matt. 25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Both the five- and the two-talent servants doubled their talents, and their lord commended them alike: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Q: How do we "double" our talents?

A: If one has a talent and just uses it for self (or for the "earth"), it remains *one* talent. But if the Lord gives opportunity to use that talent for someone else, then that talent is doubled (1 + 1). The talents are to be used in *outward* service rather than inward or downward. That would be the doubling—not how large the crowd is that one deals with, but just the

outward aspect. Self + *others* = the *doubling*.

Possession of a talent is one thing; the opportunity to use it is another. Some feed pride with their talents and perhaps look for large numbers of proselytes. In contrast, consider Moses. He was a very talented person, but he had to wait 40 years before using his talents. Capability and opportunity are both in the “talents.” However, the one who buries a talent is not even looking for an opportunity to use it, so an opportunity can pass him right by. There is a danger in forcing an opportunity to feed one’s ego, but the other extreme is to be too “humble,” to not feel the responsibility to use the talent, preferring to take a back seat always. The latter instance is too negative. Visiting the sick can be an obvious opportunity, but many times we should wait—and watch—for the Lord to open the door.

Matt. 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

Matt. 25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

Matt. 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Matt. 25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Matt. 25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

Matt. 25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Matt. 25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

To paraphrase: Then the one-talent servant said, “Lord, I know you are a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not strawed. I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the earth.”

The Lord answered, “You wicked and slothful servant. You should have put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I would have received the talent with usury. Take the talent from him, and give it to the one who has ten talents, for unto everyone who has used, more shall be given, but from the one who has not used shall the talent be taken away. Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Verse 25: The admission “I was afraid” shows that this class have a fear of sacrificial death, being all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:15). They fear what others might think or do with regard to activity in the Lord’s service.

Verse 24: “Reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.” The other servants started out acknowledging that their Lord had given them the talents and then told what they had done with the talents. However, the one-talent servant was

immediately on the defensive—as if he were attacking the Lord: “Because you are such and such a way, I had to do what I did.” He knew he had not faithfully used the talent, so he was trying to defend himself. The multi-talent servants in the parable recognized the responsibility of stewardship—that they were to use what they had—whereas the one-talent servant just wanted to keep his talent “safe.”

At first we might think that not many would have this perspective of the Lord being a hard man, reaping where he has not sown, etc., but actually *all* of the servants in the parable would have known this. When we consecrate, we know the purpose of that consecration; that is, we know right from the beginning that we must develop Christlikeness, be a steward over the Lord’s goods, and so forth, *regardless of how many or few our talents are*. In other words, all know the purpose initially; the difference is that some consider the talents a *privilege* and *use* them, whereas others *hold back*. The talents are distributed according to each man’s ability, and they are to be used, not wasted. All who consecrate know that Jesus is their Master and that theoretically they have no will of their own. All know this initially, but in practice, as time goes on, attitudes may change until the day of reckoning. At that time fright becomes a factor with those who have been careless or negligent regarding their covenants of sacrifice. They become defensive, trying to justify a lack of use earlier.

Verses 28 and 29: Notice that the one talent of the unfaithful servant was given to the ten-talent person (to the servant who had doubled five talents and not to the servant who started with two talents). “To him who has used *much, more* will be given” is the principle. Why give the talent to the servant with the most talents already? All things being equal, the Christian with the most talents who *faithfully uses them* will receive the greater reward because the greater the number of talents, the greater the degree of responsibility—and the harder it is to use them all faithfully. In regard to Kingdom honors, “one star differeth from another star in glory” (1 Cor. 15:41). This Scripture pertains to the reward later, not to the present life. The one who originally had five talents gained another five (for a total of ten) down here. *Later*, after the reward, he was given another talent.

Being faithful is more difficult for an individual who has a lot of money or a position of power, among other talents, when he consecrates. Why? Because his mind can get distracted in more directions. However, if he faithfully uses all of his talents, he merits a greater reward than the one- or two-talent person. For this reason the seven messengers to the Church get special rewards, and of course the apostles too.

Verse 14: “The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods [talents].” The *Lord* gives us our talents to start with, so everything belongs to him. As the hymn goes, “All I have and all I hope for [are not my own but] thine for all eternity.”

Not my own, my time, my talent,
Freely all to Christ I bring,
To be used in joyful service
For the glory of my King.

We should be good stewards, for what we have belongs to the Lord. He gives it back to us to be used in his service as there is opportunity.

Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:11–27)

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

immediately appear.

Luke 19:12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Luke 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

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

There is a relationship between the Parable of the Talents and the Parable of the Pounds that is usually not considered. Since both of these parables were given near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry (Luke 19:28; Matt. 26:1,2), these themes were on his mind, and we should pay attention to them. On several occasions the subject was fragmented, but finally, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus gave a long discourse (Matthew 24 and 25).

What is *common* to both parables?

1. Both show the responsibility of *increasing* and *using*.
2. Both deal with amounts of money (representing other things, of course).
3. Jesus went away and returns.

What is the *difference* between the two parables? In the Parable of the Pounds, Jesus gave *one* pound to *each* of ten servants. In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus gave *five* talents, *two* talents, and *one* talent, respectively, to three servants; that is, each received an amount *according to his ability*. This difference in the two parables indicates a different lesson despite other similarities.

Verse 13: "Occupy till I come" signifies "Take over until I return." Jesus left at the beginning of the Gospel Age and returns at the end.

Verse 14: The nobleman's "citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." As a whole, the Jewish nation rejected Jesus at the First Advent. The "citizens" would be those of the nation who *hated* Jesus, his message, and everything he stood for, in contradistinction to the remainder of the people who had lesser knowledge and thus only hearsay prejudice.

Conversely, those in the parable who obtain the pound agree to have the nobleman reign over them. This willingness shows that with the consecrated, the reign of Christ starts *at the moment of each individual's dedication*. The reign of Christ in the believer's heart begins when he consecrates—not in 1874 but at any time down through the Gospel Age. (This "reign" over the *Church* must not be confused with Jesus' *future* reign over the *world*.) Unfortunately, some in present truth confuse this matter.)

Luke 19:15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Luke 19:16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

Luke 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

Luke 19:18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

Luke 19:19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

Luke 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

Luke 19:21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

Luke 19:22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

Luke 19:23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

Luke 19:24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

Luke 19:25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

Luke 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Luke 19:27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

The time will come when the nobleman rewards or punishes according to increase or lack thereof. The first servant gained *ten* pounds with his pound—and his reward was *proportionate* according to *how much he gained*. In other words, one who consecrates with one pound and increases it to ten pounds gets *ten times* more glory and honor in the sense of a greater stewardship. He gets ten cities to rule over.

Q: The usual definition of the pound is that it represents justification, but in what manner is *justification* increased from one to ten?

A: That question will be treated later.

The Parable of the Talents and the Parable of the Pounds are the *same* subject viewed from *two* standpoints. Paul increased both the pounds and the talents—the *inward* and the *outward* aspects of Christian development—respectively. With regard to the pounds, knowledge gained must be used. “Trading” is involved or getting “usury” (interest).

In reading the Parable of the Talents, some evangelists think that getting others to accept an “altar call” is using the gospel committed to them and hence is increasing talents. There is a measure of truth in this thought, but evangelists could have such success and still not be acceptable in the Lord’s sight as part of the Little Flock based on other factors. Many forms of service are available: visiting the sick, letter writing, prayer, exhortation, encouragement, etc. The point is to *get involved*, governed of course by the Word of God.

As for the pounds, one can gain the fruits of the Spirit, but each fruit can have a greater increase. For example, one who has faith can get *more and more* faith. The same is true of hope and patience. The Christian life *always* has room for improvement. Improvement is an increase, and the reward is proportionate. The point is that character development is *active* in some way. For instance, “faith *without* works is dead” (James 2:20). God is pleased to see faith *with* works. Similarly, knowledge should be *applied*, and character development should be *used*.

Notice that in the Parable of the Pounds, the reward for the Little Flock is *cities*, not nations (see Luke 19:17,19). The apostles had a larger jurisdiction, a regional one, for they laid down advice for all. In the Kingdom their jurisdiction, which will be according to character traits, is described as sitting on 12 thrones. The *whole world* will be divided into 12 layers of apostolic authority. And humanity will also be divided into 12 categories based on character or personality traits. The Church class, and especially the apostles, will have other types of recognition as well—a variety of duties. The Church, under Christ, will have executive, legislative, and judicial authority in the Kingdom. The promise is that the Church will be prophets, kings, priests, and judges. Therefore, the promise that the 12 apostles will sit on 12 thrones embraces more than just 12 personality traits—it includes powers in other directions as well. Church and State (civil and religious powers) will be combined in the Kingdom.

In both parables the main thrust or lesson is on the *one-talent* and the *one-pound* person. All the other lessons and observations are in order, but the *climax* of each parable is what happens when the Master comes to the servant who *did not increase* the one talent or the one pound. Both are criticized. The one-talent servant buried his talent in the earth, meaning he used his capability in *worldly pursuits*. The one-pound servant laid up his pound in a napkin, meaning he made *no progress*. He was justified, lived honestly, was polite, attended meetings, etc., but an examination of his life showed no outgoing benefit to others. Some, God forbid, who profess consecration later go back into the world (and stay there) or commit gross immoral sins (and remain in them). The excuse is often given that his or her consecration was never accepted, but we have no right to make such an excuse, for the individual may well be in this one-pound category. The individual professed consecration earlier, and the consecration (immersion) was witnessed. Just because there is no progress does not mean we can excuse the individual by saying the consecration was not accepted.

God would never have called us unless we were capable *by His grace* of making our calling and election sure. With God’s help *we can make it*. If we do not measure up, we will lose the positions we would have had in the Kingdom, and others who do measure up will fill those positions.

The Parable of the Pounds, then, is talking about the one-pound person who is *unfaithful*. Nadab and Abihu represent two *Second Death* classes. One is obviously of a wrong spirit. Nadab pictures those who are conspicuously cantankerous, rebellious, critical, etc. But the other class, the Abihu class, are not conspicuous. It is *not apparent* that they are of the Second Death class. They might have nice, sweet personalities and seem to have the love of the Father. They appear to have the spirit of love and kindness, but from God’s standpoint they do not pay attention to His instructions. They are disobedient—not heeding the commandments of Jesus. If gentleness and kindness were all that is required, we would not need a whole Bible. Christianity is more than just a polite, kind veneer. Obedience is

essential. Yet those of the Abihu class, because of their pleasant personalities, are not recognized by brethren in the present life as going into Second Death.

Galatians 4:19 shows that a minimum standard is required to get life: “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again *until Christ be formed in you.*” The Apostle Paul was very concerned and desirous that each of the consecrated would develop to this degree and thus get life. Hence the one-pound person is in danger of not attaining this minimum standard.

Once one consecrates, he must be developed up to the point where it can be said that Christ is formed in him. That is the *minimum level* of character development required to get life. Paul wanted the brethren to keep maturing until they got to that point, which is called the “quickenings.” The quickening stage is the point in pregnancy where the fetus begins to move. At this stage in pregnancy, a *greater potential* for life can be seen.

Once the minimum standard is reached for one to be of the Little Flock, he could die right away and get his reward. But sometimes one’s present life here on earth is prolonged to give that individual an opportunity for even *more* fullness of development—and consequently an even fuller reward. No doubt Paul reached the mark of perfect love quite early in his life—and he had the desire to go beyond the veil—but his delay in doing so was of benefit to the Church as a whole. As a result of his stewardship, he is proportionately blessed.

2 Thessalonians 2:10 shows there is a danger at the end of the age of *not loving the truth* and thus going into Second Death. “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; *because they received not the love of the truth*, that they might be saved.”

Compare the following two Scriptures. “I feared thee, because [I know] *thou art an austere [hard] man*” (Luke 19:21). “Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that *thou art an hard man*, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed” (Matt. 25:24). At the time of consecration *all* know this. The responsibility is comprehended in the beginning. Marriage is an illustration. At the time of marriage, each party says, “I do.” That “I do” applies to sickness, poverty, etc.—*all subsequent circumstances*. You get involved in marriage without knowing what it will lead to as the years go by. The same is true of consecration. We give our hearts to the Lord but do not know ahead of time what our experiences will be. The consecration (and marriage) step is taken by *faith*. And the commitment is *binding*.

Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

The expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth” occurs several times in Scripture. In each case the meaning is determined by context. We will now consider various usages.

1. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21–23). Jesus is addressing his disciples, the spiritual class. Three categories are mentioned: (1) prophesying, (2) casting out devils, and (3) doing many wonderful works. Evidently those speaking felt they were part of the Kingdom of heaven class, and they expressed *surprise* when they were shut out.

However, Jesus never recognized them as having reached the *plateau of development* necessary for attaining the Little Flock. (Strictly speaking, the Kingdom of heaven is just the Little Flock.)

Notice that “iniquity” is mentioned: “Depart from me, ye that work *iniquity*.” The Pastor furnished the key for understanding this expression. He spoke about believers who subsequently consecrate. Before consecration they were estranged from the Lord through “wicked works” even though, at heart, they were not wicked. “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col. 1:21). In other words, the estrangement ceases at the time of consecration. The *Diaglott* calls “wickedness” lawlessness. Hence Jesus does not recognize as part of the Little Flock those who work “lawlessness.” A Christian may *think* he is doing God’s will but not be paying strict attention to the instructions in the Bible. He assumes he is doing the Father’s will, whereas, in fact, he is not obeying as he should. Consequently, he loses the prize of the high calling because he does not attain the necessary plateau of development.

Matthew 7:21–23 can also have a loose application to the tare class. Either way Second Death is not indicated. The lesson is the loss of a chief blessing because of working lawlessness instead of working according to the express wishes of the Master, as recorded in the Word.

2. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:24–29). This parable brings us down to the shutting of the door (a reminder of the Ten Virgins Parable). The point is to strive to enter in the strait gate *before the door is shut*.

Notice that the Master *is already here*—he rises up from a chair, as it were. He is not coming from a long journey but is already present. The fact that the Master rises up and closes the door shows that this event takes place during the *parousia* of our Lord, that is, during the days in which we are living. This time setting is emphasized in another way too. When the Master closes the door, those who are shut out begin to say, “We have eaten and drunk in thy *presence [parousia]*.” They ate and drank *spiritual refreshment* during the time of Jesus’ *parousia*. Moreover, “thou hast taught in our streets”; that is, Jesus gave them instruction. This parable has a strong application at the *end* of the age.

Jesus says to *strive* to enter the gate before the door is shut. In other words, he is stressing (1) effort and (2) opportunity. It takes *effort* to enter the gate while the door is still open, and the entering must occur while the *opportunity* still exists. Many will seek to enter the strait gate but not be able to because they will find the door has already been shut—and locked.

In regard to the plea “Lord, Lord, open unto us,” the same address “Lord, Lord” is used in Matthew 7:21. And in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the foolish say, “Lord, Lord, open to us” (Matt. 25:11). Jesus would have given this parable with *animation*,

mimicking those shut out. Such dramatization riveted these sayings on the apostles' minds so that they could record them.

Luke 13:24–29 is similar to Matthew 7:21–23 in that both apply to the Great Company and, incidentally, to the tares. Again, no Second Death class is shown. This subject was introduced by one right in Jesus' company, by one sympathetic to and very interested in the topic, and not by a scribe or Pharisee (Luke 13:23).

The “workers of iniquity [lawlessness]” are not evil. The problem is that they do what *they* think the Lord's will is without strictly paying attention. The motive is proper, but they are *foolish* virgins. For example, they have *their own idea* of what God's love is, but the *Scriptural* idea is necessary.

The Great Company (and the tares) will experience “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” ie, *extreme disappointment*. They will see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God and themselves *thrust out*. In the final analysis, the Ancient Worthies will have a higher reward than the Great Company, even though the Great Company has a greater opportunity in the Gospel Age. The “Kingdom of heaven” is the Little Flock, and the “Kingdom on earth” will be represented in the Ancient Worthies. The Great Company will just be messengers, go-betweens, for the Little Flock and the Ancient Worthies.

The parable is made intimate: “*Ye shall see.*” In other words, the foolish virgins will be alive and on hand when they realize they have lost the crown and been thrust out.

Q: Matthew 8:10–12 mentions the “kingdom of *heaven*” in relationship to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. How would we understand the term in this context? “When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the *kingdom of heaven*. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

A: When the Kingdom of God or heaven is established on earth, when God's will is starting to be done down here, the Ancient Worthies will be involved *with* the Kingdom of heaven but not be *in* it. They will be the legal earthly representatives. The Pastor's writings enable us to understand the vocabulary God is using.

Luke 13:28,29 and Matthew 7:21–23 are closely related. Both speak primarily of the Great Company class and secondarily of the scribes and Pharisees, a chaff or *tare* class. Both classes will be thrust out of the Kingdom. Some of the “tares” are the scribes and Pharisees of *our* day plus nominal believers. The Second Death class is not included here.

Matthew 8:10–12 is addressed to the centurion whose servant was subsequently healed. No Second Death class is involved here either. The “children of the kingdom,” who were to be “cast out into outer darkness” and experience “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” were the Jews who did not accept Jesus at his First Advent. Jesus was referring to the trouble that came on them in AD 69–70, the trouble regarding the downfall of their priesthood when the Temple fell and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. Subsequently the Jews could not even trace their priesthood. They did not know who the descendants of Aaron were because families were separated in the Diaspora: husbands from wives, parents from

children, etc. If the Orthodox Jews of our day knew who constituted the priesthood, their temperament is such that they would have stormed Dome of the Rock years ago regardless of the consequences. However, because of the uncertainty about the priesthood, a sign near the Temple Mount states, "No Jew is allowed in here." If a Jew entered and was not of the priesthood, he would be polluting the Temple area. However, the Jews in the Kingdom, especially the scribes and the Pharisees, will realize when they come back from the grave that they are not even part of the arrangement on the earthly plane because they did not really obey God's will according to the instructions in His Word. Otherwise, they would be Ancient Worthies.

The Great Company will get a conscious feeling of being rejected. Many who are very confident they will make their calling and election sure speak derogatorily of other consecrated brethren. When, in the Kingdom, these confident ones find they are not of the Little Flock, they will be greatly disappointed. The initial shock will be great. Not only is this true of the ones who are still here when it becomes apparent that the door has been shut, but it is also true of those who have already died. When they went into death, they expected to be of the Little Flock, but they will discover otherwise. Some of the consecrated speak very strongly, thinking they are faithful and others are beneath them, but they will find the *reverse* is true. That will be a very severe experience—finding out that they are not involved except as "messenger boys," and that the Ancient Worthies and those who made the Little Flock are the leaders and rulers on earth or in heaven. At the end of the Kingdom, the Ancient Worthies will get spirit nature *far above* the Great Company. During the Kingdom the Ancient Worthies will be *temporarily* restricted until they finish the task of leading many to righteousness. Ultimately they will shine as the stars while the Church shines as the sun (Dan. 12:3). The disappointment of the Great Company will be something like flunking an exam and everyone who did pass knowing about it. Momentarily it will be a discouraging experience.

Q: In Matthew 8:12 what does the term "outer darkness" mean?

A: The "children of the kingdom," the ones to whom the promises were made, were the Jewish people. The scribes and Pharisees, being in leadership positions, occupied "Moses' seat" (Matt. 23:2). They never believed that God's Temple would be completely destroyed and that they would be taken into foreign nations. Hence they were in "outer darkness" (confusion) as to the reason for the events. Troubled and perplexed, they did not understand what was happening. The Scriptures tell us that they were cast off from favor and why, when they would be recovered as a people, etc., but the Jews do not understand because they do not accept the New Testament. Therefore, they are in "outer darkness" in regard to what the Lord is doing in this age. "Outer darkness" is intense trouble and confusion.

3. A portion of the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares reads, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:41,42). Of the element being gathered out, it is possible that two classes are involved: (1) "all things [seducers—*Diaglott*] that offend," and (2) "them which do iniquity [those working lawlessness—*Diaglott*]."

Notice that with other parables interspersed, this is a delayed explanation of the parable given in verses 24–30. "The Son of man ... shall cast *them* ['all things that offend' and 'them

which do iniquity'] into a furnace of fire." As a consequence, "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." It has already been observed that the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" does not necessarily apply to those who are the most offensive or the most culpable of indignation, but that different classes can be involved with this experience. With some the phrase means Second Death. With others it just means sharing a bitter experience. Verse 43 says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," the "righteous" being the Little Flock. This parable is usually generalized, which is important, but based upon the general application, we can now glean more details regarding the destinies of the classes who are described. We know that the tares are involved and that they will be burned (their professions will be destroyed). However, the Great Company will also be burned—not their foundation but the wood, hay, or stubble *structure* that is built upon that foundation—yet they will be saved as individuals (1 Cor. 3:12–15). The foundation is solid, but the superstructure or house above the foundation will be burned if it is not built of durable metals: gold, silver, or precious stones.

Thus three classes are referred to in verses 41–43:

1. Little Flock, the "righteous" who shine as the sun, the mature wheat
2. Great Company, those who do lawlessness, the unripe wheat
3. Tares, "all things that offend," the imitation wheat

The tares (imitation wheat) and the Great Company (unripe wheat), the foolish virgins who go to the marketplace of experience, will both share in the trouble. The immature wheat will be plucked out of the fire, their souls being saved (Jude 23).

The point is that the expression "wailing and gnashing of teeth" in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares does not represent Second Death. That has been true in each case so far (Matt. 7:21–23; 8:10–12; 13:41,42; Luke 13:24–29). Nevertheless, the expression does indicate a destruction of something. The false profession of the tares will be destroyed. They will no longer claim to be Christians but will have opportunities in the Kingdom to get life—even though they will be ashamed and have certain sorrow and anguish.

4. Next to be considered is the Parable of the Dragnet: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:47–50). Both the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares and the Parable of the Dragnet take place at the end of the age. After the net was full, it was drawn to shore, and a sorting or severing work began. Notice that when the net was cast into the sea, it gathered fish "of every kind." In this mixed multitude of fish that were drawn to shore, there was a weeding-out process, the primary purpose being to determine the "just," that is, those who meet with divine approval. In this case the "just" apply to the Great Company (the immature wheat) as well as to the Little Flock (the mature wheat). The tares come under the term "wicked." However, if the term "just" can be enlarged, then perhaps the term "wicked" can also be expanded to include the Second Death class in addition to the tares.

"Wailing and gnashing of teeth" signifies *bitter*, extreme disappointment and chagrin—also anger in certain instances. To "gnash" means to grind the teeth, which indicates a strong emotion of sorrow, pain, or anger. For example, the Holy Remnant (especially) will "wail" when they find out Jesus, a *Jew* like them, was their Redeemer (Rev. 1:7). *Great sorrow* is

implied. In some instances a little fear will be mixed in with the “wailing” sorrow.

The tare element profess to be Christians but are not. The “fire” will be a humiliating experience that destroys their profession, and the humiliation will be in proportion to their former boasting.

5. A portion of the Parable of the Wedding Garment reads as follows: “So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:10–14).

Notice that these parables have a certain similarity. The wheat and the tares grow together until the *end* of the age and then comes a separation. The dragnet mixture is sorted at the *end* of the age. Now a wedding garment inspection takes place in regard to the marriage at the *end* of the age. (Matt. 22:10).

Now notice the specific wording in this parable: “Bind him [the one without a wedding garment] hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The *additional* detail “bind him hand and foot” indicates Second Death. Moreover, the parable does not specify whether the individual came in wearing a wedding garment and later removed it or whether he never had on a wedding garment to begin with. Hence *both* classes are included. The one who never had on a wedding garment would be *more* than just a tare, for he actually thought he was eligible for the wedding and, therefore, was surprised at being questioned. The individual (picturing a class at the end of the age) was a wolf masquerading in sheep’s clothing, pretending to be a sheep.

“And he was speechless.” The man without the wedding garment was stunned because of *sudden exposure*. He was with the other guests who were properly attired when he was suddenly confronted. Other Scriptures show that this man represents a class who think and act as though they are fully consecrated, and thus participate in the fullest sense, yet have never made a consecration to the Lord.

A mixed group attended the meetings even in the Apostle Paul’s day. Those who attended consisted of either those already consecrated or those considering consecration. However, that aspect is not what the parable is discussing. Jude shows that the class without the wedding garment may even be *teachers* in the Church. They are wolves in sheep’s clothing.

The designation “friend” reminds us of Judas, who was *not* Spirit-begotten yet merited Second Death. It is possible to have the Holy Spirit in *another* sense, as Judas did; that is, he had *knowledge* that Jesus is the Redeemer. Before Pentecost the apostles did not have the robe of Christ’s righteousness. Jesus had to die first as a sin offering—he had to furnish the sacrifice that would make them acceptable to God. Based on his sin offering, others can have a standing before God. Death, resurrection, ascension, and presentation to the Father all had to take place before the robe of Christ’s righteousness was given to the believers. Therefore, Judas never had the robe, yet he clearly went into Second Death.

Clues that the Parable of the Wedding Garment signifies Second Death for the one without the garment are as follows:

1. Like Judas he is called "Friend."
2. He has no wedding garment.
3. He is bound hand and foot.
4. He is cast into outer darkness.
5. Weeping and gnashing of teeth follow.

There is *no hope* for this class. Remember, Judas wept literally but did not properly repent. Knowing he was guilty of the betrayal of a just man, he tried to return the money he had gotten for the betrayal, but the chief priests and elders would not divide the money between themselves because it was contaminated. It is interesting that a class actually involved in Jesus' death felt that Judas was more culpable than they because he had sold his own Master. Because they did not want to be contaminated with the "blood money," the chief priests and elders used it to buy a cemetery for the dead (Matt. 27:3–8).

Judas did sorrow but not in the right way. Thus there are different kinds of sorrow. Politicians sorrow when they lose an election because of some mistake they made, but that is not repentance. In *contrition* Judas should have run to Jesus wherever the Master was and begged for forgiveness. Instead he went to the scribes and Pharisees with the money. On the other hand, Peter wept bitterly and was forgiven because he had a *godly* sorrow.

Let us consider the statement "many are called, but few are chosen." The Second Death class not only are not "chosen" but are out of the picture altogether in the final analysis. Matthew 6:23 states, "If therefore the light that is in thee be[come] darkness, how great is that darkness!" This type of "darkness" is *more* than just going into the world—it is *full* darkness. The same thought is expressed in Matthew 5:13, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour [that is, becomes *saltless*], wherewith shall it [ever] be salted [again]? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." It cannot be renewed. Hence this class lose their tang, their enthusiasm for truth, etc., and are used for base purposes (they are "trodden under foot of men"). Salt that had lost its flavor was used in the Temple services to absorb the blood from the animal sacrifices. The salt was cast on the ground and thus was "trodden under foot."

Q: Did Judge Rutherford lose his robe because of his actions regarding the Watch Tower takeover?

A: He technically removed the robe from the standpoint of espousing a doctrine that, in effect, denied the Ransom. In his writings he removed the robe. He taught that character building was *passé*, that, instead, one *was* a "character." Imagine! Many heard or read such statements in his presence yet did not get right up and leave him entirely. Thousands stayed in the Society.

As already stated, "gnashing" the teeth means to grind the teeth. The normal use of the word implies pain and/or anger, but *what kind* of sorrow is indicated? An emotional trauma is one example. In *bitter* disappointment one is tense and the teeth automatically clench together. This generalized term will mean somewhat different things to different classes along the lines of sorrow or anger. The Great Company will certainly experience

bitter disappointment. The world will be angry.

6. “The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 24:50,51). This strong statement of punishment sounds like Second Death, for being “cut asunder” would mean to be cut off from *all* favor.

Criticism can be either *constructive* or *destructive*. We should analyze the words and deeds of others as well as our own to see whether they are injurious to the profession of faith we are following. To call attention to something we see that is injurious to the truth brethren with the result that certain brethren are offended would not constitute smiting fellow servants. We should each examine our own heart to see why we do what we do—we should search out the causal factors. To call attention to a truly wrong action or deed is not smiting.

What happened in the Society is that the leadership appointed to Second Death those who differed with them. When some found fault with Judge Rutherford’s character, he reasoned that we are still in the flesh and that we do not build a character but we *are* a character. His advice became so foolish that many left. To put fear in those who remained but were considering leaving, he appointed to Second Death the class that had criticized him. Hence some began to doubt their own thinking and decided the judge’s reasoning was more capable. In essence, then, many were kept in the Society out of fear. There is no question that he smote those who differed with him and told those still in the Society not to have any fellowship with the ones who had left. Any who disobeyed were reprimanded. Therefore, Rutherford did a judging work, and any who were sympathetic to him and followed the same course of action were also guilty of smiting brethren in a very real sense.

In a Society meeting, at least in the past, those present were expected to read from the magazine and to *stick* to the lesson. *All* questions and answers had to be according to that magazine, and any other course was considered dangerous. Unfortunately, that attitude has somewhat crept over into *Volume* studies—that everything has to be according to the *Volumes*. Printed questions and answers were and are used, but if we analyze the questions, we see that the wording practically tells us the answers—right out of the paragraph. In the past many meetings were led that way. The questions were often answered with just a “yes” or a “no,” and there was no discussion. The question could just be turned around and read as a statement for the answer. Those who so answered were considered diligent students, very much in harmony with present truth. However, the purpose of *Volume* studies should be to exercise the mind on the subject under discussion from all angles. Our pure minds should be stirred up to find a plausible and truthful answer.

Many in the Society became very confident about their position and good standing with God because they sold so many books. Wall charts recorded the number of books sold by each individual, and one’s prominence or elevation in the movement was dependent upon book sales, not on character development. Leaders and teachers who were in this attitude of mind then took liberties in their personal lives, yet they died without a “weeping and gnashing” of teeth. Hence the expression would not apply to them, but many who sat under their leadership and saw, as time went on, what was happening did weep and gnash their teeth over being led astray. They were angry with themselves, bitterly disappointed, and felt they had wasted years of their life listening to flawed information. Finally they did leave.

Thus the “evil servant” leadership went into Second Death, but those sitting under the leadership eventually experienced weeping and gnashing of teeth if they were rightly exercised. In other words, those who go into Second Death do not all, like Judas, weep and commit suicide. Many who die with confidence will not get a resurrection. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). Some who go into Second Death are self-deceived. The Nadab and Abihu picture shows *two* Second Death classes.

Jesus frequently used the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Each time it has to be analyzed in context in order to pinpoint the meaning.

Let us consider in more depth Matthew 24:50, “The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of.” What is the application? Earlier in the chapter the “coming” refers to the *parousia*, and later it pertains to the rapture, the call to the wedding or the closing of the door. But still another “coming” is when one is visited with death. At some point in a person’s life, he is cut off in death and then merits the judgment of his prior actions. Judge Rutherford changed the date of the *parousia* to 1925 by altering the Jubilee cycles, but he lived through that date. During that time a *huge* billboard erected near Yankee Stadium to advertise a public meeting said, “Millions now living will never die.” The JW leadership thought that in 1925 the Ancient Worthies would be resurrected, so a house was built in California to receive some of them, but 1925 came and went without the expected event. Thus the “coming” of verse 50 is related to the “cutting asunder” of Judge Rutherford, ie, to his death. He had false expectations, so when the judgment came, it was in regard to cutting him off in Second Death.

The following *Reprint* excerpts pertain to the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins:

Reprint No. 5522 on August 15, 1914 (just prior to World War I). “This parable shows ... that in the *end* of the age a separation, or division, will take place in the *true* church of Christ, regardless of what may be the attitude of the world or of the nominal church.”

Reprint No. 4692 on October 1, 1910. “One of the special lessons of the parable is to show that amongst the pure, the wise, the consecrated people of God, there are two classes. For a time these will be all together—unseparated. But in the fulfilling of this parable, certain circumstances and conditions and truths will develop and separate these two classes of saints, virgins.”

The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins was not fulfilled when the Society split because both classes left. For the most part, those who stayed in the Society gave up the spiritual calling. Therefore, the fulfillment of this parable is *yet future*. Among the *truly consecrated*, a division will take place. Elijah was separated from Elisha, and both were aware of the separation when it occurred. Hence *both classes will know* in antitype.

Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

Matt. 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

The setting of this parable is when The Christ is complete and glorified and the Kingdom

has been inaugurated. We should keep in mind that the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats is still a continuation of "Our Lord's Great Prophecy," which embraces Matthew 24 and 25.

"All the holy angels" are the risen saints, the 144,000, the glorified Church class. Similar Scriptures are:

1. 2 Thessalonians 1:7—"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his *mighty angels*."
2. Jude 14,15—"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his *saints*, To execute judgment upon all."
3. Mark 8:38—"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the *holy angels*."

Verse 31 implies the reign will begin at that time. "Then [at that time] shall he sit upon the *throne* of his glory" and exercise the prerogatives of his office.

Matt. 25:32 **And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:**

A gathering work is being described. "And before him shall be gathered all nations [*peoples*]." The separating work is to be accomplished *gradually*. A shepherd separates the sheep from the goats when he is ready to move to another place.

Matt. 25:33 **And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.**

The sheep are separated to the *right* hand of *favor*. The goats are separated to the *left* hand of *disfavor*. Hard-and-fast, simplistic definitions cannot be given throughout Scripture. Here the "goats" are unfavorable, whereas in the Tabernacle arrangement, the Lord's goat and the scapegoat represent classes dedicated to the Lord. Hence we must study the *context*.

Matt. 25:34 **Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:**

The titles "King" and "Son of man" both refer to Jesus, and the term "King" suggests his *reign*. The chief lesson of this parable is that in the Kingdom Age there will be a dividing work between those who inherit life and those who go into Second Death.

This verse will be fulfilled after the final testing of the Little Season at the end of the Kingdom. It harmonizes with Revelation 21:7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Only those of the world of mankind who pass that final test will be considered *sons* of God. They will enter into the age beyond the Millennium, in which there will be no death.

The Kingdom has been prepared for the sheep "*from* the foundation of the world." Ephesians 1:4 is proof that this parable refers to the world and not to the Little Flock: "According as he [God] hath chosen us in him [Jesus] *before* the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." The inheritance of the Little Flock was set up *long before* the inheritance for mankind. The term "foundation of the

world" refers to Adam's creation. God designed Adam to be a king, but Adam lost that privilege when he sinned. The privilege will be restored to the sheep class at the end of the Millennium. Psalm 8 shows that God's purpose is to bring man into harmony with Him.

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Despite the text "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16), it is erroneous to say that saving the world (and/or restitution) is God's highest priority. The high calling has the greater emphasis. The calling is to the sanctification and development of the *Church*, to become members of the *Heavenly Kingdom class* that will eventually bless the earth. Order of priority: Church first, the world second. The "kingdom prepared ... *from* the foundation of the world" is not on the same level as the Kingdom prepared "*before* the foundation of the world." God's attention was first on Jesus, then on the Church, and finally on the world of mankind.

Matt. 25:35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Matt. 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Matt. 25:37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

Matt. 25:38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Matt. 25:39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

These verses reveal some of the criteria by which judgment will be made to determine who are sheep and who are goats. In other words, some of the *ordinary* courtesies of life, in one department or another, will be the determining factors for getting life.

Q: Micah 4:4 states that everyone “shall sit ... under his [own] vine and under his fig tree. Will this occur during or after the Millennium?

A: Consider Isaiah 11:9. Some of these prophecies will be fulfilled *during* the Kingdom, but in the final analysis the *ultimate* security cannot be realized until after the judgment work is completed. Only then will death no longer be a threatening factor. However, the preparation for that rest will take place in the Kingdom Age.

Each individual who gets life will be a king in the sense that Adam was. Hence each will have his own domain, as it were, his own “vine and fig tree” or property. In the ultimate sense this will occur after the testing of the Little Season at the end of the Millennium.

Verses 35 and 36: The “prison” is not literal but refers to the figurative “prison house” of death. Thus verses 34–36 are figurative as well as literal depending on the verse. Those coming back from the grave will literally need food, liquid to drink, clothes, and various types of service and assistance. But there is, in addition, a figurative or spiritual application. Comfort, encouragement, explanations of God’s plan with Jesus as the Mediator, and so forth, will have to be provided to those who are resuscitated. With the Kingdom being a “reconstruction” era, good “neighborliness” will be required. Those who are more established will help those who are less established.

In regard to the prison house of death, the Pastor has suggested that those who are living will pray for those not yet resuscitated from the grave. How much consideration a person has for others—how much earnest interest—will help to measure his worthiness or unworthiness for life. An attitude of “hospitality” will be required, an attitude of wanting to *help* others. In the Kingdom one’s heart condition will be revealed to a certain extent by the deeds rendered to others.

Notice the emphasis on “I” (referring to Jesus). The point is that service rendered to others will be like serving Jesus himself. We have this same principle in the Christian Age. When Jesus appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus, our Lord said, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?” In other words, a persecution of Jesus’ followers is equivalent to persecuting Jesus himself. “Inasmuch as you are doing it unto *them*, you are doing it unto *me*” is the thought. The spirit of *togetherness in Christ* will be a characteristic of the Kingdom Age as well as of the Gospel Age. Jesus’ words in Matthew 10:40 illustrate this principle: “He that receiveth you receiveth me.” Recognition of Jesus’ followers is like recognizing or receiving Jesus himself.

As the deeds listed in verses 35 and 36 are performed, their merit will accumulate. In the Gospel Age we are told to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven. Those “treasures” are all the things we do down here of good intent and in harmony with God’s Word. The same concept of “accumulation,” therefore, applies to both ages. The parable indicates that in the Kingdom the accumulation of good deeds will occur in a casual way. The sheep class will simply be rendering assistance and kind deeds—not because of the reward but because doing so is a *genuine* expression of their thinking.

Matt. 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you,

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Matt. 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Matt. 25:42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

Matt. 25:43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Matt. 25:44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Matt. 25:45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

Matt. 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Keep in mind that this is a *parable*. The parable shows both classes (sheep and goats) inquiring as to when they did or did not do the deeds that qualified them for everlasting life or Second Death, respectively. No doubt those who get life will later ask and consider how they inherited everlasting life. In the illimitable future it would be only natural for them to look back and reflect many times. However, those who go into Second Death will not have an opportunity in future ages to so reflect, for they will be nonexistent, blotted out of existence.

Each one who goes into oblivion will not be given a personal reprimand and made cognizant of the reasons for his Second Death destiny. Remember, a parable is not an exact statement of all facts. However, a parable *always* has a central theme, a very important lesson. In this parable the lesson consists of what determines the inheritance of life and what determines the inheritance of death. In the Kingdom the rendering from the *heart* of kind, ordinary deeds and courtesies will be the determining factor for a favorable judgment.

Q: Doesn't the parable indicate some *surprise* on the part of both classes in regard to their judgments? It seems as if the sheep and the goats toward the *end* of the Millennium will not be aware of where one another stands with the Lord (just as we are not to judge now who are Little Flock and who are Great Company). The goat class will be rendering *outward* obedience and appear to be sheep until the test in the Little Season exposes them. Moreover, wouldn't the goat class be *self-deceived*? They would think they were on the road to getting life.

A: Yes, to a large extent the goat class will be unaware of their destiny. However, a more *ostensible* revealing of a goat nature will occur with those who do not survive to the end of the Millennium; that is, with those who are cut off almost immediately for absolute refusal to obey and with those who are cut off after 100 years for failing to make sufficient progress. At the *end* of the Millennium, the goat class, who are described as numerous (like the "sand of the sea"—Rev. 20:8), will be destroyed instantly, just as fire came down from heaven and destroyed Nadab and Abihu, or just as the earth opened up and swallowed Korah and

Dathan and Abiram and their families (Rev. 20:9). Thus, at the end of the Millennium, there will not be time for the goat class to think out their judgment—they will just experience it, period! When the fire comes down, the destruction will be instantaneous with no time for a review of one's life and misdeeds. Therefore, the parable cannot have a literal interpretation along these lines as regards the great majority of those who will go into Second Death, this being at the *end* of the Millennium. Without question the judgment described will especially take place at that time. The *principles* will be revealed, but not the particulars, regarding all who lose life.

Consider the person who will be given a 100 years' trial but does not make good under those circumstances. The reasons may be revealed to such individuals. Since the 100-year trials will have different starting and ending points depending on when each person comes forth from the grave, they will be ending *throughout* the Millennial Kingdom, and a consciousness or awareness of having done wrong might take place when such individuals are made to de cease.

Q: Many will be alive throughout most of the Kingdom period depending on when they come forth from the grave (and assuming, of course, that they pass their 100-year trial). Thus they will live on to the test of the Little Season. Wouldn't even those of the goat class have had to literally do many of the deeds in verses 35 and 36 in order to survive that long? Would the thought be that they will do these deeds but that their hearts will not be in them? They will be doing these deeds only for the sake of expediency.

A: Yes, the goat class will render outward perfunctory obedience in order to live until the Little Season.

In the Kingdom Age, three categories will go into Second Death:

1. Those who *refuse* to listen to the voice of "that prophet" (Acts 3:23). Being that hardened and incorrigible, they will be summarily cut off.
2. Some will be cut off after a 100-year trial for not making sufficient progress.
3. The rest will be cut off at the end of the Millennium when the testing of the Little Season exposes them as pretenders, hypocrites.

Although Hebrews 6:10 applies to the Gospel Age, it brings out the principle stated in verse 40 of the parable. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shown toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." Things should be done on behalf of others, not just for self.

Summary Thoughts on Matthew 24 and 25

The comprehensiveness of "Our Lord's Great Prophecy" is shown by the following points:

1. Jesus gave the signs of the end of the age as regards the *Church*.
2. He gave the signs of the end of the age as regards the *world*.
3. He gave clues as regards two of the three destinies of the consecrated:
 - a. Little Flock (Parable of the Ten Virgins and Parable of the Talents)

b. Great Company (Parable of the Ten Virgins and Parable of the Talents)

4. He gave clues as regards the two destinies of the world of mankind in the Kingdom, namely, everlasting life and Second Death (Parable of the Sheep and the Goats)

Matthew 24 and 25 embrace a time period from Jesus' day to the end of the Kingdom. When the apostles asked three simple questions—What shall be the sign of thy presence, what shall be the sign of the end of the age, and when shall these things be (the temple stones being thrown down)?—Jesus responded with a *tremendous* sermon. He answered their questions—and *much more!* He explained the “sign of the Son of man” in two ways: (1) The world will be made aware of his presence through *visual* demonstrations of *divine* power. When Jesus comes in *power and great glory*, the world will know. (2) But the Church knows of his presence earlier. To them it is a *secret* presence—an invisible, secret, thieflike presence where he comes for a period of time to get his crown jewels.

[Note: The following separate discourse given by Bro. Frank Shallieu in October 1997 is an update and clarification of some of the details of the Parables of the Talents and the Pounds since the Matthew verse-by-verse study in 1984–1985.]

COMPARISON OF PARABLE OF THE TALENTS AND PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

The Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:12–27) was presented in the home of Zacchaeus, and the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14–30) was given subsequently on the day before the Memorial. In other words, the two parables were given a week apart toward the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. Since the parables have both similarities and disparities, a comparison yields considerable information. Later on we will reason on some subjects not commonly explored to any depth.

In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus said, "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country" (Matt. 25:14). The Parable of the Pounds reads, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke 19:12). Not only do both parables speak of the Master's departure from his disciples and his going into a "far country," which is heaven itself, but they indicate a considerable time lapse covering his absence. In fact, before the parable was given, Luke revealed that the disciples mistakenly thought the Kingdom would soon be established. To counteract such thinking, among other reasons, Jesus gave the Parable of the Pounds.

The Talents Parable continues, "Who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one [of his own servants] he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey" (Matt. 25:15). The Pounds Parable says, "He called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy [that is, trade and/or use the pounds in a business fashion] till I come" (Luke 19:13). One pound, the *same* amount, was given to each servant, but *varying* amounts of talents were given to each individual: five, two, and one. Despite the disparity, the two parables pertain to the same subject matter, namely, Jesus' going into a far country and returning to reward his faithful servants.

In the Talents Parable, we are next told, "Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents [for a total of ten talents]" (Matt. 25:16). And of the second servant it is said, "And likewise he that had received two [talents], he also gained other two [for a total of four talents]" (Matt. 25:17). Incidentally, when the two parables are compared, both the pounds and the talents are types of money.

Luke 19:14 inserts a statement that seems to be out of place, but it is there for a reason. "But his citizens hated him [Jesus], and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." The Pounds Parable continues, "And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading" (Luke 19:15). Quite an increase was shown by the servant whose pound had gained ten pounds. "Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds" (Luke 19:16). And Jesus replied, "Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:17).

Now we will read more verses. "But he that had received one [talent] went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other

five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:18–21). Notice that the one who was faithful with the one pound and increased it to ten pounds was given authority over "ten cities." The one who faithfully doubled his five talents for a total of ten talents was told he would be ruler "over many things." Thus the Talents Parable is not specific about the reward, whereas the Pounds Parable is. The reward was directly proportional to the money originally given and *faithfully used*. In both cases the reward for faithfulness was *rulership*—in the one case "cities" and in the other case "things."

The Talents Parable continues: "He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:22,23). The two-talent servant was faithful over a "few things" but was rewarded with "many things." That principle is in both parables: of doing *little* on this side of the veil and being rewarded with *much*. The point is that the "little" in service was so appreciated that, in comparison, the reward overwhelmed.

Luke 19:18,19 tells us, "And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities." The reward was equated with the end result. The one whose pound gained ten pounds got ten cities.

Although going back and forth between the two parables is a little difficult, it will start to bring out certain distinctions and the slightly different way the reward was expressed in each case.

With the rewards for the increase in talents, the same statement was made whether the individual gained five talents (a total of ten) or two talents (a total of four). "Well done! You are good and you are faithful. Therefore, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (paraphrase). Thus there was no distinction between the one with the greater results and the one with the lesser results. However, the same statement was not made with regard to the increase in pounds, for in that case the reward was directly proportional to the gain. The one ending up with ten pounds got more than the one who ended up with five pounds.

Now we will discuss in more detail the last class in the parables, that is, those who did not increase the one pound or the one talent. Keep in mind that both parables deal with the same subject matter. The first two classes are favorable and were thus commended, but that is not the case when there was no increase.

The Parable of the Talents continues: "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine" (Matt. 25:24,25). The servant was given one talent and returned one talent. There was no increase.

With regard to the Pounds Parable, "Another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound,

which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow" (Luke 20,21).

The criticism or condemnation sounds similar in both accounts. The same subject matter is being viewed from two different perspectives. In both parables there was no increase, no results. One servant hid his talent in the earth; the other laid up his pound in a napkin. The net result was that both returned to the Lord what was originally given to them with no added interest or usury. The Lord voiced his disapproval as follows:

"His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury [with interest]" (Matt. 25:26,27). In other words, the money should have been used in a business activity in which interest would accrue. The one-talent servant is called "wicked and slothful."

The Pounds Parable is worded much the same. "And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?" (Luke 19:22,23). Here the servant is called "wicked."

In both cases the Lord was complaining not that the servant had to double what he was given but that he needed at least *some sign* of interest accruing. The result was a reprimand that exceeded just words; it involved a loss.

"Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:28-30).

And what does the Luke account say? "And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they [the apostles who interrupted Jesus] said unto him, *Lord, he hath ten pounds.*) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath [used] shall be given; and from him that hath not [used], even that he hath shall be taken away from him" (Luke 19:24-26). Again the wording is similar. The disciples could not understand why the pound would be taken away and given to the servant who already had ten pounds. Human logic would say, "At least give the pound to the one with fewer pounds, the five-pound servant." In other words, the apostles could not contain themselves. Not understanding the dispensing of the reward, they interrupted Jesus.

Questions: How can the talent be taken away from the one-talent servant and given to the ten-talent servant? How can the pound be taken away from the one who did not earn any interest and then be given to the one who had accrued ten pounds? What do the "talent" and the "pound" represent in antitype?

First, the pound will be considered. In the past, the pound has been explained as referring to

justification, the standing of the Christian. With everyone in the body receiving one pound, there is equal distribution. But here is a further question? How can justification be taken from one individual and given to another who *already has justification*? If the pound is modified to mean the hope of the high calling, the definition is better, but it still does not answer all questions. At least the hope of the high calling is common to all who consecrate, for we are all called in the one hope (Eph. 4:4). And with such a definition, it would be possible for one who loses the pound to be of the Great Company. However, the faithful ten-pound servant had already attained a place in the Little Flock, so how could the hope of the high calling of the one-pound servant be given to him?

Therefore, we are back to the same question. What does the pound represent? Remember, the first two classes of servants were commended, but the third class was not. The pound represents locality, territory, or region of responsibility. When each of us gets the truth and consecrates, the hymn applies that says, "Brighten the corner where you are." In other words, when we get the gospel, responsibility follows. First, we make an effort to change the environment in the home. Next we witness to a friend, then a neighbor, and then a coworker. This responsibility to witness pertains to the one pound. Of the various avenues of industry, we *must do something* for the gospel's sake. Of course if those we witness to do not accept the truth, at least we were not quiet about it.

This line of reasoning shows us something else. When the call is given—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—and the individual responds favorably, repents, and dedicates his life to the Lord, not only is he in the race with the hope of the high calling, but a place has already been allocated (Matt. 11:28). To repeat: every person who consecrates is not only justified but has a place already allocated for him. We know that each consecrated individual has a place down here, for God puts every member in the body as (or where) it pleases Him. In being part of the body, each person has a function: the eye, the ear, the foot, etc. (1 Cor. 12:12-22). However, the Lord has so well thought out His plan with all of its ramifications that He already has territories in mind for the world in the Kingdom Age. He knows who will administer and have the rulership in the various continents of earth: North America, South America, Europe, Africa, etc.

The Scriptures tell us a little. For instance, Jesus said to his disciples, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). (The twelve tribes represent twelve different personality traits.) Just as large corporations have a chain of command for authority and responsibility, so it will be in the Kingdom with the apostles at the top. Other strata of authority will be underneath them in the chain of command. As star differs from star in glory, so there will be differences in degree in the rewards given in the Kingdom Age. The Pounds Parable shows that the reward is directly related to the exercise of one's responsibility. If the responsibility is increased, then so is the reward. A person will have authority over five or ten cities in the Kingdom instead of over just one city. Had the one-pound person gotten even one additional pound, he would be a ruler in the final analysis, for he would be of the body of Christ in glory and reign and have proportionate jurisdiction. It is significant that the parable does not mention a doubling of the pound as being necessary but simply says that the servant was unfaithful with his one pound.

With regard to the Talents Parable, the Lord originally gave five talents to one servant, two talents to another servant, and one talent to a third servant. In the net result, the servant with five talents got ten, the one with two talents got four, and if the servant with one talent had been faithful, he would have had two. However, the one-talent servant was not faithful, and this omission is very revealing. Notice, the Pounds Parable states that there were ten servants, but only three of the ten are mentioned. In several parables Jesus leaves us hanging so that we can exercise our minds, and that is the case here. What about the other seven servants? Perhaps one of them also got ten pounds. Perhaps another servant added one pound for a total of two pounds. But what about the ones who *lost* the money so that they did not have even the original pound? At least the one who hid his talent in the earth and the one who laid up his pound in a napkin were able to return the money to the Lord. The point is that some will forfeit even the one pound by, say, forsaking the truth and thus end up with nothing and a destiny of Second Death.

Another question arises. In both parables the one talent or pound was at least kept or preserved. These servants were still ostensibly in the truth but were indolent and inactive. The next point is that the talents and pounds were called the *Lord's* money, for it is *He* who originally gives the talent(s) and the pound to each one of us (Matt. 25:27; Luke 19:23). The talent(s) and the pound are not of ourselves.

In giving an explanation with regard to the five-talent person, the Pastor listed the five talents as wealth, influence, education, power of the intellect, and public utterance. In other words, if we take public utterance as an example, the Lord opens the door of opportunity, and there are different degrees for the one-, two-, or five-talent person.

Concerning the pound, each of the consecrated has personal responsibilities where he is situated. If one is faithful and has unusual zeal and energy, his influence generally goes beyond the normal parameters of the home, the business, and the neighborhood. The multiplication of the pound indicates the extension of one's influence beyond his own locale or region. Some have national influence, and others even have international influence. Thus there are different degrees to which one can "brighten the corner." The corner becomes large in some instances. The reward for using the pound, which is a city or cities proportionate to faithfulness, shows a burgeoning of influence. The greater the faithfulness, the greater the reward.

With the talent of wealth, we must be careful, for some have reasoned that if they stay in their job and accumulate thousands of dollars, they can do thus and thus and thus. The parable is referring not to that kind of reasoning but to what the Lord gives. For example, one might get a windfall or an inheritance—something that was not earned. We call that providence.

Influence is another talent. Even if our influence is confined to the local ecclesia, we have that responsibility. One way of being faithful is to attend meetings, for a meeting cannot be a success unless brethren are present. The coals of fire warm one another. We confide our problems to each other, work together, etc., especially as we see these evil days (Heb. 10:25).

The talent of education does not mean that we should reason, "If I get a college degree, I will have such-and-such a position." Instead the talent of education is something we get without effort being involved. Providence bestows the education. Many brethren obtain

considerable education (self-taught or otherwise) before they consecrate. Particularly if one was poor, it is apparent that the education was providential. (Incidentally, the three major themes of the Bible break down into one-third history, one-third prophecy, and one-third doctrine.)

Brethren may be given the talent of public utterance where the door opens for work on radio or television. Those who are invited make use of that which opens up. Others, through the pressure of salesmanship, open the door. They are self-advertisers, as it were, which is permissible if the motive is right.

The parable shows that the talent can be taken away from the one-talent person, who had apportioned to him a place in the Kingdom. The Lord sets the members in the body down here, and for those who are faithful, a much greater reward awaits them beyond the veil. If one is not sufficiently faithful, the jurisdiction or authority set aside for him is taken away and given to another. As long as the door is still open, another person is called to fill the vacancy of either the one-pound or the one-talent person.

Past explanations do not fit the taking away of the talent and the pound. Consider Solomon, who prayed for wisdom to judge the people faithfully. As the successor of David, he prayed that he might be a blessing to the kingdom of Israel, and God answered that prayer by granting wisdom through the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12 the gifts of the Holy Spirit are enumerated: a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, a gift of faith, a gift of healing, a gift of prophecy, a working of miracles, the discerning of spirits, diverse tongues, and the interpretation of diverse tongues. These gifts were mechanical in the early Church, but even in a spiritual sense, they are somewhat mechanical. God can bless one in an avenue where he was not endowed by nature. When an individual is faithful, the Lord can give a gift arbitrarily: wealth, influence, public utterance. For example, some who start with poor stammering tongues—and thus have a rather limited field—end up as international orators. God still gives these spiritual gifts. On the other hand, fruits of the Spirit, though still miraculous, picture *our cooperation* with the Holy Spirit.

Next, what about the wicked and slothful servant? Looking up the word “wicked” in the concordance does not really give the answer. The word is used only about a dozen times, and in seven of those cases it seems to apply to the incorrigible. For instance, this word is used in regard to Satan. When the Greek article “the” is put in front of this word—“*the wicked [one]*”—it is referring to the Adversary himself (Eph. 6:16). However, this word is also used in 1 Corinthians 5:13, where there is the possibility of retrieval in regard to a person who was in a pretty deplorable state along the lines of the flesh. Not only did the Apostle Paul instruct that the wicked person should be cast out of the ecclesia, but in his second epistle to the Corinthians, he mentioned that the ecclesia should restore such an individual lest he “be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” and commit suicide (2 Cor. 2:6,7). The individual really came to his senses and repented and was, therefore, to be received back. Here, then, is one who was temporarily put out, as it were, and the possibility of restoration did exist. (Of course from a practical standpoint, not too many would make that return journey for various reasons. However, this individual truly repented.)

The point is that the Corinthian situation opens the door to a faint possibility of retrieval when the word “wicked” is used. The Greek word *poneria* is listed in *Strong's Concordance* and *Liddell and Scott*. *Strong's* is relatively limited in the examples it provides, but the word

is mentioned. The following is from *Liddell and Scott*. The first or major characterization of *poneria* is "a bad state or condition, badness." The second characterization is in a moral sense: "wickedness, vice, knavery (trickery), baseness" and then one word that fits, "cowardice." Thus the word *poneria* can be used to mean "coward." Notice that in both parables the thought of fear is expressed: "I was *afraid*" and "I *feared* thee." We see, then, that with the thought of cowardice being a possibility, the parables may be speaking of the Great Company. In regard to one of these parables, the Pastor gave the thought that the one-talent or one-pound person pictures the Great Company. However, because of his numerous other responsibilities, he did not go into the reasoning behind the thought.

The Greek word is also *poneros*, which refers to a condition in a physical sense. The root meaning of this word is "oppressed by toil, toilsome, painful, grievous," which is quite different from "the wicked one." A second application of *poneros* is "bad, in a bad case, in a sorry plight, useless, good for nothing." A third application is, in a moral sense, "bad, worthless, knavish, the evil one, *cowardly*."

Liddell and Scott has ten times more information on words than *Strong's*. And another dictionary commentator also gives more information than *Strong's*, but we will now examine *Strong's*, which says that in a figurative sense *poneros* can mean "calamitous" and in a passive sense "ill," that is, "diseased" and "morally culpable," namely, "derelict." Both the one-talent and the one-pound individuals in the parables were derelict and indolent with regard to responsibility. Then *Strong's* gives another reason: "vicious."

In *Young's Analytical Concordance*, the meanings under the word *poneros* are "bad, malignant, miserable." Of the three, "miserable" is about the best connotation for the "wicked" one-talent and one-pound persons. Seven times this Greek word is used in reference to the Devil, the Wicked One, but 1 Corinthians 5:13 give reason for hope for the individual.

Next we will consider the expression "weeping and gnashing of teeth" as part of the penalty. The expression is used about nine times in Scripture. In several instances the thought is "pretty near the end of the road" or "in the pit." Nevertheless, several other usages are in a different light. For instance, the tares are cast into a furnace of fire to experience wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:42). With the tares the thought is that they will cease their profession as Christians. Having never consecrated, they never had the hope of the high calling and hence are not under the threat of possibly losing life altogether. In the Parable of the Dragnet, angels sever the wicked from the just and cast the wicked into a furnace of fire; wailing and gnashing of teeth follow (Matt. 13:50). That parable can possibly be open to two interpretations. In the Parable of the Wedding Garment, the man found without a wedding garment is cast into outer darkness and there experiences weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 22:13). This last usage sounds like the bottom of the pit. The evil servant of Matthew 24:48–51, who smites his fellow servants, does not seem to be salvable. In Luke 13:28 Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Although some of the scribes and Pharisees have more responsibility and thus incur Second Death, there is hope for them as a class, for how could they see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom if they were not brought out of the grave? Thus there can be hope when the expression "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is used.

In summary, we reason along several lines as to why the “wicked servant” in the Parables of the Pounds and Talents may not represent a Second Death class.

1. The meaning of the Greek word translated “wicked” indicates some possibility of hope.
2. Likewise, the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth” shows a possibility of hope.
3. The term “outer darkness” can also have a possibility of hope. Let us digress on that term for a moment to consider the scapegoat picture in Leviticus 16. The sins of the nation of Israel are confessed over the scapegoat before it is sent out into the desert. In other words, the Great Company will feel the guilt and have the same fate or experience as the world in the Time of Trouble, which will be a wilderness situation for *all who are left* after the feet members are taken.
4. In both parables the “wicked servant” was on hand to hear the condemnation, the suggestion being that perhaps in antitype this class do not go into Second Death. Remember, the servant *preserved* the one talent or pound.
5. Of the ten servants in the Pounds Parable, what about the seven who are not mentioned? The servant or servants who did not have even the one pound originally given are not mentioned because they remain in the tomb and thus do not hear the condemnation.
6. A dispensational feature is shown, for the man or nobleman goes into a far country and then returns. Jesus received the Kingdom when he went away and then waits until the Father tells him to go into action. Since the parables are dispensational, the faithful servants (the first two classes) hear the personal commendation “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” beyond the veil before they see the Father (Matt. 25:21). But the one-talent and one-pound individuals (the third class) hear the condemnation on this side of the veil. While still down here, they will say, “The bride hath made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7). When the foolish virgins knock on the door to get in, Jesus will tell them, “I do not know you; I do not recognize you as being of the wise virgin class” (Matt. 25:11,12). At first they will weep and gnash their teeth with remorse and a sense of loss, but subsequently they will be restored to zeal and joy as they begin to wash their robes during the Time of Trouble. As the Great Company class who have already entered the tomb are resurrected in the Kingdom, they will hear why they lost out on the high calling. Some will be very surprised.

Another aspect needs to be discussed. The Parable of the Pounds mentions, “But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). When Jesus gave this parable, he was in the house of Zacchaeus. It was the last week of his ministry, and he knew he would be crucified. The parable closes with “But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me” (Luke 19:27). This verse, which appears to be an addendum as a warning, is mentioned directly in connection with the rewards and condemnation. The word “slay” sounds drastic. In other words, certain Scriptures seem to indicate that of the ruling class, some had so much responsibility that they could even go into Second Death and thus not have the opportunity to get life in the Kingdom. This situation would be peculiar only to

those who were alive when Jesus was here at his First Advent. After all, what is the purpose of the resurrection? Its purpose is to acquaint mankind with the fact that Jesus IS the Messiah, that he IS the King, and that he HAS a message. The message is that one must listen and obey in order to get life. Disobedience and failure to bow down will result in Second Death (Acts 3:23). Those who lived after Jesus' earthly ministry—and thus get their information from others—are indoctrinated under conditions that have prejudiced them and inculcated great hatred whether for the natural Jew or for the true Christian, but those scribes and Pharisees who lived when Jesus was on the scene and paid hush money to the soldiers who guarded his tomb had *great light* and hence *great responsibility*. They heard the testimony of Jesus and saw his miracles, his ministry, and his kindness. What more could they have? In the Kingdom those who refuse to listen to the voice of Jesus will be summarily cut off. Others will receive a 100 years' trial, and some will go into Second Death at the end of the Kingdom Age. Thus there are different degrees of culpability.

What we are trying to say, too, is that Jesus gave a practical lesson at the time. When we look at the parables, we see that he invariably kept two things in mind: (1) that the parable should benefit those who were currently listening to him, and (2) that the parable should benefit those who would subsequently study his Word. Stated another way, the parables were given for two types of audience: for those who heard Jesus in the outer perimeter as well as for those who were listening at his feet. In other words, there are other or additional meanings for his people down through the age. Generally in these parables, the people listening knew he was speaking of them even though he spoke dispassionately. In some instances the people reacted with anger.

In conclusion, the one-talent and the one-pound persons represent the Great Company class, who in the Parable of the Sower are encumbered with the cares of this life, the heavy responsibilities and burdens. Whether the responsibilities are legitimate or not depends on the circumstances. In the Talents and Pounds Parables, the servants had responsibility, for they were told what to do. Thus they had no real excuse for failing to show an increase, and accordingly, Jesus gave them a little tongue-lashing, which was meant to be constructive. If hardened in heart, the hearers become angry and do just the opposite; ie, they destroy themselves if they feed on that madness; they reap a proportionate reward based on culpability.

A month later, in November 1997, Bro. Frank appended the following comments.

Matthew 25:14–30

The “man travelling into a far country” gave five talents such as *wealth, influence, intellectual power, education, and public utterance*. These were all God-given natural gifts of Providence consecrated to the Lord and accepted by him as being possessed by the individual’s new nature. (Compare *Reprint* Nos. 2764 and 3869, years 1901 and 1906, respectively.)

Luke 19:11–27

The nobleman called his ten servants, delivered ten pounds to them, and said, “Occupy till I come.” Each and every new repentant convert adopted into the body of Christ is not only justified but also invigorated with the one hope of the high calling, namely, to live and reign with Christ. In addition, God has “set the members *every one* of them in the body, as it hath pleased him” (1 Cor. 12:18). Not only is this true in the present life of human experience on this side of the veil, but also, at the same time (if we understand the matter correctly), the Heavenly Father tentatively assigns a somewhat corresponding territorial jurisdiction on the other side of the veil in the divine program of the Kingdom Age. In the Parable of the Pounds, that territorial jurisdiction is styled “a city.”

In the present life each Christian is charged with the responsibility of being a witness for Christ in whatever locale he happens to reside when he receives the call of the one hope. Each one is expected, as the hymn expresses it, “to brighten the corner” where he is, that is, the environs where he lives. In other words, the one pound represents the territory or jurisdiction immediate to the recipient of the one pound: the home, the workplace, the neighborhood, etc. According to one’s zeal, energy, and enthusiasm, there exists the possibility that the door of opportunity may be enlarged to areas of service beyond that immediate to the original calling. If faithfully performed and acceptable to the Master, the enlargement or expansion of territorial influence or jurisdiction—whether successful or not in the conversion of new souls—proportionately enhances one’s jurisdiction and influence in the Kingdom Age. (Consider Noah, a “preacher of righteousness,” as he is described in 2 Peter 2:5. Only his immediate family responded to the message, yet he is reckoned faithful.) Thus the removal of the one talent or the one pound from the unprofitable servant and the transference of such authority and/or capability to the one already possessing ten pounds or ten talents becomes entirely feasible.

[Note: The following is a separate discourse given by Bro. Frank Shallieu in July 1985. It is based on the premise that events in the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry are a type or picture of experiences that will befall the feet members at the very end of the age. The discourse concentrates on the last of these events.]

LEADING CHARACTERS IN THE CLOSING EVENTS OF JESUS' LIFE

Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane was a *crucial* point. It followed his joyful, triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the casting out of the Temple moneychangers, subsequent sermons, the anointing of his feet, etc. Moreover, the original Memorial Supper had just taken place. Jesus arrived at Gethsemane very late at night, at approximately the *midnight* hour. Thus, psychologically, the background was appropriate for his heart being full of sorrow and his apprehension as to whether he had faithfully fulfilled his ministry. Figuratively, it was his "midnight hour of darkness," and these experiences are typical of those that will befall the feet members at the end of the age.

The word "hour" is significant, for it corresponds to the "hour" of power of the beast (Rev. 17:12) and to the "hour" of Satan (Luke 22:53), the Prince of Darkness, the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). It is also the "night [hour]" in which no man can work (John 9:4). Jesus' ministry had already been faithfully fulfilled when this hour of his apprehension came. He could no longer preach sermons to either the public or his chosen disciples. This, too, is a type of the time at the end of the age when the Church is apprehended.

The "hour of temptation ... shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10). It starts with the Church at this end of the age. Back there it was Jesus' personal hour of temptation and trial when he struggled in Gethsemane, praying that if it be possible the "cup" would pass from him. (Compare the term "hour" in Mark 14:35,41 and John 12:27; 13:1.) The "cup" refers to certain features connected with the closing events of his life. Jesus had some doubts about whether he had faithfully performed everything according to the Father's will, and he was assured that he had. But what did he fear? The *stigma* of the Cross. No doubt he had previously considered the pain aspect, the brutality, etc.—after all, he came here to die—but he had not prepared for the stigma aspect, for being considered cursed of God. He did not realize in advance that the Father would have to turn His face from him, because on the Cross he cried, "My God, my God, *why* hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

In the future, the hour of temptation will start with the Church, but Paul says it will try *every* man's work (1 Cor. 3:13). The hour of temptation will try not only the true Church, the Great Company, and the nominal Church but all down the line, so that every single individual who lives at that time, as conditions wax warmer and warmer, will have his structure of faith tested in some manner—even those who are not Christians. But the hour of temptation started with the Head at the First Advent.

When Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, he came to his disciples *three* times to counsel them to *watch* and *pray* lest they enter into temptation. Watching and praying were the theme of his admonition, but they could not stay awake. Nevertheless, the Apostle John apparently heard a sufficient amount of Jesus' agonizing to record it in his Gospel, thus giving us an appreciation of what experiences our Lord went through.

The *three* (Peter, James, and John) were separated from the rest of the eleven in the Garden.

Evidently the eight stayed farther behind at the foot of the hill. Jesus went ahead a little with the three and then left them to proceed on a short distance by himself. But the three were definitely in closer proximity to him for his Gethsemane agonizing. They represent the Church, that is, the feet members. Based on other pictures, there will be *three* classes of the Little Flock at the end of the age. (The three Hebrew children in the furnace of affliction are one picture.) This concept of *three* is pictured in several ways in these last events, in addition to the three apostles being closer to Jesus when he was praying in Gethsemane. For instance, *three* women were at the Cross when Jesus gave to John the custodianship of his mother: Mary his mother; his mother's sister Mary, wife of Cleophas; and Mary Magdalene (John 19:25–27). And *three* men figure prominently: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, in addition to the Apostle John. In begging Pilate for Jesus' body and then taking it down from the Cross, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea *publicly* demonstrated their sympathy for the One who was considered an outcast, a blasphemer, before the nation. This act required a great deal of courage, especially when, prior to this, Nicodemus and Joseph were in the background. (For fear of the Jews, Nicodemus had come quietly to Jesus at night to ask questions about his doctrine and its application. And Joseph was obscure until this event.)

Thus the three apostles, the three women at the Cross, and the three men all teach the same lesson. And it is interesting that females are included in these pictures, showing that the gospel message and its application are not to be primarily considered as centered in the male sex. All are *one* in Christ, male *and* female.

We return now to the Garden of Gethsemane picture. The eight apostles who were separated out to wait farther away represent the Great Company, whereas the three who accompanied Jesus closer picture the Little Flock.

Incidentally, all the particularities of the closing scenes of our Lord's life will be indelibly etched upon all future creations; that is, when other intelligent beings are created on various planets, they will be apprised of the ministry of Jesus, the calling of the Church, etc. These events are being photographed as they actually occurred. The lessons will be much deeper than just the witnessing of this sorrowful drama leading up to the Cross.

Judas. By means of a kiss, Judas identified Jesus as the one the scribes and the Pharisees were seeking to slay. Judas was one of the twelve apostles. From that standpoint it is startling that one so closely associated with Jesus—hearing his sermons, seeing his miracles, and so forth—would stoop to betrayal. The kiss shows that right up to the very last moment, Judas pretended to have an affection for Jesus—loyalty and respect too. But the kiss was the act of betrayal.

Several *motivations* can be suggested for the betrayal:

1. Avarice. Judas wanted the money. He was the apostle who held the money bag, and he was a thief (John 12:6). Judas thought it a clever plan; namely, he would get a sizable sum of money and Jesus could easily extricate himself from any sort of imprisonment at will, even if he were betrayed. Judas did not realize the horrendous evil he was perpetrating and what the betrayal signified.
2. Judas may have wanted to accelerate Jesus' taking command as Messiah. The people had

just hailed him as "Hosanna to the Son of David," so the moment for pushing him to take control and set up his Kingdom seemed propitious. Of course, in the establishment of that Kingdom, the apostle assumed he would be greatly honored as Jesus' confidante. (Judas may have been even closer to Jesus than the Gospels indicate, for the Gospels would downplay this lest too much emphasis be given to Judas and his character thus be glorified as a martyr. With the perverted judgment today, the world often makes the villain the hero.) Thus Judas probably tried to hasten the Kingdom by forcing our Lord's hand, thinking that Jesus would manifest some great power and extricate himself. It is true that Jesus had this capability, for when the mob approached him in the Garden of Gethsemane, they all fell backward. They were momentarily awed by the power of his personality, but that power was purposely broken. And his apostles had two swords to show that he had servants who were willing to fight and to die for him and that he could have elicited an army to support him and his cause. By instructing to put away the sword, Jesus showed that he did not intend to establish the Kingdom in that way. Instead he was meek and submissive to the experiences that led to his crucifixion and death.

3. At the close of Jesus' ministry, Judas had some contact with the clergy in order to make arrangements for the betrayal. This contact is interesting in regard to the antitype, for some associated with the true Church will momentarily have a similar camaraderie at the end of the age. True, Judas was probably feigning this relationship in order to betray Christ, but he was getting money for his efforts. And regardless of the motive, he did have contact with the clergy, and he was responsible for Jesus' apprehension.

The Judas class at the end of the age will not just consist of consecrated, Spirit-begotten individuals but, based on other pictures, will include some who are not Spirit-begotten. Under certain circumstances it would be possible for some not consecrated to incur equal responsibility to Judas, and thus to merit equal condemnation and judgment, that is, Second Death.

Annas versus Caiaphas. After Jesus was apprehended at Gethsemane, he was first taken to Annas, one of Israel's chief priests. During the trial under Annas, Jesus was abused, mocked, and bruised. Next Jesus was taken to the house of Caiaphas, which was next door, as it were. Being high priests simultaneously, both Annas and Caiaphas were related to the religious element. And in the religious world today, we have Catholicism and Protestantism. Caiaphas pictures Catholicism, and Annas symbolizes Protestantism. Although Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas and hence the older of the two, it was Caiaphas who said, "It is expedient that one man die lest a whole nation perish" (John 11:50 paraphrase). Thus it was Caiaphas who made the decision for our Lord's fate. When as high priest, he tore his garments before the council, he accentuated the point that they felt Jesus was worthy of death (Matt. 26:65). (Similarly, Herodias gave counsel to Salomé to ask for the head of John the Baptist.) With Jesus going to Annas first but the decision and manipulation being done by Caiaphas, the antitype will be as follows. Deference will first be ostensibly given to Protestantism, the image of the beast, but the real power for determining the death of the feet members will be residual in Papacy, the beast. Salomé was the dancer, but Herodias was the schemer behind the scenes. And of course Herod, representing civil power, did the executing.

With regard to the *religious* aspect, Jesus was tried on *three* occasions. He was taken (1) to Annas, (2) then to Caiaphas, and (3) finally to the late council or Sanhedrin in the wee

hours of the morning, before being taken to Pilate at 6 a.m. The Sanhedrin made the legal decision that because the holy day (Passover) was coming, they would give the “dirty work” to Pilate.

There were *three civil* trials as well. When Pilate found out that most of Jesus' ministry had been performed up in the Galilee region where Herod was the chief civil authority, he turned Jesus over to Herod. Pilate thought he would thus be able to shift the pressure being exerted by the religious element to Herod. But later the matter was shunted right back to Pilate.

In all, then, there were *three* religious trials and *three* civil trials. The number “three” is very significant with regard to many events in the closing moments of Jesus' life, and it has several connotations in Scripture.

Jesus was twice robed and mocked as a king. Some of the ridicule and abuse was done privately and some quite openly or publicly, especially when he was on the Cross. He was taunted by all segments of society with regard to his claim of being Messiah. His claim appeared fallacious, for the people reasoned, “How could the true Messiah end up on the Cross?” At any rate, Jesus was mocked both publicly and privately.

Herod versus Pilate. Both Herod and Pilate were representatives of civil government or power, so what is the difference in the antitype? In the John the Baptist picture, Herod symbolizes civil power, and this definition remains consistent even though a further distinction is seen when he is compared with Pilate. When Pilate sent Jesus to Herod for interrogation and resolution of the problem, Herod's jurisdiction was over the *local* area. Thus in antitype Herod's jurisdiction would correspond to the state or local government or authority. When the feet members are apprehended, they will be examined by local authorities, but in the final analysis, their execution will take place on a national level. Therefore, Pilate represents the *federal* government or a *larger* theater of operations of government.

Most local government decisions are more prejudiced in the courts. Frequently, when a “bad” decision is rendered, an attempt is made to take the case to a higher court. Why? Because, generally speaking, the higher the case goes, the less emotional the verdict or decision will be. A national decision is usually fairer and more dispassionate. Pilate certainly tried to get out of the experience because he could see the envy of the scribes and Pharisees. He knew they wanted to have Jesus put to death—and why. Thus he tried to satisfy them and yet spare Jesus' life—hence the scourging and also the offer to free him. But instead the cry was to free Barabbas, a notorious criminal, and to crucify the holy, harmless, undefiled One.

These events of Jesus' last week are the most important in the history of the *universe*. By Divine Providence all of the actors in this “drama” have a symbolic portent in the antitype.

Barabbas. Barabbas perhaps pictures a more radical *religious* element who at the end of the age will actually think of insurrection and takeover, capitalizing on the sentiments of the public, who will be looking for a deliverer. “Barabbas” means “son of the father.” (“Bar” is the same as “ben,” ie, “son.” And “abbas” means “father.”) Thus the etymology of his name suggests a radical *religious* element as opposed to a terrorist who acts for other motives. An

example of a current radical religious terrorist is the Islamic movement, whose religion is based somewhat on Jesus but primarily on Mohammed and the Koran.

Pilate's wife. In the John the Baptist picture, Herodias, Herod's wife, represents Papacy, the mother Church, but such is not the case here. Not only does Pilate's wife signify an element somewhat sympathetic to Jesus (she could see the injustice of his being put to death), but she had a dream in which she was warned of God regarding Jesus' being a just man. And history records that Pilate and his wife met a dreadful experience a few years later. This experience was retribution for having remanded Jesus over for crucifixion. Because of this advance expiation for his sins, perhaps the good features of Pilate's character will have a greater outflow in the Kingdom.

Now let us consider certain things. Many Protestants are dissatisfied with the circumstances and conditions in their churches. They feel a lack there, but not knowing what else to do, they remain as "prisoners" within the system and do not take a stand in coming out of Babylon. In the near future the doctrine of the Trinity will become very troublesome to many. That doctrine will be held up as the determining factor to judge whether or not one is a Christian. Nonacceptance of the Trinity will rank one as a cultist; acceptance will be considered orthodox. Many in the nominal Church system do not believe in the Trinity, but they are afraid to take a stand against it. This will be true also as the end of the age approaches. In their *confused* state they will be herded into a position of opposition, whereas they will not really be in heart sympathy with what is occurring. Although they will have some knowledge, they will allow the Trinity doctrine to bind them. They will know that the impending persecution is wrong—that it does not have God's approval and that it will result in some terrible experience. Consequently, they will voice a warning to the civil authority not to consent to the persecution. Even from a humanitarian standpoint, many have noble principles along certain lines. At any rate, this class will be somewhat enlightened. But the doctrine of the Trinity will be a real problem.

The Scriptures also picture some in the nominal system as eunuchs who cast Jezebel out of the window to her destruction. The "eunuchs" are a class consecrated to the nominal system (for example, nuns and priests who have made vows to the Roman Catholic Church) and yet are not really in sympathy with the Church. They are looking for an opportunity for radical change but have not been in a position to effect the reform they desire. When a propitious moment arises, they will follow the advice of "Jehu." Thus not all in the nominal Church systems will be in sympathy with them.

Peter versus Judas. Peter did not premeditate the denial of Jesus. When certain circumstances came on Peter suddenly, he denied Jesus momentarily, which is quite different from the premeditation of Judas. Hence there was much less guilt and culpability with Peter. Even the courts recognize the factor of human frailty under conditions of pressure and thus moderate the sentence. But this is just an analysis of two individuals: Peter and Judas. In the *overall* drama, the *general flow* of events is studied and other lessons emerge.

The fleeing of the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane was also momentary, and it represents the Great Company class. The disciples were under pressure and, to a large degree, lacked understanding and knowledge. Hence they fled for their safety, but later on, they proved to be loyal at heart. Thus the fleeing was a *temporary* circumstance, condition,

and defect in character that was not as culpable as the actions of Judas. Judas had manifested greed much earlier in Jesus' ministry, so his betrayal was an outgrowth of a wrong heart condition.

Simon the Cyrenian. The class Simon represents is difficult to identify. Possibly there will be a situation similar to Elijah's being fed or given some solace by the "ravens," an unconsecrated element who are *ravenous* (self-centered and greedy for their own sustenance). In the world are some people who have enough decency that they will render support for a cause even though they are not in sympathy with the details. Evidently, Simon's sons subsequently became Christians, and rather noteworthy ones at that, because Rufus and Alexander are mentioned deferentially in the epistles (Mark 15:21; Rom. 16:13). We do not know about Simon, but a change may have occurred in his life too. However, what he was at the time he assisted Jesus with the Cross is the key to the antitype. Among the *general* public—not those identified with the religious setup—will be some in sympathy with common decency and a fair trial.

Of course Simon was forced to help Jesus with the Cross according to Roman law. (The Romans could commandeer anyone in sight who was not a Roman citizen to transport their baggage, etc., one mile. This authority was a means of providing lackeys on certain occasions.) Hence Simon was compelled to bear the Cross. Nevertheless, a providence was probably operating behind his selection. Therefore, it is possible that at the end of the age some of the public may be more or less forced by circumstances to voice their thoughts. It is one thing to witness a disputation and another matter to speak out and take a stand. Most people will not take a stand even though their hearts tell them a wrong has been committed; instead they remain silent. But the circumstances forced Simon, and yet he was probably in sympathy with that act anyway.

Sign on the Cross. The sign on the Cross "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," was written in *three* languages (John 19:19,20). The fact of three languages suggests that the experiences of the feet members will be publicized, even though they are an unknown group and relatively insignificant. When the *large* picture is considered, Jesus' ministry was confined to a *very small* spot on this globe. But when his accusation was written in three languages, it was more or less broadcast to the other nations so that foreign travelers would remember the event even if they had nothing to do with the Passover and lacked religious compunctions. The point is that in the antitype the death of the feet members will have a national or an international stage of enactment. The death of the feet members will be appreciably seen (whether favorably or unfavorably) by others not immediately identified with the local scene.

Comment: In regard to the motivations of Judas, an antitype seems likely. For instance, many (whether consecrated or unconsecrated) know that the hope of the Church is to live and reign with Jesus and that the end of the age is rapidly approaching to usher in the Kingdom with its beautiful promises. Therefore, wouldn't it be possible that part of the motivation with the Judas class would be to accelerate the establishment of the Kingdom? They would reason: the feet members have to die anyway, so if we precipitate the matter by giving the names of some of the consecrated, we will be hastening the blessings for ourselves and everybody. Their hearts could greatly deceive them.

Reply: Yes. The Judas class could be harboring the thought that since all are consecrated

unto death anyway, it does not matter whether they die today or tomorrow. They may thus justify their involvement and not appreciate the guilt aspect—the *personal guilt* they would incur.

Comment: In other words, they may feel it is harmless to give out the names of brethren since they are all consecrated and will have to die anyway. However, everything must be done according to the *Lord's timetable*. The Lord has a specific time for each of us to die, and we should never precipitate the end of either our own course or the course of any of the brethren.

Reply: Notice that in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus said, "Let these others go. It is *me* you want."

Comment: It was mentioned in the discourse that Judas had some contact with the clerical element. Based on certain other types, the suggestion has been made—and strongly proved by Scripture—that a greater opportunity for a witness work will open up as the end of the age approaches. This witnessing will no doubt, at least temporarily until the smiting message is due, throw some of us in contact with the clergy and thus create the potential for too much compromise, fraternization, etc.—and perhaps even betrayal.

Reply: In other words, leads established earlier could be followed up at a later date for wrong reasons. For a *short* time the truth will be attractive to certain segments of the public, including the clergy.

Comment: And it would be flattering to suddenly have others listen to us, but that should not color our stand for principle.

Q: The faith of every man will be tested. Will those in the nominal Church be tested on the Trinity? And how could the *unconsecrated*, those in the *world*, be tested along the line of *faith*?

A: The world does not have "*the faith*," but in times of great duress or emergency, when life itself is threatened, people are usually not atheists. Instead they call for some higher power to save them. Thus many people are *intellectual* atheists. They like to feel so independent and self-sufficient that they give the impression of being atheists, but at heart there are not too many hard-core atheists. Only the fool says in his *heart* there is no God, but one could utter these words with his *mouth* (Psa. 14:1).

Every man's work will be tried in the Time of Trouble. All who go through the trouble will have a very severe experience. It will come down to a question of survival, of life itself. The trouble and personal reactions to the events of that day will become indelibly etched on the minds of the people forever. There are all kinds of works—wood, hay, and stubble. Some are based on Christianity and some are not.

With regard to the Trinity, many will waver with indecision. They will reason that it is more favorable to remain in the nominal Church than to take a step into the unknown. But as time goes on, other circumstances will force the Great Company to come out of Babylon. The revealment of the *true* character of professed Christianity will cause them to make a decision based on factors other than the Trinity. And the Trinity will begin to lose its power. When a person is in a fire or some very trying experience—literally as well as

figuratively—he thinks differently than he would under quiet circumstances with a studious application. Earlier, when the Trinity test comes, the people will be able to think about it and make a decision. Later on, the doctrine will fade out, and the real issue will be life and death.

Jesus' words in Matthew 16:25 will be very meaningful at that time: "For whosoever will [seek to] save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life *for my sake* shall find it." This text applies not only to the Little Flock but to the Great Company as well—to *all* of the consecrated. When we say that some will forsake the Master because of fear, that would be only a *momentary* condition for the Great Company, for in the final analysis, they will have to make a decision. Any of the consecrated who carry that fear too long will go into Second Death, no matter how nice they appear to be. The Great Company will be forced to make a decision later on, that is, after the Little Flock is beyond the veil. Earlier, the Great Company will momentarily forsake, but later on, each will be forced to *personally* make a decision.

Comment: When the church systems collapse, the consecrated who have remained in Babylon will be suddenly forced or cast out on their own. That is when the crucial testing point of the Great Company will come.

Reply: Therefore, regardless of which class we ultimately find ourselves in, we must be careful about seeking to save our life. We should *always* keep in mind that we *must lose our life*—but according to the *Lord's* timetable.