

The background of the cover is a photograph of a wide river or lake. The water is calm and reflects the sky. On the left bank, there is a dense line of trees, some with white bark. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The overall tone is peaceful and natural.

Jude

Acts of the Apostates

Arlen L. Chitwood

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by
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By the Same Author —

PROPHECY ON MOUNT OLIVET
THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE
THE MOST HIGH RULETH
SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH
RUN TO WIN
SO GREAT SALVATION
SALVATION OF THE SOUL
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FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES
IN THE LORD'S DAY
FOCUS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
LET US GO ON
REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE
MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM
THE BRIDE IN GENESIS
HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES

FOREWORD

Apostasy is a major subject of Scripture, not only among Christians in the New Testament, but also among the Israelites in the Old Testament as well. There were *false prophets* among the Israelites during and following Moses' day, "even as" there are *false teachers* in Christendom during the present dispensation. And the message of *the false teachers* in Christendom is described by the words, "damnable heresies," which had its counterpart in the message previously proclaimed by *the false prophets* in Israel (II Peter 2:1).

Paul had warned the Christians in Ephesus over "the space of three years," "night and day with tears," concerning individuals who would arise *within the Church* and lead many astray. These individuals were described as "grievous ['savage,' 'violent'] wolves" who would proclaim "perverse things [distorting, twisting the truth]," and "draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-31).

Paul warned Timothy concerning *apostasy* "in the latter times." Many at that time would "depart ['apostatize'] from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons." That is, Christians would cease to listen to those proclaiming the truth, *the doctrine of God*; and, instead, they would listen to those proclaiming that which was false — truth which had been twisted, perverted — called, *the doctrine of demons* (I Tim. 4:1, 2).

The Spirit of God led two individuals to write complete books dealing with apostasy — II Peter and Jude. Of the twenty-one New Testament epistles, all center around one subject: *the salvation of the soul*. And two of these epistles center specifically around one particular aspect of the salvation of the soul: *apostasy, as it relates to the salvation of the soul*.

Then, two accounts showing the complete history of the Church throughout the dispensation are given in the New Testament. The first was given during Christ's earthly ministry before the Church was ever brought into existence (Matt. 13:3-33). And the second was given through John about sixty years after Christ's ascension (Rev. 2, 3).

Both accounts, written from two different perspectives, show *exactly the same thing*. They both show a Church *becoming progressively removed throughout the dispensation* from all sound teachings concerning the Word of the Kingdom. And both accounts show *exactly the same outcome* for the Church in days immediately preceding the end of the dispensation, days during which Christendom presently finds itself. Both accounts show the Church *so far removed* from any sound teaching surrounding the Word of the Kingdom that, at the time of Christ's return, He will not find "faith [*lit.*, 'the faith,' an expression peculiarly related to the Word of the Kingdom in the N.T.] on the earth." That is, He will not find the Word of the Kingdom being proclaimed in the Churches of the land (Luke 18:8).

The Church, throughout 2,000 years of history, will have moved 180 degrees out of phase. At the beginning of the dispensation, the Word of the Kingdom was *the central message known and taught* throughout Christendom (Col. 1:5, 6, 23). However, at the end of the dispensation, conditions will have become *exactly the opposite*. The Word of the Kingdom — having to do with the salvation of the soul — will be *a message unknown and resultingly untaught* in Christendom (*cf.* Matt. 13:31-33; Luke 18:8; Rev. 3:17).

The Books of II Peter and Jude deal with different facets of the apostasy which has been occurring over almost two millenniums of time, resulting in conditions as they exist today. And this commentary on Jude, which draws from II Peter as well, deals with this overall apostasy from the only correct Biblical perspective — *an ever-increasing departure from "the faith" as the dispensation progresses, with this departure being brought to completion at the end of the dispensation* (Matt. 13:33).

1

The Great Apostasy

Jude is an epistle dealing specifically with “apostasy” in the latter days and with “judgment” which follows this apostasy. The present dispensation had its beginning in the Book of Acts with the *Acts of the Apostles*; and the dispensation will end, as described in the Epistle of Jude, with the *Acts of the Apostates*. The Book of Acts introduces *the beginning* and progression of the history of the early Church from 30 A.D to about 62 A.D., and the Epistle of Jude reveals how this history will *end*.

The exact positions which the Book of Acts and the Epistle of Jude occupy in the canon of Scripture are in perfect keeping with their respective contents. The Book of Acts immediately precedes twenty-one epistles directed to Christians, providing a smooth, transitional flow from the gospels into the epistles; and the Epistle of Jude appears as the last of these twenty-one epistles, introducing the Book of Revelation by *the great apostasy* which precedes the removal of the Church into the Lord’s Day (Rev. 1:10ff; cf. I Thess. 4:16-5:10), ending the present dispensation.

APOSTASY

The word “apostasy” is itself not used in the Epistle of Jude, but this word is taken from the Greek text of several corresponding

Scriptures appearing elsewhere in the New Testament which refer to this *departure from the faith* as “the apostasy.”

This *departure from the faith* actually began very early in the history of the Church, foretold by the Lord Himself in Matt. 13:33. According to this verse, set within Scriptures having to do with the course of the present dispensation, a woman would place *leaven* in three measures of meal; and this *leaven* (a substance used in the symbolism of Scripture to depict “sin,” “deterioration,” “corruption”) would work until the whole had been corrupted. This leavening process provides the reason for the existing conditions in Christendom today, very near the end of the dispensation — the absence of the proclamation of the message surrounding “the faith” in the Churches of the land. And this leavening process also provides the reason why, when the Son of Man returns, He will not find “the faith on the earth [‘faith’ is articular in the Gk. text]” (Luke 18:8).

Relative to *apostasy*, Paul states in II Thess. 2:3, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the Day of the Lord] shall not come except there come a *falling away* [*the apostasy*] first...” Paul, again in I Tim. 4:1 states, “Now [‘But’] the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall *depart* [*apostatize*] from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons.” The writer of Hebrews calls attention to this same thing in Heb. 3:12: “Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in *departing* [*apostatizing*] from the living God.” In the preceding verses, the words “falling away,” “depart,” and “departing” are translations of either the Greek noun *apostasia* or the verb *aphistemi* (the verb form of *apostasia*), meaning “apostasy.”

The English word “apostasy” is actually a transliterated form of the Greek word *apostasia*, a compound word formed from *apo* and *stasis*. *Apo* means “from,” and *stasis* means “stand,” or “standing.” When used together, forming the word *apostasia*, the meaning is “standing away from.” This “standing away from” pertains to a position previously occupied and refers more specifically (drawing from contexts where the word is used) to a *standing away from* “*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (cf. I Tim. 4:1; Jude 3).

In the true sense of the word, no one can stand away from something with which he has never been affiliated. This can be

illustrated by the use of the Greek word *apostasion* (neuter form of *apostasia*) in Matt. 5:31; 19:7; Mark 10:4. In each instance the word is translated “divorcement.” It is one person “standing away from” another person. There could be no “divorcement,” “standing away from,” unless there had previously been a marriage. In like manner, no one could “stand away from” *the faith* (apostatize) unless he had previously been associated with *the faith*. Believers alone occupy a position of this nature from which they can “stand away.” Unbelievers have never come into such a position, and, in the true sense of the word, are not associated with the *latter-day apostasy* in Scripture.

REASON FOR APOSTASY

Christians familiar with what Scripture teaches will have no difficulty understanding why the present dispensation will end in apostasy. As previous stated, the entire matter stems from an incident occurring very early in the history of the Church. In Matt. 13:33, in the parables of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, a woman took leaven and hid this leaven “in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

(Note also the “parable of the Sower, the “parable of the tares” and the “parable of the mustard seed” which immediately precede the parable of the leaven. These three parables show different facets of the results of the working of the leaven in the fourth parable [vv. 3-8, 18-32].)

All seven parables in this chapter have to do with the course of Christianity throughout the present dispensation and/or with events at the conclusion of the dispensation after the Church has been removed from the sphere of activity, with the last three parables having to do with events immediately preceding and leading into the Messianic Kingdom itself. Once this woman had placed leaven in the three measures of meal, *the course of Christianity was set*. The leaven would work in the meal throughout the dispensation, climaxing its work at the end of the dispensation with the entire three measures of meal being completely saturated with leaven.

“Leaven” in Scripture always refers to that which is *false* or *corrupt*. The “leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” was *false doctrine*

(Matt. 16:6-12), and “leaven” associated with a Christian refers mainly to *sin* in his life (*cf.* Ex. 12:14-20; I Cor. 5:1-8). Leaven in Exodus, chapter twelve, because of what it symbolized, could occupy no place in the house of an Israelite following the issues surrounding the death of the firstborn in Egypt; and that which leaven symbolizes (sin, corruption) must, in like manner, *never* be allowed to occupy a place in the life of a Christian today.

“Three [the ‘three’ measures of meal into which the leaven was placed]” is the number of *Divine perfection*. The number “three,” for example, is used of the Godhead — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is used concerning the time of Christ’s resurrection. Christ was raised from the dead on the third day, which points to the coming third day (the third one-thousand-year period dating from Calvary) when all of God’s firstborn Sons (“Jesus,” “Israel,” and the “Church” following the adoption [another triad]) will be raised, *i.e., elevated to their proper positions on and over the earth*. In that day, *Divine perfection* in God’s plan for the ages will be worked out to perfection in its fullness.

God has forbidden the placing of leaven in meal (Lev. 6:14-17), as this woman did in Matt. 13:33. Meal is made from crushed wheat. “Wheat” is sown by *the Sower* in Matt. 13:3 (the Lord Jesus Christ [Matt. 13:37; John 12:24]) and has to do with *that which is sown in the field* in Matt. 13:24 (the sons of the kingdom [Matt. 13:38]). The three measures of meal, in the light of related Scripture, could only point to doctrine emanating from the triune God. This doctrine, in the light of the context, must pertain particularly to “the Sower,” “the sons of the kingdom,” and “the word of the kingdom.”

RESULT OF APOSTASY

The woman in Matt. 13:33, a propagator of that which is false or corrupt, can only be associated with Satan and his false system of doctrine. This woman inserted leaven into the three measures of meal very early in the history of the Church, as evidenced by the rampant apostasy which existed in the early Church only about thirty years following the inception of the Church.

The leaven has been working for over nineteen centuries, it is presently working, and it will continue to work until “the whole” has

been *leavened*. Scripture places the completion of the leavening process at the end of the present dispensation, exactly where we are living today. The latter days in Christendom, prophesied in Scripture, will be marked, not by great revivals or a widespread teaching of the Word of God, but by the completion of a leavening process, resulting in *apostasy*.

Conditions in Christendom throughout the dispensation are set forth in the seven letters to the seven Churches in Revelation, chapters two and three. These are seven epistles to seven Churches existing in the first century during the days of John, which portray the history of the Church throughout the dispensation. The leaven placed in the three measures of meal was already at work in these Churches; and one Church, the Laodicean Church (3:14-21), had, even before the end of the first century, become *completely corrupted* by the leaven. This Church, the seventh and last of the named Churches, depicts the final form of Christendom at the end of the dispensation after the leaven has permeated all of the meal in which it had previously been placed.

In this respect, the Epistle to the Laodiceans corresponds to the Epistle of Jude. As in II Timothy and II Peter, the apostasy had already set in during the opening several decades of the dispensation; but conditions in both epistles portray Christianity more particularly at the end of the dispensation (when the leaven will be doing its most damaging, end-time work), immediately before the removal of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation (Rev. 4:1ff; 6:1ff).

Several things distinguish the Laodicean Church from the others:

- a) Nothing good was recorded about this Church.
- b) Only a form of godliness remained within this Church (vv. 15, 16; cf. II Tim. 3:5).
- c) Materialism had permeated this Church to such an extent that it was spiritually destitute (vv. 17, 18).
- d) Christ stood on the outside, not within (v. 20).

To some individuals it is inconceivable that Christians can apostatize from *the faith* to the extent that they become as the Laodiceans, “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”; but this is exactly the Biblical picture of the Church in the latter days, after the

leaven has been at work for almost two millennia. The “lukewarmness” of the Laodicean Church in John’s day fostered the working of the leaven (v. 16), for leaven works more rapidly in a place where the temperature is not too hot nor too cold. And the “lukewarmness” of the Laodicean Church of today (where the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom is all but absent) is allowing the leaven to do its most rapid and damaging work of the entire dispensation. Because of this, apostasy is not only presently abounding but it will increasingly continue to abound on every hand as the Church moves even closer to the end of the present dispensation; and conditions wrought by the leaven within these lukewarm confines, will continue to rapidly deteriorate the mass until “fire” stops the working of the leaven after the dispensation has run its course.

The message to each Church throughout Revelation, chapters two and three concerns conditions existing among Christians in these Churches. Then, at the conclusion of each message is an overcomer’s promise to Christians within these Churches, even to Christians in the most corrupt Church of all, the Laodicean Church: “To him that overcometh...” (2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21).

Overcomers’ promises of this nature can only be for Christians alone, for only Christians are in a position to overcome and be recipients of the things promised in these two chapters — things which, in their entirety, are *millennial in their scope of fulfillment*.

APOSTASY AND THE MYSTERIES

“Holding the mystery of the faith in all pure conscience...

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness...

Now [‘But’] the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart [‘apostatize’] from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons;

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Tim. 3:9, 16a; 4:1, 2).

1) “THE MYSTERIES OF GOD” (I COR. 4:1)

Two mysteries are mentioned in I Timothy (3:9, 16), and both appear immediately before the reference to apostasy in the latter days

(4:1, 2). A *mystery* refers to “a truth previously hidden but now revealed,” and teachings within all mysteries in the New Testament move toward the same end (an end, in reality, toward which all Scripture moves) — the termination of this dispensation and the ushering in of a new dispensation. “The mystery of God” will be brought to completion immediately prior to the Messianic Era (Rev. 10:7); and all revealed mysteries, within their framework of completion, move toward this same point in time.

Mysteries in the New Testament begin with the “mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens” in Matthew, chapter thirteen. These mysteries (seen in seven connected parables) provide a chronological sequence of events during and following the present dispensation, which will be culminated at the beginning of the Messianic Era. Teachings within these mysteries have to do centrally with the present work of the Spirit among Christians (present dispensation) and the Son’s future work on behalf of Christians (during the Tribulation, during the last seven years of the preceding dispensation). And the counter-work of Satan has to do with the “doctrines of demons,” associated with the “mystery of iniquity,” as he seeks to subvert the work of God.

The mystery dealt with more than any other in the New Testament was revealed to the Apostle Paul by Christ Himself via “revelation [personal appearance]” and is called in Scripture simply “the mystery” or “the mystery of Christ” (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3, 4, 9; Col. 1:26, 27; 4:3). This mystery is defined by Paul as “Christ in you [*lit.*, ‘Christ (the One Who will rule and reign) being proclaimed among you’], *the hope of glory*” (Col. 1:27), pointing to that future day when “Christ, who is our life shall appear,” and Christians will “also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:4).

“The mystery” has to do with the fact that believing Jews and believing Gentiles, forming the “one new man” *in Christ*, will, after being approved at the judgment seat of Christ, be the recipients of heavenly promises and blessings as joint-heirs with Christ in His kingdom (Eph. 3:6; *cf.* I Cor. 9:24-27; James 1:12; I Peter 1:7-9). This mystery has for its end *the realization of the Christians’ present hope*.

Another mystery is that of *Israel’s present blindness*, awaiting “the fullness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:25). This mystery, as the others, has

to do with events during the present time which will be completed immediately preceding the coming kingdom. The purpose for Israel's blindness is to allow for "the fullness of the Gentiles," and the purpose for "the fullness of the Gentiles" is that God may, in the coming dispensation, have "a people for his name [a people separate from Israel — namely, the Son's wife, who will rule as consort queen with Him]."

After "the fullness of the Gentiles be come in," Israel's blindness will be lifted (Rom. 11:26). God will then have a people for His name here on earth (*Israel*, following the nation's repentance, conversion, and restoration) and a people for His name in the heavens (the *Church*, following this new nation's removal from the earth, adoption, and establishment in heavenly places).

Another mystery concerns the resurrection of the dead and the translation of the living "in Christ" (I Cor. 15:51-58; I Thess. 4:13-18). This mystery has to do with the removal of the saints (body, soul, and spirit) from the earthly sphere to a heavenly sphere with a view to the coming reign of Christ from the heavens. Certain things concerning the resurrection of the dead, the translation of the living, and saints occupying heavenly places were revealed during Old Testament days (Gen. 5:24; II Kings 2:11; Job 19:25-27; Ezek. 37:12-14, 23-25; Dan. 7:25-27). But that which was not opened up to saints of preceding generations, "the mystery," focuses on a people separate from Israel, comprised of those "in Christ," who are to be associated with a separate resurrection, experience translation, and occupy heavenly places.

Other mysteries, such as those in I Tim. 3:9, 16, have to do with the present activities of the saints, with a view particularly to events during the coming millennial day. The "mystery of the faith" (v. 9) and the "mystery of godliness" (v. 16) have to do with the present faithfulness on the part of Christians, with a view to their receiving the "end ['goal']" of *faith*, the *salvation of their souls* (I Peter 1:9; cf. Heb. 10:38, 39; 11:1ff).

The word translated "godliness ['mystery of godliness']" in the Greek text is *eusebeia*, which is a term used of men alone, not of God. This word refers to Christians exercising "piety," "godliness," "reverence" in their lives. Both the "mystery of the faith" and the "mystery

of godliness,” as they relate to the salvation of the souls of those “in Christ,” were unrevealed in the Old Testament, save for the types dealing with the subject.

But these types could really not be properly understood apart from the antitype. The antitype would unlock the types, and the types would then shed a world of light on the antitype. (*cf.* I Peter 1:10-12). In this respect, because later revelation was required to open up and explain this material in the Old Testament, these are termed “mysteries” in the New Testament.

2) “THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY” (II THESS. 2:7)

To counter the work of God within His revealed mysteries, Satan, in connection with his activities among Christians, has what Scripture calls, “the mystery of iniquity” (II Thess. 2:7, 9, 10). In Rev. 2:24, the “depths of Satan,” as opposed to the “deep things of God” in I Cor. 2:10, is mentioned as well. And the construction of the Greek text in both Scriptures is identical.

These opposing doctrines are literally called, the “deep things of Satan,” and the “deep things of God.” *The deep things of God* reveal the things which God would have His people know; and we’re told that the “doctrines of demons” emanate from the deep things of Satan, as Satan seeks to mislead God’s people (I Tim. 4:1ff). Thus, God has His “deep things,” associated with His “mysteries” (*cf.* I Cor. 2:7); and Satan, the great counterfeiter, has his “deep things,” associated with the “mystery of iniquity.”

Satan’s great objective today, within the scope of the “mystery of iniquity,” is to counter teachings (through false doctrine) within the “mysteries of God.” Note how teachings concerning the “mystery of the faith” in I Tim. 3:9 are countered through the “doctrines of demons” in I Tim. 4:2. The “mystery of the faith” is to be held with a “pure conscience”; and in I Tim. 4:2, out of “hypocrisies and lying words,” demons, through their doctrines, “sear one’s conscience” (literal thought from the Gk. text).

Conscience has to do with “spiritual awareness.” The word was used earlier in first Timothy concerning the spiritual warfare and faithfulness as they relate to “the faith” (1:19, 20 [the second use of “faith” in v. 19 is articular in the Gk. text]). *The doctrine of demons* is

designed to scar one's spiritual awareness, adversely affecting one's faithful, godly walk in the present world.

Satan, above everything else, does not want the "mysteries" proclaimed. These "mysteries" all pertain to some facet of the "word of the kingdom," which speaks of that future day when Satan and His angels will be put down, with Christ with His co-heirs then moving in and taking the kingdom.

Christ has already shown Himself fully qualified to replace Satan as the Ruler over this earth, and Satan can do nothing about Christ and His present status. However, Christians are presently in the process of qualifying (or being disqualified) to replace the fallen angels ruling under Satan; and if Satan could prevent this from happening, he could prevent Christ from taking the kingdom, for Christ would have insufficient, qualified personnel to occupy the necessary positions of power and authority in the kingdom. Thus, in one respect, Satan's present activity is directed against Christians toward this end.

The entire present dispensation is an interval during which God is taking out of the Gentiles "a people for his name." And those whom God is removing from the Gentiles are the ones who are being offered positions with Christ in the coming kingdom. These are the ones who will replace the incumbent rulers. That's what the "mysteries of God" are about, and that is also what the "mystery of iniquity" is about in a counter respect.

The great *apostasy in the Church* during the latter days, brought into existence through the "leaven" placed in the three measures of meal and associated with the "doctrines of demons," is being accomplished through one central means: *taking the truth of the Word of God and twisting, perverting this truth* (I Tim. 4:1, 2). And this is being done with one central goal in view: *the destruction of all sound doctrine surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ*.

INTRODUCING APOSTASY IN JUDE

"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified ['loved'] by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied" (Jude 1, 2).

1) "JUDE"

Jude begins his epistle with his own name, which is literally "Judas" in the Greek text. The name "Judas" is derived from the Greek form of the Hebrew name for "Judah" (cf. Matt. 1:2, KJV). This was a common name in Israel during the days when our Lord was upon the earth, but this name, understandably, is seldom used today. Through the actions of another person named "Judas" (Judas Iscariot), the name has become a synonym for *traitor* or *apostate*.

Judas Iscariot, numbered among the twelve, betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Judas was appointed to the apostolate by the Lord (Matt. 10:1-4), and from this position he "by transgression fell ['turned aside,' 'fell away']" (Acts 1:25). Judas "stood away from" the other eleven. Insofar as the apostolate and the message being proclaimed were concerned, Judas became an *apostate*.

The fact that the Epistle of Jude was written by an individual whose name has become associated with traitorous actions (apostasy) is no mere coincidence. Nor is it coincidental that his name is the very first word which appears in the epistle. The Epistle of Jude, by the very name of the writer itself, begins with the mark of *apostasy*.

Jude was the brother of James (v. 1), apparently the same as the writer of the Epistle of James and the half brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:19). In this respect, the writer of the Epistle of Jude would be the same Jude ("Judas," "Juda") mentioned in Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3, one of four half brothers of Jesus (cf. Psa. 69:7, 8). None of the half brothers of Jesus was numbered among the twelve apostles, but two (if this is the same Jude from Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3) were later singled out by the Lord to write New Testament epistles.

James, in his epistle, deals specifically with the great doctrine of the *salvation of the soul*; and Jude, in his epistle, also deals with this same doctrine, but from a different perspective — from the perspective of *apostasy* which will engulf the Church in the latter days (the same as Peter presented in his second epistle), producing a dark-age effect upon all correct Scriptural teaching surrounding the *salvation of the soul*.

The fact that the writer of the Epistle of Jude was apparently a family member of the Lord is itself, as the name "Judas," not without significance. The latter-day apostasy, of which Jude writes, will be

entered into by family members of the Lord — those within the family of God, the children of God, the saved. Thus, the name “Jude [‘Judás’]” and the apparent relationship of Jude to the Lord set the tone, at the very beginning, for the entire epistle.

2) “*SANCTIFIED...PRESERVED...CALLED*”

Jude directs his epistle to “them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called” (v. 1). Most of the better Greek manuscripts have the word for “love” rather than the word for “sanctify” in this verse, and this is the translation which one will find in versions such as the ASV, NASB, NIV, *et al.*

The word for “love” is in the perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating action completed in past time, with present, continuing results (results based on the past, completed action). Through a completed act, the *love* of God has been manifested (past). God manifested His love at Calvary; and the perfect tense shows that the manifestation of this love, based on the Son’s past, completed work, continues uninterrupted. God is the One Who loves, and man is the object of His love. God’s love is an active, continuing, ever-abiding love which exists during all *present time* and will continue to exist during all *future time*.

The recipients of God’s love will *never* be estranged from this love. Paul asks the question in Rom. 8:35:

“Who shall separate us from the *love* of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

The question is then answered in verses thirty-eight and thirty-nine:

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come.

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature [‘any other created thing’], shall be able to separate us from the *love* of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Nothing in God’s material universe, present or future, can separate Christians from His love. A Christian may appear in the presence

of Christ *naked* and *ashamed* at the end of this dispensation (*cf.* Rom. 8:35; Rev. 3:17, 18), but this, although resulting in dire consequences, will not separate him from the love of God. Man's unfaithfulness can have no bearing on God's faithfulness (II Tim. 2:13). A Christian can pass through any experience of life and pass out of life into death without effecting a change in the nature of God's love toward that individual personally. God does not change, and His love toward His creature does not change. Based on a past, completed work, this love is a *present reality which will endure forever*.

The word "preserved," also in the perfect tense, could be better translated, "kept." Christians are "kept in Christ Jesus." This is in association with our past salvation experience and its present, continuing results. The word "kept" is *unique* insofar as introductory remarks in New Testament epistles are concerned. Paul used words such as "faithful," "beloved," and "called," but Jude alone used the word "kept."

A similar word appears in I Peter 1:5 (also translated "kept" in the English text, but from a Greek word having a slightly different meaning): "Who are kept [*i.e.*, 'guarded'; *lit.*, 'Who are being kept under guard' (passive participle)] by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Studying Jude in the light of this verse, it is not difficult to understand why the *guarding, keeping* power of God will be sorely needed by Christians in the latter days. Confronted with *apostasy* on every hand, Christians must be *guarded, kept by the power of God*, as they, "through faith," keep their goal set on the "salvation [salvation of the soul] ready to be revealed in the last time."

Not only were the Christians to whom Jude wrote "loved" and "kept," but they were also "called." The "called" were the *saved*. They had been saved for a purpose, and their calling had to do with that purpose.

"...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Whereunto he called you by our gospel [not the good news concerning the grace of God but the good news concerning the coming glory of Christ], to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ"

(II Thess. 2:13b, 14).

Other Scriptures show that an individual must be “called out” of the “called” (cf. Matt. 22:14) in order to be a partaker of the “glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The message in Jude is to the “called,” with a view to their being “called out” and realizing the *hope* of their calling, which is associated with the *glory* to be revealed.

3) “MERCY...PEACE...LOVE”

Jude concludes his introductory remarks with, “*Mercy* unto you, and *peace*, and *love*, be multiplied.” The similar Divine order beginning every Pauline epistle, with the exception of three, is “*Grace* be unto you, and *peace*...” “*Grace*” must always stand *first*, for, apart from God’s grace, all is *meaningless and vain*. When God deals with man in *grace* He considers neither man’s merits nor demerits. Grace is that which God is able to do completely apart from human intervention; and such dealings must always precede the manifestation of His *mercy, peace, and love*.

The fact that “*mercy*” is used in the salutations of I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus possibly provides the reason for its usage in Jude 2. I and II Timothy are epistles which also, to some extent, deal with apostasy (e.g., I Tim. 4:1ff; II Tim. 3:1ff); and Titus deals specifically with the “blessed hope” set before Christians (1:2; 2:13; 3:7), which has to do with life (salvation of the soul) in the coming age (cf. Jude 21). *Mercy* is “Divine compassion,” “Divine pity,” which presupposes helplessness and need. God is “rich in *mercy*” (Eph. 2:4), and Christians are to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain *mercy*, and find *grace* to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

Helplessness and *need* in the lives of Christians will be manifested as never before as Christians move deeper into the present ever-increasing apostasy. And *mercy* (Divine help), *peace* (peace of God), and *love* (love of God) must be multiplied to see Christians safely through the dark days produced by this apostasy.

2

Contending for the Faith

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

Following introductory remarks in verses one and two, Jude calls attention to the original intent of his epistle. Jude had originally set about to write an epistle dealing with the “common salvation [salvation by grace through faith, possessed commonly by all believers]”; but the Holy Spirit prevented him from writing upon this subject and, instead, moved him to write upon something entirely different. The Holy Spirit moved Jude to write upon *contending for the faith during a day of apostasy*.

There are two indispensable keys which one must possess when studying the Epistle of Jude: a) a correct understanding of “apostasy from the faith” as it relates to both individual Christians and to the Church as a whole, and b) a correct understanding of exactly what is meant by the expression “earnestly contend for the faith.” These things must be grasped at the very outset, else the main message in this epistle will be either distorted or lost to the reader.

“Apostasy from the faith,” the first indispensable key, was the main subject under discussion throughout the introduction to this

book; and this introductory material should prove sufficient to provide a base upon which one can build as he moves on into the Epistle of Jude and views the various forms which apostasy can take. Those who apostatize from the faith are *Christians*, not those of the world. It is not possible for an unsaved person to “stand away from” *the faith*, for he has never come into a position relative to the faith from which he can stand away. Only individuals from among the saved can possibly come into this position, and only these same individuals can enter into this latter-day apostasy in the true sense of the word.

The second indispensable key which one must possess to correctly understand the Epistle of Jude is the subject matter at hand in our present study — “earnestly contend for the faith,” which, in one sense of the word, is the opposite of “apostasy from the faith.” However, contrary to popular interpretation, this opposite meaning has nothing to do with being a protector or guardian of the great Christian doctrines (*e.g.*, divinity and virgin birth of Christ, salvation through a vicarious death and the shedding of blood, etc.). Rather, something entirely different is in view, and this will constitute the subject matter of this chapter.

STRIVING IN THE CONTEST

The words translated “earnestly contend” in Jude 3 are from the Greek word *epagonizomai*. This is an intensified form of the word *agonizomai*, from which we derive the English word “agonize.” The word *agonizomai* is found in such passages as I Cor. 9:25 (“striveth”), I Tim. 6:12 (“fight”), and II Tim. 4:7 (“fought”). This word refers particularly to a “struggle in a contest.”

In I Cor. 9:24-27, Paul pictured himself as a contestant in a race, with a victor’s crown to be won through a successful completion of the race. And he pictured himself running the race in *the most intense manner possible*, using the word *agonizomai* to describe his actions as he ran. Paul *strained every muscle of his being* as he sought to finish the race in a satisfactory manner and be awarded the proffered crown.

And Paul sought to encourage others to run after the same fashion, keeping the same goal in view. I Tim. 6:12 states, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also

called..." This verse could be better translated, "Strive [Gk. *Agonizomai*, the word from which the English word 'agonize' is derived] in the good contest [*agon*] of the faith; lay hold on life for the age, whereunto thou art also called..." *Agon*, translated "contest," is the noun form of the verb *agonizomai*, translated "strive." A contest/race is in view (same as I Cor. 9:24-27), and it is a "contest [race] of the faith." It is "striving" *relative to the faith*.

II Tim. 4:7 is a very similar verse. "I have fought a good fight..." could be better translated, "I have strived [*agonizomai*] in the good contest [*agon*]..." The "contest" here, as in I Tim. 6:12, has to do with *the faith*. And the goal set forth in both sections of Scripture is the same: "...I have finished my course [the contest/race], I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day..." (II Tim. 4:7b, 8; cf. I Tim. 6:12, 15, 18).

The contest or race here is the same race set forth in I Cor. 9:24-27, with one or more crowns in view at the end of the race. And successful completion of the race will result in the runner being crowned, anticipating the coming rule from the heavens over the earth as a joint-heir with Christ (called "life for the age" in I Tim. 6:12).

With these things in mind concerning the use of the word *agonizomai* in connection with "the faith," note the expression "earnestly contend for the faith" in Jude 3. In keeping with the other translations, the exact thought brought out by the word *epagonizomai* in Jude (an intensified form of *agonizomai*, as seen in I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7), could perhaps be better understood by using the translation "earnestly strive." Once again a contest/race is in view, and the thought is really *earnestly striving* "with reference to the faith" rather than *earnestly striving* "for the faith." The wording in the Greek text will allow either translation, but related Scriptures are concerned with the basic thought from the former translation rather than the latter. *Earnestly striving* "with reference to the faith" in Jude carries the identical thought as *striving* "in the good contest of the faith" in I Timothy. The intensified form of *agonizomai* (used only this one place in the New Testament) undoubtedly appears in Jude because of the subject of the epistle (apostasy) and the immediate danger of the recipients of this message being caught up in the apostasy at hand.

JUDE AND II PETER

Understanding exactly what is involved in *earnestly striving* “with reference to the faith” in Jude is possibly best brought out in II Peter. II Peter is the companion epistle to Jude. Both epistles deal with the same subject matter throughout — “faith,” and “apostasy.” “Faith” appears first in both epistles (Jude 3; II Peter ch. 1), followed by “apostasy” *from the faith* (Jude 4ff; II Peter chs. 2, 3).

II Peter also occupies the same unique relationship to I Peter that Jude occupies relative to all the preceding epistles — Pauline and General. I Peter deals specifically with the salvation of the soul, and II Peter deals with “faith” (ch. 1) and “apostasy” (chs. 2, 3) in relation to this salvation. The same order is set forth in Jude and the epistles which precede. The epistles preceding Jude, as (and including) I Peter, also deal specifically with the salvation of the soul. Jude then forms the capstone for the entire subject, presenting, as II Peter, “faith” in relation to the salvation of the soul first (v. 3), and then “apostasy” in relation to the salvation of the soul (vv. 4ff).

Parallels in the sections on *apostasy from the faith* in both epistles (II Peter 2:1ff; Jude 4ff) clearly illustrate the oneness of Peter’s and Jude’s messages. Numerous identical subjects, events, and places are recorded in the same order (*cf.* II Peter 2:1-3 and Jude 4; II Peter 2:4-9 and Jude 6, 7; II Peter 2:10-14 and Jude 8-10; II Peter 2:15, 16 and Jude 11; II Peter 2:17, 18 and Jude 12, 13, 16; II Peter 3:1-13 and Jude 17-19). “Apostasy” in both instances is *from the same* “faith”; and since Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of Scripture, a proper study on either “faith” or “apostasy” in one epistle would necessitate a study of the same subject matter in the other epistle. The best available commentary on Jude is II Peter, along with other related Scripture; and the best available commentary on II Peter is Jude, along with other related Scripture.

Our main interest at hand is the parallel sections on “faith” in the two epistles. Where Jude devotes one verse to *earnestly striving with reference to the faith* (v. 3), Peter devotes the greater part of an entire chapter to *maturity in the faith* (ch. 1). And this chapter, in the light of Jude and other related Scripture, is actually a dissertation on *earnestly striving* “with reference to the faith,” which will result in the one

engaged in this “contest of the faith” (if he runs according to the rules) “receiving the end [‘goal’]” of his *faith*, even the *salvation of his soul* (I Peter 1:9). Thus, in order to properly understand Jude 3, the remainder of this chapter will be drawn from II Peter, chapter one.

(Note that II Peter chapter one is Scripture’s own commentary on Jude 3. And this commentary is perfectly in line with that which is stated about “the faith” at any other point in Scripture.)

MATURITY IN THE FAITH

Peter directs his second epistle to “them that have obtained like precious *faith* with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour [*lit.* ‘our God and Saviour’] Jesus Christ” (v. 1). This is a “faith” possessed by *all* Christians. We were *all* accorded the same measure of “faith” at the time of the birth from above. Every Christian begins at the same point with the same “like precious faith.” Then, in verses five through seven Christians are told:

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to [*lit.* ‘abundantly supply in’] your faith virtue; and to [‘in’] virtue knowledge;

And to [‘in’] knowledge temperance; and to [‘in’] temperance patience; and to [‘in’] patience godliness;

And to [‘in’] godliness brotherly kindness; and to [‘in’] brotherly kindness charity.”

Peter then states in verse eight,

“For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge [*epignosis*, ‘mature knowledge’] of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Greek word *epignosis*, referring to a “mature knowledge,” occurs three times in II Peter chapter one (vv. 2, 3, 8). In verse two, “grace and peace” are multiplied through a *mature knowledge* “of God, and of Jesus our Lord [*lit.* ‘of God, even Jesus our Lord’ (*cf.* v. 1)].” In verse three, Christians are given “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” through *the mature knowledge* “of him that hath called us to glory and virtue”; and in verses five through eight, abundantly

supplying the things listed (with “faith” as the foundation) will result in “fruit-bearing” (if these things “abound” *in* the person) within one’s *mature knowledge* “of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Colossians 2:2, 3 is a corresponding passage concerning a mature knowledge “of Jesus our Lord” which deals with the same basic truths as II Peter 1:2, 3, 8. In the Colossian passage, the “mystery of God” is revealed to be *Christ*, and *in Him* “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” The words appearing between “God” and “Christ” (v. 2) in the Authorized Version are not found in the best Greek manuscripts, and the latter part of this verse should literally read: “...unto a mature knowledge [*epignosis*] of the mystery of God, Christ.”

The name “Christ” is placed in apposition to the word “mystery” in the Greek text, making Christ to be “the mystery of God.” The things in this mystery were unrevealed in prior ages; but now, through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, the previously hidden truths concerning Christ are being made known to the saints. Man today has the complete revelation of God, and as this revelation is received into man’s saved human spirit, the indwelling Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and reveals things (previously hidden) concerning the Son (John 16:13-15; I Cor. 2:6-13; *cf.* Gen. 24:4, 10, 36, 53).

In Col. 2:2, 3, it is only the person coming into a mature knowledge of the “mystery of God” who will see the great storehouse of “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” *in Christ*. In like manner, only the person coming into a *mature knowledge* of “Jesus Christ our Lord” in II Peter 1:2, 3, 8, contained in the “mystery of God” in Col. 2:2, will realize an increase of “grace” and “peace” (*cf.* “Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied” [Jude 2]), or come into possession of the numerous other things mentioned in this chapter.

In II Peter 1:3, 4, a *mature knowledge* of God’s Son will result in the realization of two things:

a) *Possessing “all things that pertain unto life and godliness”*: “Life” (Gk. *Zoe*) is used referring to life in its absolute fullness, which a Christian is to exhibit during his present pilgrim walk; and “godliness” refers to *piety* or *reverence*, which is to be exhibited at the same time. A godly walk in the fullness of life is appropriating that which God has for man (revealed in His Word) and, at the same time, walking

in a Godlike manner.

b) Possessing “great and precious promises”: Through these “great and precious promises” (revealed in God’s Word) individuals become “*partakers* of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world [by means of *epignosis*; cf. II Peter 1:2, 3; 2:20].” The “divine nature” has been planted within the inner being of every Christian; but it, as *faith*, can be either dormant or very active. To assure that the “divine nature,” along with *faith*, does not lie dormant, a Christian must lay aside the things having to do with corruption in the world and receive the Word of God into his saved human spirit (James 1:21; I Peter 2:1, 2). It is the reception of this Word and the corresponding work of the Holy Spirit *alone* which bring individuals into that position where spiritual growth is wrought, partaking of the “divine nature” is effected, and victory over the things of the world, the flesh, and the Devil come to pass.

The great problem among Christians today is spiritual immaturity, which often results in fleshly or worldly living and resultant defeat in one’s spiritual life. There is no increase of “grace,” “mercy,” “peace,” and “love.” Such Christians, not in possession of a mature knowledge (*epignosis*), cannot be in possession of the things pertaining to “life and godliness”; and they can know very little to nothing of the “great and precious promises,” or being “partakers of the divine nature.” They, thus, can be easily “carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14).

FRUIT-BEARING FOR THE KINGDOM

In II Peter 1:5-11, *fruit-bearing* is in view; and *fruit-bearing* is associated with *things abundantly supplied in faith* (vv. 5-7), *a mature knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ* (vv. 8, 9), *one’s “calling and election”* (v. 10), and “*entrance*” into the coming “*kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*” (v. 11).

1) THINGS ABUNDANTLY SUPPLIED IN FAITH (VV. 5-7)

Every Christian is in possession of *faith*, obtained “through the

righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” This faith can be very active, or it can be weak, anemic, or even dead (James 2:17, 20, 26). But faith, even though looked upon as anemic or dead, is still present with the believer; and it can never pass away (I Cor. 13:13).

The word “dead” appearing in James 2:17, 20, 26 (KJV), in connection with *faith*, can only refer to a “barren” or “fruitless” *faith*. This type faith is void of works, and works are necessary to bring forth fruit and bring faith to its goal.

In a number of the older Greek manuscripts the word for “barren” appears in the text of verse twenty rather than the word for “dead,” equating “barren” in this verse with “dead” in verses seventeen and twenty-six. However, one need not belabor whether or not the word for “barren” in these older manuscripts is the correct rendering of the text, for II Peter 1:5-8 teaches the same thing concerning a “barren” faith.

II Peter 1:5 should literally read: “But also for this cause, giving all diligence, abundantly supply in your faith...” Because of that which has preceded (outlined in verses one through four) — things resulting from a mature knowledge (*epignosis*) “of God, even Jesus our Lord” — the Christian is commanded to follow a certain stepped course of action. And this course of action will result in “fruit-bearing,” within one’s mature knowledge (*epignosis*) “of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 8). And this will, in turn, ultimately result in an *abundant entrance* “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (v. 11).

a) “Add to [*Abundantly supply in*] your faith virtue” (v. 5): The words “Add to” should literally be understood as “Abundantly supply in” throughout verses five through seven. The Greek word translated “virtue” is *arete* (same as v. 3), which could be understood as either “virtue” or “moral excellence.” And when used relative to God, the word has to do with *His power*. The thought contextually would have to do with Christians exercising “moral excellence” under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Thus, with Christians conducting their lives in this manner, Divine power through the Spirit’s leadership would be in view through the use of the word.

b) “And to [*in*] virtue knowledge” (v. 5): “Knowledge” is the translation of *gnosis* (the regular Greek word for “knowledge”) rather

than *epignosis* (“mature knowledge”) as used in verses two, three, and eight. *Gnosis* refers to the accumulation of facts, which may result in *epignosis*, but not necessarily. *Epignosis* is more restricted in its usage, having to do with knowledge pertaining more particularly to things relating to the coming kingdom (*ref.* Part 2 following this section, “A Mature Knowledge”).

c) “*And to [‘in’] knowledge temperance*” (v. 6): The Greek word translated “temperance” is *egkrateia*, which means “self-control,” “mastery over oneself.” This is a compound word from *en* and *kratos* (*en* means “in,” and *kratos* means “power”). The reference is to passions and desires emanating from the man of flesh being held in check. And this is accomplished through allowing the Spirit to govern and control one’s life, which goes back to the Divine power previously seen through the word *arete* in verse five.

d) “*And to [‘in’] temperance patience*” (v. 6): The Greek word translated “patience” is *hupomone*, which has to do with “patient endurance” under trials and testings during the pilgrim walk. This is a compound word from *hupo* and *mone* (*hupo* means “under,” and *mone* means “stay,” or “remain”). Thus, the word literally means, “remain under”; and the compound word is possibly best understood by the translation, “patient endurance.”

Note how the verb form of this word (*hupomeno*) is used in James 1:12: “Blessed is the man that endureth [‘patiently endureth’] temptation: for when he is tried [‘approved’], he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” Note also the use of *hupomeno* in II Tim. 2:10, 12 (translated “endure” and “suffer” respectively). Both should properly be translated “patiently endure.”

e) “*And to [‘in’] patience godliness*” (v. 6): The Greek word translated “godliness” is *eusebeia*. The word is derived from *eu* and *sebomai* (*eu* means “good,” and *sebomai* means “to worship” or “to reverence”). Thus, *eusebeia* has to do with Christians exercising “piety,” or “godliness” as they patiently endure the trials and testings of life during their pilgrim walk. The thought is simply a continued building upon that which had been previously stated in the book.

f) “And to [‘in’] godliness brotherly kindness” (v. 7): The words “brotherly kindness” are a translation of the compound Greek word *philadelphia*, comprised of *phileo* (“love,” “affection”) and *adelphos* (“brother”). The word should be translated “brotherly love” or “brotherly affection.”

g) “And to [‘in’] brotherly kindness charity” (v. 7): The Greek word translated “charity” is *agape*, which, as *phileo*, means “love.” However, *agape* moves beyond mere affection, or the type love between Christians set forth by the word *phileo*. *Agape* has to do with “Divine love,” which God is in His character and nature. “God is love,” *i.e.*, “God is *agape*” (I John 4:8). This is also the same word used relative to man in the context of this verse in I John. “Love” set forth by the word *agape* is the highest type love attainable. This is love produced by the Holy Spirit in the life of a faithful believer. *Agape* appears after all the other things mentioned in II Peter 1:5-7. It must be supplied last, for it is placed at the height of Christian experience, and nothing can be added therein (*cf.* I Cor. 13:1ff; *agape* is used throughout this chapter).

2) A MATURE KNOWLEDGE (VV. 8, 9)

Epignosis in Scripture has a peculiar relationship to the salvation to be revealed, the salvation of the soul. This word appears in passages which have to do with the saints possessing a mature knowledge in things related to the coming kingdom. The list is by no means complete, but throughout the New Testament *epignosis* is associated with a mature knowledge of “God,” of God’s “Son [‘the mystery of God, Christ’],” God’s “will,” truths pertaining to “faith,” “life,” and “godliness,” the coming “judgment” of the saints, the “blessed hope,” and the coming “inheritance” of the saints (Rom. 1:28; Eph. 1:17, 18; 4:13; Col. 1:9-12; 2:2; 3:10; I Tim. 2:4; II Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1, 2; 2:13; 3:7; Heb. 10:25-31; II Peter 1:1-8; 2:20, 21).

Epignosis, having to do with an impartation of things pertaining to “life and godliness,” allows Christians to escape the “pollutions of the world” (II Peter 1:3, 4; 2:20). Rejection of *epignosis*, on the other hand, places Christians in the dangerous position of being easily entangled in the things which *epignosis* allows them to escape (Rom. 1:28; II Peter 2:20-22).

“All filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness” must be set aside prior to receiving the “engrafted [‘implanted’] word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21); and the reception of this Word progressively produces the renewing of your mind “in knowledge [*epignosis*] after the image of him that created him,” working the *metamorphosis* in one’s life (Rom. 12:1, 2; Col. 3:10), allowing that person to escape the entanglements of the world.

Epignosis has to do with the “strong meat” of the Word, which is associated in Heb. 5:6-14 with Christ and His Melchizedek priesthood. Those who have been enlightened in these truths — have been allowed by God to move from *gnosis* to *epignosis* — and then “fall away” are the ones who become entangled again in the affairs of the world (Heb. 6:1-6). The fact that such persons cannot be renewed again unto repentance (vv. 4, 6) will answer the question concerning why it would have been better for such individuals not to have known “the way of righteousness” (II Peter 2:21) through coming into possession of *epignosis* (v. 20).

Hebrews chapters five and six must be understood in the light of chapters three and four, which contain the record of the Israelites being allowed to go on into things beyond the death of the firstborn in Egypt. They first passed through the Red Sea. Going down into the Sea points to *death* (as it pertains to the old man, Egypt), coming up out of the Sea points to *resurrection* (as it pertains to the new man, the land ahead). The events of Sinai then soon followed.

A “mount” in Scripture signifies a *kingdom*. This is where the Israelites received the Law (the rules and regulations governing the people within the theocracy which lay ahead), and this is where they both received the instructions for and built the tabernacle (the dwelling place of God among His people within the theocracy). They were then allowed to go up to the very border of the promised land itself, hear the report about the land from the twelve spies, and taste the actual fruits of the land which the spies had carried back with them.

In this respect, the Israelites were allowed to move from *gnosis* to *epignosis*; but they turned away (fell away), and it was then impossible to renew them again unto repentance (Num. 13, 14). They were overthrown in the wilderness. It would have been better for the ones who were overthrown (the entire accountable generation, twenty

years old and above, save Caleb and Joshua) not to have known these things about the land (equivalent in the antitype to, “it had been better...not to have known the way of righteousness” for Christians in II Peter 2:21), than after they knew these things, “to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (Num. 13:30; Deut. 1:21ff; cf. Joshua 1:1, 2). It was so with the Israelites in the type, and thus will it be for Christians in the antitype.

3) *CALLING AND ELECTION (v. 10)*

Individuals are to give *diligence* to make their “calling and election sure.” The word “election” could be better translated “called out.” The words translated “calling” and “election” in this verse are from the same root forms as the words translated “called” and “chosen” in Matt. 22:14, which should literally be translated, “For many are *called*, but few are *called out*.”

(Both an individuals *calling* and *out-calling* have to do with the same thing. His *calling* can't have to do with the Christians' presently possessed salvation, for he can't make that anymore “sure” than it already exists. Salvation by grace through faith has already been made “sure,” based on Christ's finished work at Calvary.

An individual has been saved for a purpose; and that “purpose” would equate to his *calling*, as “realizing that purpose” would equate to his *out-calling*. Both have to do with a salvation set in the future, the salvation of the soul; and both have to do with Christians one day being *called out of the called and realizing positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom*.)

The word “diligence” in verse ten is from the same word also translated “diligence” in verse five. With the same intensity that a person is to abundantly supply in his *faith virtue...*, he is to make his *calling* and *out-calling* “sure.” The word sure is the translation of a word which means “certain,” “firm,” “secure.” And to make his *calling* and *out-calling* sure, a Christian would have to be *knowledgeable* concerning that which is in view (note *epignosis*, “mature knowledge,” in v. 8).

There can be no such thing as following Biblical guidelines surrounding the purpose for one's salvation and, at the same time,

ignoring one's *calling* and *out-calling*. The entire concept widely promulgated in Christian circles today that the one really important thing is just to be saved has no basis in Scripture whatsoever. Scripture places the emphasis on *the purpose for one's salvation*. It is man who has turned this around and placed the emphasis back on salvation itself.

The entire purpose for the present dispensation is *to procure a bride for God's Son*, with a view to the coming age when the Son will reign over the earth with His consort queen (procured during the present dispensation). God has set aside an entire dispensation lasting 2,000 years for this purpose. He sent His Spirit into the world at the beginning of the dispensation with specific instructions (seen in the type in Gen. 24:3-9). And the work of the Spirit throughout the dispensation, though it includes breathing life into the one who has no life (salvation of the unsaved), is primarily concerned with procuring a bride for God's Son. And the bride is to be taken from the saved, not from the unsaved (seen in the type in Gen. 24 through the specific instructions which Abraham gave his servant and that which the servant did once he was in Mesopotamia — went to the city where Abraham's kindred resided, and went to Abraham's kindred in that city [vv. 3-27]).

The whole of the matter surrounding the reason for the Spirit being sent into the world at the beginning of this dispensation has to do with one's *calling* and *out-calling*. And Christians are to be knowledgeable concerning God's plans and purposes for the present dispensation, making their *calling* and *out-calling* "sure."

4) ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM (V. 11)

The word "entrance" is the translation of a word which means a *road into*. The route has been properly marked in the preceding verses, and one can not only follow this route, but he is exhorted to so do. The Christian, through this means, can make his *calling* and *out-calling* "sure."

Peter did not follow "cunningly devised fables" when he made known "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." He was an "eyewitness of his majesty." He saw the Son's *glory* when he was with Christ "in the holy mount," and he penned the Epistles of I, II Peter as

he was “moved [‘borne along’] by the Holy Spirit” (II Peter 1:16-21). Peter not only saw and recorded things having to do with the coming kingdom, but he also left detailed instructions concerning that which Christians must do to have a part in this kingdom.

When will Christians learn that they have been saved for a purpose? And when will they learn that this purpose has to do with the coming kingdom? Positions as joint-heirs with Christ in the governmental structure of the kingdom are presently being offered, and crowns must be won by conquest. The arch-enemy of our souls is at work in the closing days of this dispensation as never before; but the route for an “abundant entrance” into the kingdom has been properly marked, and the promise of God stands sure:

“To him that overcometh...” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21).

And the command given through Jude, in order that one might one day realize this promise, is clear:

“Earnestly strive for [with reference to, in the good contest of] the faith...”

3

Falling Away from the Faith

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness [‘licentiousness’], and [‘even’] denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4).

The “apostates” in Jude 4 are *false teachers* who are often erroneously thought of as unsaved individuals. However, understanding these false teachers to be unsaved individuals has no basis whatsoever in Scripture. In fact, such a view would militate against that which Jude has to say about false teachers. The context in Jude (v. 5) and the corresponding section in II Peter (2:1-3; cf. vv. 19-21) both demonstrate conclusively that the unsaved are not in view at all.

The context of Jude 4 has to do with individuals who were *saved out of the land of Egypt*, but *afterward destroyed*. Not only had these individuals appropriated the blood of the paschal lambs but they had also been delivered from Egypt. In the antitype this points to individuals who have both *appropriated* the blood of the Passover Lamb and have been *delivered* from the things of the world (*ref.* “...having escaped the corruption that is in the world...have escaped the pollutions of the world...” [II Peter 1:4; 2:20]).

Then, continuing with the antitype of Jude 5, this verse also has to

do with the *destruction* of many of these same individuals. The reason for the destruction of certain individuals, following their appropriation of the blood of the Passover Lamb and following their deliverance from the things of the world, is revealed in the context in Jude (vv. 3, 4) and in the Old Testament type (Num. 13:21-14:9, 27-37). It was because of unfaithfulness, resulting in a *falling away* — *apostasy*.

The companion epistle to Jude, II Peter, clearly states that these false teachers had been allowed to move from *gnosis* into *epignosis*, from “knowledge” into a “mature knowledge” (cf. 2:1-3, 19-21; “knowledge” in v. 20 is *epignosis* [“mature knowledge”] in the Greek text). Operating in the spiritual realm is impossible for the unsaved, whether dealing with *gnosis* (I Cor. 2:14), or with *epignosis* (II Peter 2:20). The unsaved are spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1) and can no more move about in the spiritual realm than can a physically dead person move about in the physical realm.

An unsaved person knows only the soulical nature; he lacks a redeemed spirit into which the Word of God can flow; and he lacks the indwelling Holy Spirit who can take this Word and lead him into all truth — turning the *Water* into *Wine*, moving from *gnosis* to *epignosis*. All things associated with the new nature are *totally alien* to unsaved man, and any acquisition of knowledge relates to his soulical (natural) nature and could never be associated with *epignosis*.

The widespread tendency to read into II Peter and Jude what is not there (*unregenerate* false teachers) has served only to cloud the true issue and rob both epistles of their correct message. The unsaved existing in the midst of Christians today *is* both an issue and real problem, but that is not the subject matter at hand. Peter and Jude both deal with *regenerate* teachers who have *apostatized from the faith*, become *false teachers*, and now *stand in the way* of those who are *earnestly striving* “for [with reference to, in the good contest of] the faith.”

STANDING IN THE WAY

The thought of false teachers standing in the way of those who are *earnestly striving* in “the good contest of the faith” is very similar to the actions of the Scribes and Pharisees during the time Jesus was upon the earth, prior to His crucifixion. The Scribes and Pharisees “shut up the

kingdom of the heavens against men [‘before men,’ ‘in front of men’]” (Matt. 23:13). They were not going in themselves, and they didn’t want anyone else to go in either. They stood in the way of those who were *striving* to enter.

No other religious group in Israel received a greater condemnation at the hands of Christ than did the Scribes and Pharisees. Over and over Christ uttered the condemnatory words, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (Matt. 23:13-16, 23, 25, 27, 29). He called them “fools and blind...serpents...vipers,” and likened them to “whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (Matt. 23:17, 19, 24, 26, 27, 33).

Even the Sadducees, although spoken against for their unbelief and often placed in the same category with the Pharisees, were never the recipients of such condemnatory words as those recorded in Matthew chapter twenty-three. What made the difference? Why were *the woe’s* and *the words of condemnation* directed toward the Scribes and Pharisees (the keepers and teachers of the Law, the fundamental legalists of that day) instead of the Sadducees (a group not holding to the exact letter of the Law [*e.g.*, Acts 23:7, 8], who could be looked upon as the liberals of that day)? The answer is obvious. The ones who claimed to believe the Scriptures to the very letter (the Scribes and Pharisees) not only exhibited an unbelief greater than that of the Sadducees but this was done in an open, hypocritical manner, producing dire consequences.

The Scribes and Pharisees, the legalistic keepers and teachers of the Law, were, by far, the largest religious party in Israel. They, by their very numbers, controlled the religious life in Israel. They had not only rejected the message and the Messenger — the kingdom of the heavens being proclaimed by Israel’s Messiah — but they had stood in the way of others heeding the message and receiving the Messenger. They had “shut up the kingdom of the heavens” in the presence of those in Israel (Matt. 23:13).

This resulted in a widespread *unbelief* in Israel, climaxed by the nation’s *rejection* of the King and the Kingdom, followed by the *crucifixion* of the King Himself. Thus, the Scribes and Pharisees were directly responsible for that which occurred in Israel when Christ

came the first time, which accounts for Christ's condemnatory words directed toward them at the climax of His ministry, immediately preceding the events surrounding Calvary (Matt. 23:1ff).

The same basic thing exists in Christendom today relative to what is often termed the clergy and the laity. And the Word of God concerns itself far more with warnings directed toward those who follow in the paths of the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees — the apostates and those who do their bidding — than it does with warnings directed toward those who have never become associated with “the faith.”

And the basic issue today is the same as it was over 1,900 years ago — the offer of the kingdom of the heavens on the one hand, and certain individuals seeking to subvert this offer on the other hand. False teachers, as their counterparts in Israel, are *shutting up* “the kingdom of the heavens against men [‘before men,’ ‘in front of men’].” They themselves are not going to enter into the kingdom; and their basic aim underlying all their pseudo systems of doctrine, whether they realize it or not, is to also prevent others from entering. They stand in the way of others, producing a widespread unbelief concerning the King and the Kingdom.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The mention of *false teachers* in Jude appears immediately following the exhortation to *earnestly strive* “with reference to the faith.” The parallel section to this, as we have seen, is II Peter, chapters one and two. Another parallel section which should prove profitable to consider at this time is the section devoted to “false prophets” in the latter part of what is commonly called the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matt. 5-7). In this discourse, delivered by Jesus to His disciples while in a mountain apart from the multitudes, “false prophets” are mentioned immediately *after* an exhortation to *enter in* “at the strait gate” and immediately before a rejection of certain individuals for *entrance* “into the kingdom of the heavens” (7:13-23). The contextual setting provides the reason for the appearance of false prophets at this particular point in Scripture; and a study of this contextual setting in the light of related Scripture will clearly reveal that these false prophets are, as in Jude 4, *false teachers*, not unregenerate individuals

alienated from God.

The Sermon on the Mount is a connected discourse dealing with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens. This discourse is actually an exposition of Matt. 5:20:

“For I say unto you [Jesus’ disciples; cf. v. 2], That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case *enter into the kingdom of the heavens.*”

Two things must ever be kept in mind when studying the Sermon on the Mount: a) The message is to the *saved*, not the *unsaved*; and b) the subject matter at hand is *entrance into the kingdom*, not eternal salvation.

The Sermon on the Mount was delivered by Jesus to His disciples during the time that the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was still open to the nation of Israel. This message was delivered during the closing days of God’s past dealings with Israel and applied strictly to a people (Israelites) to whom the offer to occupy positions in the heavenly portion of the kingdom was being extended. However, after Israel’s rejection of this offer and the subsequent removal of the kingdom from Israel (Matt. 21:18-43), the words of the Sermon on the Mount could no longer be applicable to this nation.

The Sermon on the Mount, dealing with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens, can be applicable only to those to whom the kingdom of the heavens *is being extended* (not ‘was’ being extended [in relation to Israel in time past], but ‘*is*’ *being extended* [in relation to another entity today]). With this in mind, the present recipients of the promises and blessings associated with the kingdom of the heavens comprise an entirely “new creation” *in Christ*. This new creation, separate and distinct from Israel, was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected — the *heavenly* portion of the kingdom.

And the words of the Sermon on the Mount, remaining applicable to individuals associated with entrance into the kingdom of the heavens, *must, accordingly, now apply to Christians*. The words of the Sermon on the Mount — following a reoffer of the kingdom to Israel and a second rejection by Israel (seen in the Book of Acts) — can apply to no other group of individuals during the present dispensation.

DANGERS CONFRONTING CHRISTIANS

Matt. 7:13-23 records *two dangers* which confront every Christian during his present pilgrim walk. These dangers are produced by the actions of the false prophets (vv. 15-20) and concern the Christian basically in his relationship to the coming kingdom. The *first danger* confronting Christians is “lack of effort” (vv. 13, 14), and the *second danger* is “performing works for the Lord, but not doing the will of the Lord” (vv. 21-23).

1) LACK OF EFFORT (VV. 13, 14)

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

A parallel verse recorded in Luke 13:24 states,

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

The word “Strive” is the translation of the Greek word *agonizomai*, from which the English word “agonize” is derived (*ref.* Chapter II). Effort — straining every muscle of one’s being — is to be expended as Christians strive to enter through this gate. Every weight and hindrance is to be cast aside, everything not associated with the race is to be counted for naught, as Christians “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Heb. 12:1, 2; Phil. 3:7-14).

Striving in passages such as I Cor. 9:25; I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7; Jude 3 is in “the good contest of the faith.” *Entrance into the kingdom* is in view in these passages, as in Matt. 7:13, 14 and Luke 13:24. Entering in “at the strait gate” in Matt. 7:13 requires *effort*, and related Scriptures reveal that this effort has to do with *striving in the race* set before Christians. II Peter 1:11, a verse showing the result of properly striving in the race, refers to an *abundant entrance* “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” The kingdom of the

heavens and entrance into this kingdom comprise the subject matter at hand, which is the object of the race in all these verses.

The parable of the Sower in Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23 provides one of the best examples in Scripture showing how Christians are caused to fail in the race and *fall away* because of the ministry of false teachers. This parable concerns four types of Christians who are sown out in the world by the Lord Jesus Christ (the words, “he that received seed” [vv. 19, 20, 22, 23], should be translated, “he that was sown” [cf. vv. 37, 38]). These Christians are categorized as the ones sown “by the wayside,” the ones sown “upon stony places,” the ones sown “among thorns,” and the ones sown “into good ground.” Only the latter, the ones sown “into good ground,” bring forth fruit. The other three types of Christians, for various revealed reasons, do not produce fruit.

The parable of the Sower in all its four parts concerns experiences in the lives of Christians who have both heard the word of the kingdom and have been sown by the Lord Jesus Christ in various places out in the world, with a view to bringing forth fruit for the kingdom. The second part of this parable concerns Christians sown upon “stony places” (vv. 5, 6, 20, 21); and, because of “tribulation or persecution” arising in their lives, these Christians fail to bring forth fruit. The “tribulation” and “persecution” are seen to be brought about “because of the word [‘the word of the kingdom’; cf. v. 19].” These represent those who hear and joyfully receive “the word of the kingdom,” finding themselves in a position to bring forth fruit when “tribulation or persecution” arises in their lives.

Individuals responsible for bringing about “tribulation” or “persecution” in the lives of Christians sown upon “stony places” are said to cast a “stumbling block” in their path (the word “offended” [v. 21] should literally be translated “stumbling block”). In the parallel passage in Luke 8:13, this “stumbling block” cast before Christians is said to cause them to “fall away.” The Greek word translated “fall away” in this passage is *aphistemi*, the verb form of the word *apostasia*, from which the English word “apostasy” is derived. This is a *falling away*, an *apostasy*, “from the faith.”

Christians who have heard the “word of the kingdom” and have been placed out in the world, with a view of bringing forth fruit for the kingdom, are the ones engaged in *striving* “in the good contest of the

faith.” These are the ones who are striving to enter in at the strait gate. Those who cast a “stumbling block” in their pathway are none other than the false prophets/teachers of Matt. 7:15-20; II Peter 2:1-3; Jude 4. And the ministry of those proclaiming a false message concerning the kingdom centers around seeking to prevent other Christians from bringing forth fruit by causing them *to turn away* from the “word of the kingdom,” *to fall away*. Such an act then results in fruit-bearing in an entirely different realm — the apostate teacher himself producing fruit, diametrically opposed to the “word of the kingdom.”

The apostates, through their ministry among Christians, produce other apostates (those caused to fall away through standing away from the faith). This is what is meant by the statement in Matt. 7:20: “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” This verse has to do with identifying apostate Christians alone, not with the common, false concept of testing a person who claims to be saved (seeking to ascertain the reality or nonreality of his/her conversion) by watching for fruit.

Such a concept, as the preceding, is completely alien to Scripture. A person is placed in a position to bring forth fruit only *after he is saved*, and Scripture clearly teaches that he *may* or *may not* bring forth fruit. Whether a Christian bears fruit or not is *never* set forth as a test for salvation, a criterion to show whether or not he has been saved. Those who promote such teachings are seeking to bring works over into an area where works *cannot* exist (Rom. 11:6; cf. Eph. 2:8, 9).

Contrary to this entire false system of thought, Scripture teaches that there will be many Christians appearing at the judgment seat of Christ without one single good work to their credit (I Cor. 3:12-15). *Fruit-bearing* in Matt. 7:15-20 pertains to “a falling away,” to “apostasy” — *i.e.*, an apostate Christian producing fruit. The apostate Christian has *fallen away* “from the faith,” and he bears fruit by causing other Christians (who are in a position to bring forth fruit for the kingdom) to follow his false teachings and also *fall away* “from the faith.” This is the warning set forth in Matt. 7:15-20.

2) PERFORMING WORKS, BUT... (VV. 21-23)

“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the

kingdom of the heavens; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils ['demons']? 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'].”

“Many” individuals to whom the offer to occupy positions of power and authority with Christ in His kingdom is presently being extended will, in that coming day, be rejected. Matthew 7:21 is one of seven such statements in Scripture, teaching exclusion from the kingdom. The other six are Matt. 5:20; 18:3; 19:23, 24; Luke 18:17; John 3:5; I Cor. 6:9, 10. Teachings relative to the Christian’s calling, his present responsibility, and his future accountability must be understood in the light of these statements.

A travesty in Scriptural interpretation today is the use of Matt. 7:21-23 (or, for that matter, also vv. 13, 14, 24-27) as a message directed to the unsaved, for this serves only to obscure the correct interpretation. These verses have to do, not with the message of salvation by grace, but with the Word of the Kingdom. These verses have to do *only* with the saved relative to their future entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens. Such should be clear to anyone who has not already decided contrariwise and is willing to accept what Scripture *alone* teaches.

1) *The words “Lord, Lord” (vv. 21, 22)*, uttered by individuals who are denied entrance into the kingdom, constitute an expression peculiarly characteristic of disciples. According to I Cor. 12:3, “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.” An unsaved person, not in possession of the Holy Spirit, does not understand the things of the Spirit. These things are alien to his soulical nature (the only nature which he possesses). Jesus is not his Lord; and, apart from the Spirit of God, he does not, he cannot, so acknowledge Christ.

2) *A three-part question* is asked by those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord in verse twenty-two, and the construction of this question in the Greek text (using the negative “*ou*,” governing all three parts)

designates that a positive, rather than a negative, response was expected from the Lord. That is, the manner in which the question was asked reveals that these individuals expected to hear the Lord say, “Yes, you have prophesied in my name; yes, you have cast out demons in my name; and yes, you have performed many wonderful works in my name.” These individuals had been proclaiming a message and performing works — even miraculous works — believing these things were being done in the name of the Lord. However, such was not the case. They had, unknowingly, been deceived by the false prophets, with miraculous works emanating from the only source possible — *the demonic world*; and Christ’s answer to their question (v. 23) was not at all in keeping with their expected response.

a) *Prophesying in the name of the Lord* in this passage is simply proclaiming the truth concerning the Word of God. The meaning of the word for “prophesy” in the Greek text (*propheteuo*) is “to speak forth.” The meaning could go beyond this and refer to prophetic utterance itself, but that is not what the text and context are dealing with. This is the same word (in its noun form; *prophetes*) translated “prophets” in verse fifteen, as well as in II Peter 2:1. Note that in II Peter 2:1 the “false prophets” are identified as “false teachers,” synonymous with the false teachers in Jude. The entire thought surrounds a servant of the Lord (who himself is an apostate, or has been misled by the apostates) teaching things which are not in accord with the Word of God and, thus, could not be taught in the Lord’s name.

b) *Casting out demons and doing many wonderful works*, supposedly in the name of the Lord, is perhaps best exemplified during the present time by the actions of those Christians involved in the Charismatic Movement, for this is exactly what these individuals are doing. The Charismatic Movement can be properly understood only in the light of Scripture. Seemingly it is a movement which exists because of the simple failure of Christians to understand the proper place which signs, wonders, and miracles occupy in the Word of God. However, the crux of the matter goes far beyond this. Matt. 7:15-23 reveals an apostate element resulting from the ministry of false prophets associated with a movement of this nature.

Signs, wonders, and miracles, such as were in evidence during the

earthly ministry of Christ and for the first several decades of the existence of the Church, are peculiarly related to two things, *Israel and the Kingdom*. That would be to say, God *must* be dealing with *Israel* in relation to *the Kingdom* for signs, wonders, and miracles to be manifested (*ref.* the author's book, FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES, Chapter I).

Israel was dealt with in relation to the kingdom in the past (relative to the O.T. theocracy and Christ's offer of the kingdom of the heavens at His first coming), is not being dealt with in this manner today (during the present dispensation in which God is calling out a bride for His Son, with Israel set aside), but will be dealt with after this fashion in the future (the Tribulation period and the Messianic Era). Accordingly, signs, wonders, and miracles (associated with Israel and the kingdom) were in evidence in the past, cannot be in evidence today, but will be in evidence once again in the future.

Thus, there can be no current manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles, as seen in the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts. Those in the Charismatic Movement, claiming to be manifesting these signs during the present time, cannot possibly be doing so. That being seen in the movement today can be neither a continuation of nor a restoration of the signs, wonders, and miracles evident during apostolic days.

The Charismatic Movement has been singled out because of the movement's widespread influence in what is viewed as Christendom in the world today (crossing all denominational lines, Protestant and Catholic alike). But, to broaden the matter, suffice it to say, any manifestation of supernatural powers in the world today — in any movement, Christian or non-Christian — can have no association whatsoever with supernatural powers exhibited during apostolic times. Such powers, from a Biblical standpoint, *cannot exist today*.

These powers were for a time *past*, and are reserved for a time *future* (during the Millennium, if not also during the Tribulation as well when God once again begins to deal with Israel immediately preceding the Messianic Kingdom [Isa. 35:1-6]). Consequently, any movement in the world today purporting to exercise these powers is *not at all what it claims to be*.

Manifestations of supernatural powers in the world today are no indication that the ones exhibiting these powers are from God. One

thing which is almost completely overlooked is the fact that Satan possesses supernatural powers which can be exhibited through man. Scripture associates the *working of Satan* with “all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thess. 2:9, 10). His efforts through the manifestations of his powers are always directed toward one goal — to *deceive*. He is introduced into affairs of the human race in this fashion, comprising a *first-mention principle* which remains constant throughout Scripture (Gen. 3:1-7; Ex. 7:11, 12, 22; 8:7; Matt. 24:24; Eph. 4:14; I Tim. 2:14; Rev. 13:13, 14). And the deception of individuals in Matthew, chapter seven (vv. 21-23) by the false prophets (vv. 15-20) constitutes a warning to everyone involved in comparable activity today.

Signs, wonders, and miracles were in evidence during apostolic days as signs for Israel, calling the nation to repentance (Matt. 10:1-8; cf. Matt. 4:23-25; 8:1-9:38). This was during a time when God was dealing with Israel in relation to the kingdom. The kingdom of the heavens was “at hand,” something which is not true at all today. Israel has been set aside, and the kingdom of the heavens is being offered to an entirely new entity, though the kingdom is not presently “at hand.”

Since that condition no longer exists, and the only kingdom now in existence on the earth is Satan’s kingdom, any present manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles would, of necessity, have to do with this kingdom. In this respect, individuals involved in any movement associated with signs, wonders, and miracles today are, in reality, producing works relating to a kingdom diametrically opposed to the kingdom of Christ; and any manifestation of supernatural power would have to emanate from that kingdom. Thus, it is no wonder that they are called *workers of iniquity* and will, in the coming day of reckoning, be denied entrance into the kingdom of Christ.

The words, “I never knew you” (v. 23), have been misunderstood by many individuals over the years. All expressions of this nature in Scripture must be understood as *relative expressions*, pertaining to the subject matter at hand. In reality, God in His omniscience *knows* everyone and everything.

An expression of this nature used relative to eternal life, for example, would limit those whom God *knows* to the ones in possession of eternal life. God *knows* all the others (the unsaved), but not relative

to eternal life. However, the subject under discussion in Matt. 7:21-23 is not eternal life at all. This subject has to do with “doing the will of the Lord” — resulting in *fruit-bearing* — with a view to *entrance into the kingdom*. The words, “I never knew you,” constitute a *relative expression* pertaining to the fact that the Lord did not know them concerning the works which they had performed; and, consequently, because of their lack of fruit, He also did not know them concerning entrance into the kingdom. These individuals did perform works, but these works were performed completely outside the will and purpose of the Lord, and He had nothing to do with these works.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

The judgment of Christians will be based solely on *works* (cf. Matt. 16:27; I Cor. 3:13-15; II Cor. 5:10, 11). Being approved for a crown before the judgment seat of Christ involves accomplishing the will of the Lord. This concerns faithfulness to the task/tasks which God has called each individual to perform, resulting in fruit-bearing. Being rejected for a crown before the judgment seat of Christ involves the exact opposite — not accomplishing the will of the Lord. This concerns unfaithfulness to the task/tasks which God has called each individual to perform, resulting in a fruitless condition. The reckoning in Matt. 7:21-23 illustrates the latter — a *negative side* to the coming judgment of Christians, showing their rejection in that coming day because of *fruitlessness* during the present day.

The end of the present dispensation is to be marked by a rise in demonic activity, an increase in false teachers, and Christians being “carried about with every wind of doctrine,” being misdirected in every way possible. The tremendous growth of such activity ushers in the great apostasy of the end-time and can only be expected to increase as the dispensation draws to a close. The only recourse which Christians have during this day of apostasy is the *Word of God* and the *indwelling Holy Spirit* Who can take the Word received into man’s saved human spirit and guide him “*into all truth*,” providing “*all things that pertain unto life and godliness*.”

4

Saved, but Afterward Destroyed

I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not (Jude 5).

The beginning of spiritual lessons concerning apostasy in Jude is drawn from the experiences of the Israelites under Moses. The Israelites were saved out of the land of Egypt. Not only had they appropriated the blood of the paschal lambs but they had also been delivered from Egypt itself. As a redeemed people under Moses, they had been called into existence and saved out of the land of Egypt for a *purpose* — a purpose to be realized in the land of Canaan.

GOD'S FIRSTBORN SON

Israel's standing among the nations is that of *firstborn*. Israel is God's *firstborn son*. An announcement to this effect was to be proclaimed to the Pharaoh of Egypt before the Exodus, along with the command, "Let my son go, that he may serve me" (Ex. 4:22, 23). This referred to the fact that the purpose surrounding Israel's removal from Egypt was associated with the nation's birthright. Israel was called out of Egypt to go into another land, the land of Canaan, and exercise

the rights of the firstborn in that land.

The rights of the firstborn, the birthright possessed by Israel, consisted of three things: 1) *ruler* of the household, under and for the Father, 2) exercising the office of *priest* in the family, and 3) the reception of a *double portion* of all the Father's goods.

The *first* segment of the birthright placed the firstborn in the position of "heir" with respect to a *rule* of the Father's house, under and for the Father. "Sonship" implies *rulership* and carries the thought of *supremacy*. In this respect, Israel, a national power, was to be the *supreme nation* and exercise *rule* over other nations — all the nations of the earth. This earth, a province in the kingdom of God, constitutes the Father's house when the birthright with respect to nations is in view (cf. Rev. 2:26, 27); and Israel was to bear rule over all the nations in this house, under and for the Father. Israel occupied this standing as *firstborn* among all nations while still in Egypt, but Israel would not actually realize these rights until after the nation had been removed from Egypt and established in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The *second* segment of the birthright would place Israel in a *priestly* position with respect to both God and the nations. Israel was to be a "kingdom of priests" in the midst of the nations (Ex. 19:6), resulting in the nations being blessed through Israel in accord with Gen. 12:1-3. A *first-mention principle* relating to these blessings had previously been established in Gen. 9:25-27. "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex. 3:6) was *first* "the God of Shem" (Gen. 9:26). Neither Ham nor Japheth had a God, and the only way they could realize spiritual blessings was through Shem and his God. Or, to say it another way, the descendants of Ham and Japheth (the Gentile nations) are "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12) and can realize spiritual blessings *only* through the descendants of Shem (the nation of Israel) and their God. Although the lineage of Shem also, among others, includes the descendants of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah, spiritual blessings for nations emanating from these lines are derived through the same means as those for the Gentile nations (Gen. 17:18-21; 21:5-12; 22:2; 25:1-6).

The *third* segment of the birthright placed Israel in a position to receive the *double portion* of all the Father's goods. This segment of the

birthright, as the first two segments, also had to do with Israel's position among the nations. There are two spheres of governmental power and authority in a rule over the Gentile nations — *earthly*, and *heavenly* — and the double portion of the birthright pertained to Israel ultimately coming into possession of both (*cf.* Gen. 22:17, 18). The way was open at Kadesh-Barnea for Israel to go into the land and realize the *earthly portion* of this inheritance, but the *heavenly portion* of the inheritance was not to be opened to the nation until about fifteen hundred years later.

It was necessary that *both* be extended to Israel at some point in time, for Israel, as the firstborn, was the *appointed heir*. At Kadesh-Barnea, when the earthly portion of the inheritance was in the offing, God Himself dwelt in the midst of the nation; fifteen hundred years later, when the heavenly portion of the inheritance was in the offing, God Himself once again (in the person of His Son) dwelt in the midst of the nation.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

When Israel left Egypt, the march was not directly to the land of Canaan. Before entering the land and assuming the rights of the firstborn, certain preparatory steps had to be taken first. Thus, the march of the Israelites under Moses, beyond the Red Sea passage, was to a previously designated place in the wilderness — a *Mount* in “the wilderness of Sinai” (Ex. 3:1, 12; 19:1, 2) — where God would meet and commune with His people through Moses. Here, before the Mount in the wilderness of Sinai, the people were to be prepared and equipped for the position which they were to occupy in the land of Canaan. During this time the Law was given to Moses, the priestly ministry and tabernacle worship were established, and orderly arrangements of the tribes and families were set forth (Ex. 19:3-Num. 10:10).

The Law given to Moses at Mt. Sinai, with all its rules and regulations, was to be Israel's constitution, given to govern the nation's affairs in the kingdom. And the tabernacle, with God dwelling in the Holy of Holies in the midst of His people, was to be the central place of worship for the “kingdom of priests,” through whom God would bless all the nations. Israel, God's firstborn son, was to bear rule after

this fashion in a worldwide theocracy with pre-established laws, rules, and regulations.

The tabernacle was “set up” in the wilderness of Sinai on the first day of the first month of the second year following the Exodus — a few days short of one year. On that day the “glory of the Lord” — the visible presence of God among His people — filled the tabernacle. And at that point in time a theocratic kingdom came into existence on this earth (Ex. 40:1-38). The kingdom with its constitution was actually established in the wilderness of Sinai, but the actual rule within this kingdom could not begin until God’s firstborn son had been removed from the wilderness and established in the land of Canaan. Thus, the march from the wilderness of Sinai was then to Kadesh-Barnea. In essence, at that juncture in history, everything was ready for God to begin fulfilling His purpose for having saved His people out of the land of Egypt.

ISRAEL AT KADESH-BARNEA

“And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, ‘Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.’

But the men that went up with him said, ‘We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we’” (Num. 13:30, 31).

All things dating back to Abraham and his removal from Ur of the Chaldees came to pass with an end in view, and that end involved the nation springing from the loins of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob realizing the very purpose for its national existence. All the nations of the earth were to be blessed through Abraham and his seed, and this was to be realized through the seed of Abraham becoming a “great nation” and occupying a predetermined place on the earth with respect to the surrounding nations (Gen. 12:1-3). National blessings for the nations of the earth were to be realized through Israel. God was to bless Israel and, in turn, bless the nations of the earth through Israel. The surrounding nations, alienated from God (Eph. 2:12; *cf.* Psa. 147:19, 20), were to be brought into a proper relationship with God through the “kingdom of priests” — the nation in possession of the tabernacle, the dwelling place of God and the only way of approach to

God.

Herein lies the reason that the people of God since time immemorial have been commanded, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem...” (Psa. 122:6). When Jerusalem is at peace, the nations will be at peace; when Israel is at rest, the nations will be at rest; when Israel has been established in the land as a blessing, the nations will be blessed in their respective lands through Israel (Isa. 2:1-5; 14:1, 2; 40:3-5; 52:9, 10; 62:1-7; Jer. 3:17, 18; Zech. 2:4-11; 8:20-23; 9:10; *cf.* Deut. 32:8; Ezek. 5:5; Acts 17:26, 27).

Spiritual blessings are derived through God’s firstborn Sons. This was the pattern established in history, this pattern remains true today, and this pattern will remain true throughout time and eternity. Genesis 12:3 remains in force today, as does Gal. 3:14. However, during the present dispensation, God’s firstborn Sons (Israel, and Jesus) are not occupying their God-ordained places with respect to their *Firstborn* status; and the *fullness of blessings* awaiting mankind must be deferred to that future time, to the coming age, when present conditions will be changed.

The prospect lying before the people of Israel upon their departure from the wilderness of Sinai was to enter into the land of Canaan and to ultimately be established in that land, not only as the *ruler* over the nations of the earth, but also as the *kingdom of priests* through whom God would bless the nations. The prospect lying before the nations at this point was, accordingly, that of entering into a position of subjection to Israel which would ultimately result in their being recipients of the blessings of God.

1) THE TWELVE SPIES AND THEIR REPORT

Several months beyond Israel’s departure from the wilderness of Sinai, about one and one-half years beyond the nation’s departure from Egypt, the newly established nation, God’s firstborn son, arrived at the borders of the land of Canaan. The end of an era was at hand. Heretofore the descendants of Abraham had been considered “strangers” in relation to the land of Canaan (Gen. 15:13; 37:1; 47:9; Ex. 6:3, 4). But the sojourn of the seed of Abraham had ended (Ex. 12:40, 41), and the descendants of Abraham were now at the very borders of the land — an established nation *under God* (the only nation which has ever

been or will ever be so placed) — ready to enter in and take possession of the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

At Kadesh-Barnea, God instructed Moses to send spies into the land of Canaan, one man from each of the twelve tribes. These spies were to traverse the land, obtaining a complete report concerning the land and its inhabitants prior to the nation's entrance into and conquest of the land. The twelve men chosen searched the land "from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob" for forty days. They observed the cities and inhabitants of the land, and obtained samples of the fruits of the land ("grapes," "pomegranates," and "figs") to carry back with them. And among the inhabitants of the land were the "giants [*nephilim*], the sons of Anak, which came of the giants [*nephilim*]."

(The word *nephilim*, a transliterated Hebrew word meaning "fallen ones," refers to the offspring resulting from a cohabitation of the "sons of God [angels]" with the "daughters of men [female descendants of Adam]." This subject will be covered in Chapters IV and V.)

Upon their return, the spies possessed a complete report concerning the land and its inhabitants. Their findings were then presented before Moses, Aaron, and all the congregation of Israel (Num. 13:1-33).

Ten of the twelve spies presented an "evil report" concerning the land and its inhabitants. They stated that the land was truly a land flowing with "milk and honey," but the *people* that dwelt in the land were "strong," the *cities* were "walled, and very great," and it was a *land* that "eateth up the inhabitants thereof." According to their report, the Israelites would "be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." In essence, the ten spies bringing this report were saying that God would be *unable* to complete His dealings with Israel through bringing the people of this nation into the realization of their calling (Num. 13:26-29, 31-33), resulting in Gen. 12:2, 3 remaining unfulfilled.

However, two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, believed God could and would do exactly what He had promised. Caleb "stilled the people before Moses, and said, 'Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it'" (Num. 13:30). Caleb and Joshua recognized that the battle belonged to the Lord (II Chron. 20:15), and circumstances were not to be viewed from a naturalistic standpoint,

but from a Divine viewpoint. They knew that the Israelites within their own strength could not overcome the inhabitants of the land (*cf.* Num. 14:42-45); but they also knew that with God dwelling in their midst, *no one*, inside or outside the land, could overcome them. In essence, their report stated that God was *well able* to complete His dealings with Israel through bringing the people of this nation into a realization of their calling (*cf.* Num. 14:8), ultimately effecting the fulfillment of Gen. 12:2, 3.

2) ISRAEL'S REACTION

The nation of Israel at this point stood at the very threshold of entering into the land and ruling within a theocracy in the position for which the people had previously been saved out of the land of Egypt. They were in possession of all things pertaining to the kingdom (constitution, center of worship, presence of God Himself), they had heard the report concerning the land from those who had been there, and they had even tasted the actual fruits of the land. They were at the end of one era and the beginning of another.

Everything was now in readiness for them to move ahead. They had been brought from the brickyards of Egypt to the borders of the land of Canaan. They had been brought from a place of subjection to the most powerful Gentile nation of that day to a position where they could enter into a land which belonged to them alone and ultimately rule over, resulting in a blessing to, the same Gentile nation which had previously held them in bondage. This is the prospect which lay before the people of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea.

If ever a people could be looked upon as having moved from a state of *gnosis* ("knowledge") to a state of *epignosis* ("mature knowledge" [particularly as it related to things surrounding the purpose for their calling]) it would be the Israelites under Moses. They moved from a *simple knowledge* (*gnosis*) of the rudimentary things surrounding the death of the firstborn in Egypt to an *extensive knowledge* (*epignosis*) concerning the purpose of their calling at Kadesh-Barnea (Ex. 12-Num. 13).

(Comparing *gnosis* and *epignosis*, the preposition *epi* prefixed to *gnosis* [*epignosis*] intensifies the word. Note Paul's use of the verb form

of *gnosis* [*ginosko*] without, and then with, the preposition *epi* in I Cor. 13:12:

“For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face:
now I know [*ginosko*] in part; but then shall I know [*epiginosko*]
even as I also am known [*epiginosko*].”)

And at Kadesh-Barnea the children of Israel, in possession of this knowledge, were in a position to move in one of two directions: they could either *believe the true report* proclaimed by Caleb and Joshua and go into the land, or they could *believe the false report* proclaimed by the other ten spies and refuse to enter the land. Israel chose the latter, and, through this move, the nation *fell away* (Num. 14:1ff).

The nation of Israel *stood away from* “the faith.” They refused to believe that they could go into the land and, under God, be victorious in conquest. Israel, not only to her own detriment but to the detriment of the nations of the earth, committed *national apostasy* at Kadesh-Barnea. Israel turned away from the land of Canaan and looked back toward the land of Egypt (*cf.* Luke 9:62). The people rejected God’s appointed leader, Moses, and sought to appoint a new leader who would lead them back to Egypt. They even sought to stone Caleb and Joshua because of their positive report concerning the land. They refused to believe that God was able to victoriously lead His people into this land, and they wanted no part of it (*cf.* Heb. 3:19). This is the point in Scripture where one finds a *national apostasy* resulting in a *national overthrow*.

Caleb and Joshua alone, of the entire accountable generation, twenty years old and above, would ultimately be allowed to enter into the land and realize the purpose for their salvation. The remaining individuals were to be overthrown in the wilderness and fall short of the goal of their calling (Num. 14:29ff).

CHRISTIANS AT KADESH-BARNEA

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world [‘age’] to come,

If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance...”
(Heb. 6:4-6).

This passage in Hebrews has been an enigma to Bible students over the years and is possibly the most misunderstood section of Scripture in the New Testament. But the passage is not nearly as difficult as the multiplicity of interpretations would lead one to believe. The numerous interpretations advanced by various expositors have resulted basically from two exegetical errors: 1) a failure to take into consideration the *message* of the Book of Hebrews, and 2) a failure to take into account the *context* of Heb. 6:4-6.

The *message* of the Book of Hebrews centers around the “salvation of the soul” (e.g., 6:13-20; 10:35-39; 13:17) and the *context* leading into Heb. 6:4-6 has to do with the experiences of the Israelites under Moses (chs. 3, 4), which is why maturity in the faith — moving from *gnosis* to *epignosis* — is in view immediately preceding Heb. 6:4-6 (5:5-6:3). The summation of the matter is contained in chapter six; but the thought begins in chapter three, and the entire passage must be so understood.

ISRAELITES UNDER MOSES — CHRISTIANS UNDER CHRIST

As the Israelites under Moses moved from a state of *gnosis* to a state of *epignosis* in the type, Christians under Christ are moving from a state of *gnosis* to a state of *epignosis* in the antitype; as the Israelites under Moses moved from Egypt toward the land of Canaan with an earthly inheritance in view, Christians under Christ are moving from the things of this world toward a land separate from this world with a heavenly inheritance in view; as the Israelites under Moses were being prepared during the wilderness journey for entrance into the land, so are Christians under Christ being prepared during the wilderness journey for entrance into the land; as the Israelites under Moses were to go in, conquer the inhabitants of the land, and rule as God’s firstborn son here on earth at the head of the nations, Christians under Christ are to go in, be victorious over the inhabitants of the land (*cf.* Eph. 6:10-17), and, in the coming day (following the adoption [Rom. 8:14-23]), rule as God’s firstborn son from the heavens over the nations.

BUT, as the Israelites refused to go into the land, conquer the inhabitants, and take possession of the land (with a view to a future rule), so can Christians refuse to go into the land, be victorious over the inhabitants, and take possession of the land (with a view to a future rule); and, just as the Israelites at this point fell away, with no possibility of being renewed again unto repentance, so can Christians at this point fall away, with no possibility of being renewed again unto repentance; and, just as the Israelites who fell away were overthrown in the wilderness and failed to realize the goal of their calling, so will Christians who fall away after this fashion be overthrown in the wilderness and fail to realize the goal of their calling.

The words, “once *enlightened*, and have *tasted* of the heavenly gift, and were made *partakers* of the Holy Spirit, and have *tasted* the good word of God, and the powers of the world [‘age’] to come” (Heb. 6:4, 5), refer to a progression in growth from milk to meat to strong meat. This is a progression from the rudimentary things concerning the antitype of the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt to the strong meat associated with things surrounding the antitype of Israel’s experiences at Kadesh-Barnea (chs. 3, 4).

In the immediate context (ch. 5), “strong meat” is associated with things surrounding the Melchizedek priesthood. This priesthood refers to things beyond Kadesh-Barnea, in the land itself. Melchizedek was a king-priest, setting forth in type the office which Christ will occupy in the coming age when He, as the great King-Priest, with His “kings and priests” (Rev. 5:10), takes the kingdom.

The entire thought in Heb. 6:4-6 is a progression from *gnosis* to *epignosis*, followed by a “falling away” from *the faith*. “Eternal salvation,” which, more often than not is read into this text, is *not* in view at all. Viewing eternal salvation as the issue under discussion is completely unnatural and will serve only to obscure the correct interpretation. If the Scriptures alone are allowed to interpret Heb. 6:4-6, the entire matter will become clear.

(Note the words, “enlightened,” “partakers,” and “tasted” [vv. 4, 5]. These words are used elsewhere in the Book of Hebrews referring to individuals [Christ, and Christians] entering into certain experiences [cf. 2:9; 3:1; 10:32]. The usage of these words in Heb. 6:4-6 is within the

same framework.)

IMPOSSIBILITY OF RENEWAL

The thought that *it is impossible* “to renew” certain apostate Christians “unto repentance” is one of *the most solemn warnings* to be found in all Scripture. The *finality* of the matter for those who apostatize in this manner is set forth by the word “impossible.” This is a *particular apostasy*, and once a Christian has fallen away from the faith in the manner set forth in Heb. 3-6, he can *never again* be brought back into the position which he occupied prior to his departure from the faith. (The Greek word translated “renew” refers to being *brought back into exactly the same position previously occupied*.) In the type, Israel could not be brought back into this position; and in the antitype, neither can Christians.

The entire thought is very similar to the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Matt. 12:22-32. This was a national sin committed by the religious leaders of Israel — not something which man, saved or unsaved, can commit today. Once the religious leaders had committed this sin, their actions brought the nation into a state from which a restoration to the previously occupied position could never occur.

At Kadesh-Barnea, however, the prohibition applied only to the present generation, twenty years old and above (this would allow the nation of Israel, at a future time, to realize the position for which the generation under Moses had been called — an *earthly* calling). In Matthew, chapter twelve, anticipating Matt. 21:43, this prohibition not only applied to the present generation but to future generations as well (this would prevent the nation of Israel from ever realizing the position unto which the generation during the days of Christ and the apostles had been called — a *heavenly* calling).

One thing which must not be overlooked when considering the impossibility of renewing an apostate unto repentance, who has fallen away in the manner specified, is the fact that in the type surrounding the experiences of the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea the nation did repent. The word “repentance” (Gk. *metanoia*) means a *change of mind*. This change of mind will lead to other things which are often mistaken for repentance (or part of repentance), but the simple, restrictive

meaning of the word itself does not include these things. Once the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea fell away and realized the consequences of their action, they changed their minds (repented) concerning the land of Canaan. They sought to occupy their former position, entering into and taking possession of the land, with a view to subsequently ruling over the nations.

(*Metanoia*, translated “repentance” in the N.T., is a compound word comprised of *meta* [“with”] and *noeo* [“to know,” or “to perceive (with the mind)”], derived from *nous* [“mind”]. *Metanoia* points to doing something with one’s mind, and that understood in the Greek language through the use of this word is “a change of mind.”)

Thus, bringing this over into the antitype, it is possible for Christians who have apostatized in this manner to also change their minds about the land set before them and seek to occupy their former position, looking ahead to the coming inheritance of the saints. However, God did not change His mind concerning what He stated would befall apostate Israelites in the type; nor will God change His mind concerning what He has stated will befall apostate Christians in the antitype.

After the Israelites had repented (changed their minds) at Kadesh-Barnea, the nation *failed* to regain the position which it had previously occupied. The Lord was no longer among His people to lead them victoriously into the land; and when they tried to enter, the Amalekites and Canaanites “smote them” (Num. 14:40-45).

Nor will the Lord be among like-minded apostate Christians today who repent (change their minds) and seek to occupy their former, forfeited position. They can no longer move victoriously into the land and overcome the inhabitants. If they try, as in the type, they will be overcome. The only promise awaiting Christians who have apostatized in the antitype of Israel’s Kadesh-Barnea experience is the same promise which awaited Israel — an *overthrow in the wilderness*, on *the right side* of the blood but on *the wrong side* of the goal of their calling.

The word “repentance” is only used three times in the Book of Hebrews (6:1, 6; 12:17), and two of these three times the word is used in the heart of major warnings given to Christians. Hebrews 6:4-6 is the heart of the third major warning, and Heb. 12:14-17 is the heart of

the fifth major warning.

Interestingly enough, in the fifth major warning in chapter twelve, Esau did repent. He changed his mind concerning the birthright after it had been forfeited. His repentance led to a great show of emotion. The words, “he found no place of repentance,” refer to the fact that *he found no place for a change of mind in his father* (ref. ASV). Esau sought to effect a change of mind on the part of his father, resulting in a reversal of that which had transpired. However, such did not, it could not, occur. Isaac could not change his mind. The birthright, once forfeited, was beyond Esau’s grasp forever.

The situation in Heb. 6:4-6 is identical. The apostates in this passage cannot occupy a previously forfeited position. It is not possible, as in Esau’s case, to renew them again unto repentance. In the types — the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea, and Isaac in the presence of his father — both the Israelites and Esau repented; but, though they repented, they still found no place of repentance. That would be to say, though they changed their minds at Kadesh-Barnea, God did not change His mind (God did not repent); and, though Esau changed his mind when he appeared in Isaac’s presence, Isaac did not change his mind (Isaac did not repent).

Repentance in the fifth major warning is not on the part of the one who forfeited his birthright, for he did repent. And repentance in the third major warning, as well, cannot to be on the part of the ones who fall away. In the type, the Israelites did repent, necessitating that the antitype be viewed after the same fashion. Also in the type, Israel’s repentance wrought no change in that which God had decreed; nor will a Christian’s repentance in the antitype bring about such a change.

Man turning his back upon that associated with the greatest thing God has ever designed for redeemed man — that of ascending the throne with God’s Son during the coming age — is *a serious matter*. In fact, it is *a very serious matter*; and God will deal with this matter in *an equally serious fashion*.

This is what Heb. 6:4-6, drawn from the type seen in chapters three and four, is about. *God overthrew* the Israelites who fell away in the type, and *He will also overthrow* Christians who fall away in the antitype.

5

In Those Days

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day (Jude 6).

There are two periods in the history of the earth where angels in the kingdom of Satan “kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.” The *first* period was in days *preceding the Flood*, and the *second* period was in days *following the Flood*. These two periods are referred to in Gen. 6:4 by the expressions, “*in those days* [before the Flood]; *and also after that* [after the Flood].”

II Peter 2:4-6 and Jude 6, 7 outline events resulting in the judgment of God in both periods. Note the section in II Peter: The “angels that sinned” (v. 4) refers to acts by angels involving illicit, sexual perversions, both *preceding* the Flood (v. 5) and *following* the Flood (v. 6). These angels, for this specific purpose, departed from “their own habitation,” their dwelling place in the heavens, and came to earth. Once upon the earth, these angels, appearing in the form of man, involved themselves in illicit, sexual relations with members of the human race.

This cohabitation in days before the Flood, insofar as the record is concerned, occurred only with the “daughters of men” — a heterosexual relationship. However, Scripture reveals both homosexual and heterosexual relationships involving angels and members of the human race in days following the Flood.

Attention is called to these two periods of time in sections of Scripture in the New Testament which deal with “apostasy,” revealing the serious nature of “standing away from” the position in which one was originally created — whether in the angelic world, or a new creation in Christ. In days *before* the Flood and again in days *following* the Flood, angelic beings in the kingdom of Satan “stood away from” their original, created state, involving themselves in something not only completely outside their own realm, but unlawful. This resulted in their being confined with chains in a place of darkness, awaiting judgment. And *time* has wrought no change in God’s attitude toward their sin. They have been bound for millenniums, they remain bound today, and they will continue to be bound until a designated time of judgment yet future.

CREATED TO RULE AND TO REIGN

The cohabitation of angels in the kingdom of Satan with members of the human race was a deceptive, well-planned scheme with a specific purpose in view; and this purpose can be traced to the reason man was brought into existence in Genesis, chapter one.

The original earth, which had become a chaos because of Satan’s aspirations to be “like the most High,” was restored over a six-day period; and man, created on the sixth day, was brought into existence to rule the restored earth in the stead of Satan and his angels (Gen. 1:2-28; Isa. 14:13, 14; Ezek. 28:15). Satan, knowing the reason for man’s creation, immediately began to move against man — something which he has continued to do since that time. Satan’s objective was *to bring about the disqualification of man through sin*, as he himself had previously been disqualified.

Thus, Satan, through deception, caused Adam to sin by first causing Eve (a part of Adam’s very being) to sin. This act not only disqualified the man, preventing him from assuming the role for which he had been created, but Adam’s sin also brought the entire restored creation under the bondage of sin.

Satan’s move against Adam, through Eve, in Genesis chapter three produces at least two first-mention principles in Scripture. One of these is Satan’s “method”: *deception* (*ref.* Chapter III). The other is

Satan's "reason" for this deception: *to prevent man from assuming the governmental reigns of the earth*. These two principles surrounding Satanic activity remain constant, holding true at any point in Scripture where Satan is seen moving against man. The underlying purpose behind Satan's every move against man always concerns *the governmental reigns of the earth* which he himself holds, and his methods are always *deceptive*.

Two things introduced following Adam's sin revealed that man, created in the "image" and "likeness" of God, was a being quite different from angels. When Satan sinned, he was disqualified to rule, and his kingdom was brought into a ruined state; when man sinned, he also was disqualified to rule, and the restored domain over which he had been created to rule was brought under a curse (a ruin once again).

However, with man, his disqualification and resulting ruined domain were by no means the end of the matter. Fallen man, unlike fallen angels, was to be redeemed; and man's redemption was with a view to his ultimately occupying the position from which he had fallen — man restored, and the domain restored for man. Genesis 3:15 records God's promise concerning man's Redeemer (the Seed of the Woman), and Gen. 3:21 records God's immediate action concerning a provision for man's sin (the slaying of innocent animals to provide skins to clothe Adam and Eve).

God's promise and action at this point in Scripture form two other first-mention principles in the opening chapters of Genesis: 1) the *way of salvation* was to be through a "Redeemer," and 2) the *means of salvation* was to be via "death" and "shed blood." Since no redemptive provision was made following Satan's sin, the principles in Gen. 3:15, 21 form something entirely new in God's dealings with His creatures. And, with this new turn of events, Satan, knowing that his own reign could continue only as long as man remained in his fallen state, must now center his thoughts on preventing man's redemption by directing his attack against the promised Redeemer.

SATAN AGAINST MAN'S REDEEMER

At the time of the birth of Cain, the firstborn of the human race,

there is every indication that Eve believed he was to be the promised Redeemer. The words of Eve, “I have gotten a man from the Lord [referring to Cain]” (Gen. 4:1), are recorded literally in the Hebrew text, “I have gotten a man, Jehovah” (*cf.* Gen. 22:8). Nothing like this was said about Abel, who, from all indication, was the twin brother of Cain, but born last. Eve apparently took her firstborn to be the promised Redeemer and uttered the recorded words concerning him prior to the birth of Abel. The record is silent concerning anything Eve may have said at the time of Abel’s birth.

As the two sons grew into manhood though, Abel was the one who acted “by faith” (Gen. 4:3-5; Heb. 11:4). And Satan, having observed the entire matter, apparently reasoned that if one of these sons was to be the promised Redeemer, or possibly of the line through which the Redeemer was to come, it would have to be Abel, not Cain. Thus, the first murder in human history occurred. “Cain, *who was of that wicked one*...slew his brother” (Gen. 4:8; I John 3:12). The fact that God later appointed “another seed instead of Abel [Seth]” reveals that the Redeemer would have come through the lineage of Abel, had he not been slain. In this respect, Satan reasoned correctly, but God thwarted his plans at this point through the birth of Seth (Gen. 4:25).

Following the birth of Seth and the birth of his son, Enos, the Genesis account states that “men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them” (Gen. 6:1). Satan, at this point, turned his attention more to mankind in general. The very next statement in Scripture reveals the cohabitation of the “sons of God [angels in the kingdom of Satan]” with the “daughters of man [female offspring from the lineage of Adam]” (Gen. 6:2). Through this act, perpetrated by a segment of the angels under Satan’s command, Satan sought not only to defile the female members of the human race (the human instrument through which the Redeemer would eventually come) but he also sought, through the offspring of this union (the “giants [*Nephilim*]”), to corrupt the lineages of the families of the earth in order to prevent the appearance of the Redeemer (v. 4).

(The expression “sons of God,” as in Gen. 6:2, 4, refers throughout Scripture to *special creations of God*. All angels are sons of God because of creation [*cf.* Job. 1:6; Ezek. 28:15]; Adam was a son of God because of

creation [Luke 3:38]; *Israel* was God's son because of creation [Isa. 43:1; cf. Ex. 4:22, 23]; and *Christians* are God's sons because of creation [II Cor. 5:17; cf. Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8].

A sonship status should not be confused with that referred to by "adoption" in Scripture [Rom. 8:15, 23; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5]. "Adoption" is a translation of the Greek word *huiiothesia* [from *huios*, "son," and *thesis*, "placing," or "positioning"]. Thus, *huiiothesia* literally means "son-placing," or "son-positioning." Adoption in Scripture has to do with taking one who is already a son and placing that son in a "first-born" status. Israel, a son because of creation, has already been adopted [Rom. 9:4] and is presently *God's firstborn son* [Ex. 4:22, 23]. Christians, sons because of creation, have yet to be adopted. But Christians will one day be adopted [Rom. 8:14-23] and occupy the position of *firstborn* as well [Heb. 12:23].)

The use of this expression in Genesis chapter six can be a reference only to angels (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). The male descendants of Adam could not be in view, for they were begotten, not created.

Everything at this point in the Genesis account was apparently directed toward one goal: *total corruption of all the lineages of the families of the earth*. Had Satan been successful, the Redeemer could not have been brought forth, and God's original purpose for man's creation could not have been realized. Satan had sought to counter God's purpose for man's creation through the fall of Adam; then, through the murder of Abel he had sought to destroy the one who could possibly be the promised Redeemer (or, at least, of the lineage through which the Redeemer would come); and now, with the appearance of the Redeemer still future, he continued seeking to counter God's purpose for man's creation through efforts directed toward preventing the Seed of the Woman from being born.

1) THE TIME OF GENESIS 6:1, 2

A corruption of the families of the earth through the cohabitation of the sons of God with the daughters of man was something which had to be accomplished over a period of many generations. The beginning of this cohabitation can be traced to a time hundreds of years before the Flood, and the fact that only eight individuals from one family escaped the judgment of the Flood may reveal just how

close Satan came to succeeding.

The time framework of Gen. 6:1, 2 is much closer to the creation of Adam than to the Flood. Sixteen hundred and fifty-six years separate these two events, and the beginning of the time when the sons of God saw and took wives from the daughters of man could not have been too far removed from the creation of Adam. Note the wording of verse one: "And it came to pass when men *began to multiply* on the face of the earth..." This cohabitation goes back to near the very beginning of the families of the earth.

2) *THE RESULT OF GENESIS 6:1, 2*

Six hundred eighty-seven years following Adam's creation, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, begat Methuselah. The name "Methuselah" means, *When he is gone, it (judgment) shall be sent*. The judgment referred to by the name Methuselah was later revealed to be the judgment of the Flood. So long as Methuselah remained alive, judgment would be withheld; but when Methuselah died, judgment would fall. Methuselah lived 969 years. The 969th year of his life was the 600th year of Noah's life, the year of the Flood (Gen. 5:25-29; 7:11).

How did Enoch know at the time of his son's birth that he would live to the very year of God's judgment upon the earth? And how did he know that he was to be given the name "Methuselah," signifying this fact? The answer is given in Heb. 11:5: "By faith Enoch..." According to the record, Enoch walked with God for three hundred years after he begat Methuselah. Also, according to the record, at the end of these three hundred years, Enoch, "by faith," was translated. It is evident that something happened to Enoch at or about the time of Methuselah's birth. *The name given to Methuselah, the fact that Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah, and the fact that by faith he was translated* all point to this very thing.

In order for Enoch to act "by faith" in any realm it was necessary for God to make certain things known to him, for no one can act "by faith" apart from the Revelation of God. "Faith" is simply *believing* that which God has to say about a matter, and, consequently, faith cannot exist apart from God's Revelation. In order for Enoch to act as he did, God had to reveal certain things to him about his son, the coming judgment, and the fact that he would be translated before this

judgment.

From what we can glean in the record, God apparently revealed these things to Enoch at or about the time Methuselah was born. Methuselah was then given a *name* indicating that so long as he remained alive, God's judgment would be withheld; but when he was gone, it would be sent. Enoch then *walked* with God for three hundred years in anticipation of God removing him from the earth *alive*, before this judgment — exactly as God had previously revealed.

Scripture clearly implies that at the time of Methuselah's birth, 687 years beyond the creation of Adam, the results of the cohabitation of the sons of God with the daughters of men had become a thing of such magnitude that it was necessary for God to intervene in the affairs of man. However, this actual intervention did not come until 969 years had passed. At the time of Methuselah's birth the announcement concerning impending judgment was given, and 969 years later judgment fell. God sent the waters of a Flood to destroy all the inhabitants of the earth, save Noah and his immediate family.

Scripture states that Noah was found "perfect in his generations" (Gen. 6:9). His lineage had not been tainted by the cohabitation of the sons of God with the daughters of men. And the lineages of his wife and daughters-in-law would, of necessity, be likewise untainted. God, in His sovereignty, brought conditions to pass as such. The lineages of the families of the earth had become corrupted by the cohabitation of the sons of God with the daughters of man. But Noah, uncorrupted in his generations, "found grace in the eyes of the Lord"; and the salvation of eight souls "by ['through'] water" was with a view to a new beginning to be realized through the sons of Noah.

Thus, when Methuselah died, judgment fell. Noah, his wife, and his three sons and their wives were in the previously prepared ark and passed safely through this judgment, thwarting the ultimate goal of Satan which he had been working toward for centuries. Following the Flood, the human race had to begin anew; and Satan, likewise, had to begin anew at this time.

RESERVED UNTO JUDGMENT

The angels who took upon themselves the form of man, left their

positions of power in the heavens, and took wives from the fallen human race have been “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” These angels were imprisoned in a particular place following the Flood during Noah’s day, they remain imprisoned today, and they will remain imprisoned until their appearance in judgment before God’s Son at a time yet future. All judgment had been committed into the hands of the Son (John 5:22), and these angels will one day be judged by the One Whose very appearance they sought to prevent.

The angels imprisoned, awaiting judgment, are in a place which Scripture calls *Tartarus*. II Peter 2:4-6 refers to the angels who sinned during the days of Noah and during the days of Lot as being cast “down to hell [*Tartarus*].” *Tartarus* is simply a transliterated Greek word, and it appears only this one time in the New Testament. All other occurrences of the word “hell” in English translations are from the Greek words *Gehenna* and *Hades*. *Gehenna* appears in Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6. And *Hades* appears in Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; I Cor. 15:55; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14.

There is a connection between *Tartarus* and *Hades* in the sense that one is housed within the other. *Hades* is the larger realm, with *Tartarus* comprising a section of *Hades*. The souls of both the saved and the unsaved go into *Hades* at the time of death, though the location into which the saved and unsaved go would not be the same.

Hades simply refers to a place in which the dead reside, whether saved or unsaved. It has nothing to do with “hell” per se. Rather, it simply has to do with the place of the dead, with no distinction made between saved and unsaved within the Word itself.

During Old Testament days, *Hades* (Heb. *Sheol*) was located in only one place — somewhere below the surface of the earth (Gen. 37:35; Num. 16:32, 33; I Sam 28:15; Job 7:9). Today, the place of the dead is located both below the surface of the earth and in the heavens. This change in location would be for only part of the dead — the saved of this present dispensation, “the dead in Christ” (II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23).

The place into which the saved went at the time of death during Old Testament times apparently remains unchanged today. This place during Old Testament times could only be located *down*, and

there is nothing in Scripture which would indicate that this place could be looked upon after any other fashion today. Old Testament saints would apparently still be in the same part of Hades which they have always occupied.

Christ's resurrection, ascension, and the ushering in of a new dispensation could have nothing to do with bringing about a change in the location of the Old Testament saints. Nor can Eph. 4:8 be understood to teach that Old Testament saints were removed into the heavens at the time of Christ's ascension. This is a quotation from a Messianic Psalm (Psa. 68:18), which has to do with doing away with the captivity seen in Luke 4:18. The whole of the matter seen in Eph. 4:8 is yet future in the scope of its fulfillment (*cf.* Acts 2:29, 34).

No Old Testament saint is in Tartarus, though it is located in a section of *Hades*, as *Hades* (or *Sheol*) existed during Old Testament times. Tartarus is located in a section of *Hades* into which man does not enter. This section is reserved for the angels who sinned in accordance with II Peter 2:4-6; Jude 6, 7, along with, it would appear, their progeny also (*Tartarus* is discussed further in Chapter VI).

Gehenna, the other word indiscriminately translated "hell" in most English translations of the New Testament, is a word which always, with the exception of James 3:6, came from the lips of Jesus during His earthly ministry. Every appearance of this word in the gospel accounts is in passages dealing with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens. Thus, Christ did not use the word at all in connection with the issues of eternal salvation or eternal damnation.

Gehenna, the Fiery Valley of Hinnom, was south of Jerusalem; and during the days when Christ was upon the earth this valley was the place of refuse for the city of Jerusalem. *Gehenna* was the receptacle for all kinds of corruption. The sewage of the city flowed into this valley, and it was customary to cast the carcasses of dead animals therein. Even the bodies of executed criminals, by order of the Sanhedrin, were sometimes cast into this valley.

In Matt. 5:22, 29, 30 the word is used in connection with judgment in the local Jewish courts and the judgment of the Council, which was the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin possessed the power to inflict a sentence of death by stoning, and also, should the Sanhedrin so rule, the

punishment could be intensified by ordering the corpse to be cast into the Valley of Hinnom. The decrees and determinations rendered by these earthly courts were used by the Lord to call attention to parallel decrees and determinations which will be rendered by a heavenly court, with the severest penalty being the same as that seen in the earthly courts — *death*, followed by the person *being cast into Gehenna*.

In Matt. 23:13, 25-28, 33 the Scribes and Pharisees were in danger of “the damnation of hell [*lit.*, ‘the judgment of *Gehenna*’]” because they had closed the door to the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the nation of Israel. In Mark 9:43, 45, 47, being “cast into hell [*Gehenna*]” is used as an antithesis to entering “into life” and entering “into the kingdom” (which are the same). And it is so with all the other occurrences of this word in the gospel accounts.

Gehenna in James 3:6 is the only exception to the previous in the New Testament and the only place where this word is used outside the gospel accounts. In James 3:6, the word is used in a symbolic sense, dealing with the tongue. But, even here, in a book dealing specifically with the salvation of the soul (1:21; 5:19, 20), the word has an inseparable connection with the way it is used in the gospel accounts.

Thus, in no contextual usage is being cast into *Gehenna* used as a reference to the unsaved being cast into “the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14, 15), as is often taught; nor can *Gehenna* be even remotely connected with *Hades* or *Tartarus*. *Gehenna* is associated with the judgment of a select group — those to whom the offer of the kingdom of the heavens is extended. The word is thus associated with *the future judgment of Christians in connection with issues surrounding the millennial kingdom*.

CHRIST'S PROCLAMATION

“Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit;

In which also he went and preached [delivered a proclamation] unto the spirits in prison,

That aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few,

that is, eight souls, were saved through water” (I Peter 3:18-20, ASV).

The “spirits” in this passage are said to have sinned during days preceding the Flood. For this reason not only are they imprisoned but Christ also appeared in their presence at a time following their imprisonment and delivered a proclamation. The *time* and *purpose* of this proclamation center around the *reason* for their sin, and the passage must be interpreted with this in mind.

These imprisoned spirits cannot be identified as descendants of Adam. The dead from the lineage of Adam are never referred to as being in prison; nor are individuals from the human race, living or dead, ever called “spirits.” Man has a *spirit*, but he himself is never called a “spirit.” Scripture speaks of the “spirits of just men” (Heb. 12:23) and refers to Christ, *following His resurrection*, as a “quickening spirit” (referring to His position as Life-Giver in His resurrection body [a *spiritual body* — I Cor. 15:44, 45 — a body of *flesh* and *bones*, the same body which had been placed in the tomb, but now possessing the Spirit rather than the blood as the life-giving, animating principle of the body]). But the descendants of Adam cannot be referred to by the use of the word “spirit” in this sense, for they have not received such bodies, with the possible exception of Enoch, Moses, and Elijah.

Among God’s created beings, only *angels* are called “spirits” in the Word of God:

“Who maketh his angels *spirits*, and his ministers a flame of fire.

Are they [angels] not all ministering *spirits*, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:7b, 14).

The “spirits” in I Peter 3:19 can only be identified as the *angels* who sinned by taking upon themselves the form of man, leaving their positions of power in the heavens, and cohabiting with women in the human race during days preceding the Flood. The prison in this passage is *Tartarus*; and according to both II Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, these angels are not only confined in this prison but they are chained, awaiting judgment.

The word for “preach” in I Peter 3:19 is *kerusso* in the Greek text, which means, to “make an announcement.” The word itself gives no

indication concerning either the type announcement or the content of the message. These things must be determined from the context or other related Scripture. *Kerusso* appears numerous times throughout the New Testament and is almost always used in connection with proclaiming some facet of the gospel message. In these passages, either the Greek word *euaggelion* (“gospel,” “good news”) or other related qualifying words appear with *kerusso* to make this connection (e.g. Matt. 4:23; I Cor. 1:23). However, there is nothing in I Peter 3:18-20 which would even remotely connect *kerusso* with the gospel message. In fact, the word *could not* refer to the proclamation of the gospel. The message in this passage is directed to “spirits [angels],” and the gospel is for the descendants of Adam, not angels. *Kerusso* is used in I Peter 3:19 in the same sense that it is used in Rev. 5:2 — a proclamation concerning *something other* than the gospel.

The *time* of this proclamation did not occur, as many infer, between Christ’s death and resurrection while He was in *Hades*; nor, as others infer, did this proclamation have anything to do with the strange interpretation which is termed “the preaching of Christ [by the Holy Spirit] through Noah” during days preceding the Flood. I Peter 3:18, 19 clearly reveals that Christ delivered this proclamation Himself, *following His resurrection*.

In verse eighteen, Christ was “put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit.” At the time of His death, Christ possessed a “soulical [*psuchikos*]” body of flesh, blood, and bones. The life-giving, animating principle of this body was the blood (Lev. 17:11). But at the time of His resurrection Christ possessed a “spiritual [*pneumatikos*]” body of flesh and bones, without blood. The life-giving, animating principle of this body was the Spirit of God. The body which Jesus possessed following His resurrection was the same body He possessed before His death. The words “soulical” and “spiritual,” in the preceding respect, have to do with the life-giving, animating principle of the body (cf. I Cor. 15:44-50).

The thought in verse eighteen is continued in verse nineteen by the statement, “In which also he went and preached [delivered a proclamation] unto the spirits in prison.” In verse eighteen, Christ was put to death in a soulical body and then raised in a spiritual body. Then, in verse nineteen, Christ went to *Tartarus* and delivered a

proclamation to the angels who were responsible for the judgment of the Flood.

The word “which” (v. 19) is a translation of the Greek relative pronoun “*ho*.” A rule of Greek grammar states that the relative pronoun must agree with its antecedent in both gender and number. “*Ho*” is a singular case form of the word which can be either masculine or neuter (both case forms in this instance are the same in the Greek text, but the feminine is different).

The wording in verse eighteen, in the English text, would seem to allow for two possible antecedents to be considered: “flesh,” and “Spirit.” However, in the Greek text, “flesh” is a feminine word and thus cannot be the antecedent. “Spirit,” on the other hand, is a neuter word. Consequently, the antecedent of “which” can only be “Spirit” (a neuter relative pronoun agreeing with its neuter antecedent).

With this in mind, note what is in view insofar as the time and manner of the proclamation are concerned. In verse eighteen, Christ was “made alive in the Spirit.” Jesus possessed a resurrection body animated by the Spirit. Then verse nineteen states, “In which also he went and preached [delivered a proclamation] unto the spirits in prison.” The relative pronoun “which,” with its antecedent “Spirit,” can only refer to His resurrection body. Jesus, *IN* His resurrection body, went to *Tartarus* for the specific purpose of making an announcement to a select group of imprisoned angels.

These angels imprisoned in *Tartarus* had sought, under Satan, to corrupt the lineages of all the families of the earth in order to prevent the appearance of man’s Redeemer. But now, the very One Whose appearance they had sought to prevent stood in their presence. Not only this, but He stood there in His *resurrection body* with His work of redemption *completed*. He had met Satan face to face in the wilderness, showing that He was fully qualified to redeem that which Adam forfeited in the fall. He then paid redemption’s price at Golgotha, His Own shed blood. Man’s redemption was now not only an accomplished fact, but redeemed man could ultimately realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning.

The only proclamation which Christ could have delivered to the imprisoned angels in *Tartarus* would have had to center around the fact that what they had attempted to do preceding the Flood was for

naught. The resurrected Christ stood in their presence; and not only would He, as the Last Adam, one day take the kingdom, but a great host of individuals redeemed from the lineage of the First Adam would reign as co-heirs with Him.

The angels in *Tartarus* could now look forward to only one thing: *remaining chained, awaiting judgment.*

Satan and the angels continuing to reign with him could, likewise, now look forward to only one thing: biding their time, awaiting the day Christ takes the kingdom, followed ultimately by their consignment to the *lake of fire* “prepared for the devil and his angels.”

6

And Also After That

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7).

The world during Noah's day experienced destruction as a direct result of angelic intervention in the affairs of the human race; four cities in the Jordan plain were destroyed during the days of Abraham, once again, for this same reason; and the Israelites under Moses were told to go into the land of Canaan and slay every inhabitant in the land, once again, for this same reason.

Angels in the kingdom of Satan took upon themselves the form of man, left their positions of power in the heavens, came to earth, and cohabited with members of the human race. Before the Flood, insofar as the record is concerned, this cohabitation was only between angels and female members of the human race — a heterosexual union. After the Flood, however, Scripture reveals both heterosexual and homosexual relationships of this nature.

Before the Flood, this union involved the families of the earth. After the Flood, this union appears to have been confined more particularly to the inhabitants of the land in the Abrahamic covenant. The cohabitation of angels in the kingdom of Satan with members of

the human race in days before the Flood and again in days following the Flood occurred with the same objective in view: Satan *must*, at all costs, continue to hold the governmental reins of the earth.

Man in his present state cannot exercise power over the earth. This is graphically illustrated by comparing the command given to Adam and Eve before the fall with the similar command given to Noah and his sons following the Flood. These commands, to a point, were identical. One was given at the beginning of an unfallen human race (Gen. 1:28), and the other was given at the new beginning of a fallen human race (Gen. 9:1).

However, *one part* of the command given to Adam and Eve was not repeated in the command given to Noah and his sons. Adam and Eve were told to “subdue it [the earth]: and have dominion [‘rule’]...”; but this was not — *for it could not be* — repeated in the command given to Noah and his sons. Fallen man must await the time of the “manifestation of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:18-23) — which includes 1) *a separate and distinct creation*, 2) *redemption*, and 3) *adoption* — for man can rule nothing within the sphere of governmental control “before the time” (I Cor. 4:5).

The nation of Israel was placed in a position to rule following the Exodus under Moses, but this nation consisted of a *special creation in Jacob*, a *redeemed* people, and an *adopted* people. Israel was *God’s firstborn son*. Israel had been created in Jacob (Isa. 43:1), allowing the nation to occupy the position of “God’s son”; then God adopted Israel into a firstborn status.

Christians today have been redeemed and are new creations in Christ. They are “sons of God” in that respect (e.g., Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8). But Christians, unlike Israel, have yet to be adopted into a firstborn status. Thus, Christians are presently in no position to rule, for it is not just “Sons” who will rule in the coming age, but *God’s firstborn Sons*.

Nor is Israel presently in a position to rule. Even though the nation retains its status of being a special creation in Jacob and an adopted nation — God’s firstborn son — Israel today resides on the earth in *unbelief*. In conjunction with this unbelief, the nation has been set aside while God takes out from the Gentiles “a people for his name.” The time when both Israel and the Church will be in positions to rule is yet

future.

Before the Flood, Satan's strategy consisted of an attempt to corrupt the lineages of the families of the earth in order to prevent the appearance of the Seed of the Woman, Who would not only be man's Redeemer but would ultimately crush Satan's head. After the Flood, Satan changed his strategy somewhat and concentrated his efforts on corrupting the nations dwelling in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This task was accomplished prior to the establishment of Israel as a nation and the subsequent Exodus from Egypt under Moses.

Satan knew that the land between the Nile and the Euphrates Rivers belonged to Abraham and his seed, he knew that the families of the earth were to be blessed through the nation emanating from Abraham, and he knew that the Redeemer was to come through the lineage of Abraham (*cf.* Gen. 12:1-3; 14:19; 15:18-21; 17:7, 8; 22:1-18). Thus, Satan moved his forces into the land ahead of Israel, not only to contest their right to enter the land in a ruling capacity but also to continue his efforts to prevent the appearance of man's Redeemer.

Aside from the fact that Israel was to be the channel through which the Redeemer would come, this nation was called out of Egypt for a more immediate, specific purpose. Israel was to enter the land of Canaan, conquer the inhabitants of the land, and exercise supremacy within a theocratic rule over the nations of the earth. Israel's position of supremacy at this point was to, in turn, result in the nations of the earth being blessed through the seed of Abraham in accordance with Gen. 12:2, 3. Israel was to rule as a kingdom of priests, and the nations of the earth were to be blessed through Israel's national kingly-priestly position. These were the nations over which Satan and his angels ruled; and a rule by Israel within a theocracy of this nature would, in reality, at least to a degree, be a wrestling of governmental control from Satan and his angels.

Not only was Israel to occupy this position of governmental power and control among the nations here on earth, but Israel was also in possession of heavenly promises and blessings. This would necessitate the nation one day controlling, with at least a segment of the nation occupying, the very heavenly places from which Satan exercised power over the nations (continuing to exercise this same power

today). The seed of Abraham — both earthly and heavenly — *MUST* ultimately “possess the gate of [exercise governmental control over] his enemies” (Gen. 22:17, 18). Thus, Satan, as the incumbent ruler over the Gentile nations from this heavenly realm, must not only prevent the appearance of man’s Redeemer, but he must also destroy the nation of Israel itself to assure his continuance on the throne in the heavenly realm.

Satan tried to accomplish this task in Egypt before the Exodus through the afflictions in the brickyards and the death of the male Hebrew children at birth. He continued trying to accomplish this task at the time of and following the Exodus under Moses through the armies of Pharaoh pursuing Israel to the Red Sea, the Amalekites attacking Israel in the wilderness, and the corrupted nations awaiting Israel in the land of Canaan itself. He has tried to destroy Israel in many instances since (*e.g.* in modern times, the destruction of six million Jews under Hitler during the years of the Third Reich in Europe [1933-1945]), he will try in the immediate future through Russia and her allies, and he will try a few years beyond that through the nations of the earth under Antichrist.

His attempts in the past have been for naught, as will be his attempts in the future. Not only has Israel brought forth the Redeemer, but Israel herself remains, as a nation, yet to occupy her God-ordained position as the one through whom the nations of the earth will be blessed.

(Note that Israel, the old creation in Jacob, has forfeited the right to occupy the heavenly sphere of the kingdom [*cf.* Matt. 12:22-32; 21:43]. This right has been assumed by the Church, the “one new man,” the “new creation” *in Christ*, called into existence for this purpose [*cf.* Matt. 16:18; 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10]. This heavenly realm must be occupied by God’s firstborn son; and Christians, who are “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise [the heavenly portion of the promise in Gen. 22:17; *cf.* Gen. 14:19],” will, following the adoption, “possess the gate” of the enemy in the heavenly realm [Eph. 6:1ff].)

NEPHILIM AND REPHAIM

Prior to the Flood, the cohabitation of the sons of God with the

daughters of men resulted in offspring called *Nephilim*. Following the Flood, when this union occurred again, these offspring were known by two names: *Nephilim*, and *Rephaim*. The translators of the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament) used the word *Gigantes* in most instances for both of these words. *Gigantes* is the Greek word for “giants,” and this is the thought that is carried over into several verses of the King James Version (e.g. Gen. 6:4; 14:5; Num. 13:33).

However, this meaning may have been only secondary to that which the translators of the Septuagint Version had in mind. *Gigantes* comes from a root form of a word which, in the secular Greek world, signified “earth-born” rather than gigantic stature. If the use of *Gigantes* is understood in this respect, the word would, contextually, refer to “earth-born individuals [individuals born on the earth, having heavenly fathers and earthly mothers],” with a secondary thought having to do with “physical stature.”

Nephilim is simply the plural form of a Hebrew word meaning “to fall,” and *Rephaim* is the plural form of another Hebrew word meaning “to heal.” A cognate form for *Rephaim* though would carry the thought of “casting down,” or “falling down.” Understanding the word in this latter sense would appear to be more in keeping with the fact that *Rephaim* is simply another name for the *Nephilim*, referring to this same group of individuals — “fallen ones.”

The word *Nephilim* is used only three times in the Old Testament in passages referring to offspring resulting from the cohabitation of the sons of God with the daughters of men (Gen. 6:4; Num. 13:33). But the word *Rephaim* is used numerous times referring to these individuals (Gen. 14:15; 15:20; Deut. 2:11, 20; 3:11, 13; Joshua 12:4; 13:12; 15:8; 17:15; 18:16; II Sam. 5:18, 22; 23:13; I Chron. 11:15; 14:9; 20:4, 6, 8; Job 26:5; Psa. 88:10; Prov. 2:18; 9:18; 21:16; Isa. 14:9; 17:5; 26:14, 19).

English versions of the Old Testament handle the Hebrew words *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* in different ways. The words are many times transliterated rather than translated. Other times translations are attempted (e.g. “giants,” “departed spirits,” “spirits of the dead,” “deceased,” “death,” “dead” [ref. KJV, ASV, NASB, NIV]). All that can be known about the *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* must be derived from these passages, in conjunction with related Scripture.

During the days of Abraham, the *Rephaim* could be found among

the inhabitants of five cities in the Jordan plain (Gen. 14:1-5). Four of these cities — Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim — were destroyed by brimstone and fire from heaven (Gen. 19:23-29; Deut. 29:23). Zoar, the fifth city associated with the *Rephaim*, was spared to serve as a refuge for Lot and his two daughters when the Lord destroyed the other cities of the plain.

It is evident from Gen. 14:1-5 that the *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* were in the land of Canaan preceding Abraham's entrance into the land. Note that the very first statement of Scripture following Abraham's journey from Ur of the Chaldees to the land of Canaan concerned the inhabitants of the land: "And the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12:6b). Since the *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* were associated with the nations of Canaan, this verse could very well be a reference to these individuals. In this respect, the reference would call attention to a fact of primary importance concerning Abraham's entrance into the land: Satan had already established his forces in the land in order to oppose God's purpose surrounding the call of Abraham.

There are two entrances of the people of God into the land of Canaan under the call of God with the forces of Satan — the *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* — being marshalled in the land first. Abraham's entrance, following his departure from Ur, constitutes the first; and Israel's entrance, following the Exodus from Egypt, constitutes the second.

The *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* were individuals of gigantic stature and great strength. Their gigantic stature can be seen in the report of the ten faithless spies at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 13:33), the apparent size of Og, king of Bashan (Deut. 3:11), and the size of Goliath, who appeared later in Jewish history (I Sam. 17:4; cf. II Sam. 21:18-22). Their great strength can be seen in the fact that they were "mighty men [the Hebrew word pertains to 'strength']" (Gen. 6:4), the fact that they were the ones who built the sixty "great cities" of Bashan (Deut. 3:4, 5; I Kings 4:13), and the position of Goliath as a "champion" in the army of the Philistines (I Sam. 17:1ff).

The first time that the *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* appeared (called *Nephilim* only in antediluvian days), God destroyed them by the waters of a Flood. The second time that these individuals appeared, God destroyed a segment of them in the destruction of the cities of the

plain; and God later commanded His people, the nation of Israel, to go into the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and destroy all that were in the land.

By this time the *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* had so infiltrated the nations in the land of Canaan that God commanded total destruction of these nations (Deut. 7:1, 2). However, the failure of the Israelites to carry out the command of God completely when the nation entered the land under Joshua resulted in the *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* persisting in Jewish history as the bitter enemies of the people of God for hundreds of years beyond that time.

THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN

Scripture in several places singles out angelic activity involving sexual perversions in the cities of the plain during the days of Abraham. Jude 7 specifically states that individuals living in the cities of the Jordan plain committed illicit sexual acts with angels. The words, “in like manner,” should literally read, “in like manner to these.” The words “to these” refer to the angels in verse six. The inhabitants of “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them” had given themselves over to “fornication” and had gone after “strange flesh” in the same manner as the angels.

The word “strange” is *heteros* in the Greek text, referring to “a different kind” of flesh. The angels in the kingdom of Satan who came to earth, took upon themselves the form of man, and cohabited with members of the human race did not possess the same type flesh as man. There was an unrevealed difference, which is set forth by the Greek word *heteros*. Angels went after “strange flesh [a different kind of flesh]” by cohabiting with the inhabitants in the cities of the plain, and the inhabitants of these cities went after “strange flesh [a different kind of flesh]” by cohabiting with angels.

Jude 7 is usually taken to refer only to homosexuality, in accord with Gen. 19:1-11. This interpretation, however, is too limited. *Rephaim* were associated with the cities of the plain (Gen. 14:1-5), necessitating past sexual relations between angels and female members of the human race as well. Jude 7 and the parallel section in II Peter 2:6 actually have to do with both homosexual and heterosexual acts, and

the Genesis account points to widespread perversions in both realms.

1) *DEGENERACY OF THE SODOMITES*

The account in Gen. 19:1-11, showing the utter degeneracy of the inhabitants in the cities of the plain, has to do with men and homosexuality; but the Scriptures in II Peter and Jude, alluding to both homosexual and heterosexual acts between angels and members of the human race, place both types of sexual perversions occurring in these cities on the same basic level. And, in this respect, the apparent utter degeneracy of the entire populace — both male and female — can be seen by what is revealed in the Genesis account.

The night preceding the destruction of the cities of the plain, Lot had given two angels, sent to Sodom by the Lord, lodging inside the safety of his home. After Lot, his family, and the two angels had eaten, the men of Sodom began to gather outside Lot's house. These men are described as "*both old and young, all the people from every quarter,*" and they had come for one sole purpose: they wanted the two angels under Lot's roof to be brought forth in order that they might "know them," *i.e.*, have homosexual relations with them.

Lot came outside, shut the door behind him, and offered his two virgin daughters to these men in order to protect the two angels under his roof. But the men of Sodom showed no interest in his daughters. Their only apparent interest lay in having illicit, carnal relations with the two angels. The intensity of their interest is shown in verse nine: "And they said [to Lot], 'Stand back' ... And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door." But the two angels intervened. They pulled Lot inside the house and smote the men who were at the door with "blindness." The angels then revealed Sodom's impending destruction to Lot.

2) *EVIDENT PAST HISTORY OF SODOM*

There is far more to Genesis chapter nineteen than Lot just being very insistent that two unknown strangers spend the night inside the safety of his house, and the men of Sodom just wanting two strangers turned over to them. Why was Lot so insistent that these two men not remain in the streets during the night? Why, in seeking to protect these two men, did Lot go to the point of even offering his two virgin

daughters to the men of Sodom?

Then there is the attitude and actions of the men in Sodom. These men, “*both old and young, all the people from every quarter,*” wanted these two men so badly that they were going to break down the door of Lot’s house. They were not interested in Lot’s daughters; nor were they interested in having illicit, carnal relations with one another. Their interest lay *solely* in obtaining the two strangers inside Lot’s house.

The inference from the record appears to clearly indicate that both Lot and the men of Sodom knew that these two strangers were angels. Lot went to great lengths to protect them from the Sodomites, because he knew what had been happening in Sodom (II Peter. 2:7, 8). The men of Sodom, on the other hand, went to great lengths to obtain these two individuals, for they had evidently been brought into this depraved frame of mind through their past ungodly manner of living.

By comparing Gen. 19:4-11; II Peter 2:4-8; Jude 6, 7, it appears clear that the men of Sodom, as well as the men in the other cities of the plain, had been having homosexual relations with angels. It cannot be determined how long illicit, carnal relations of this nature had been occurring; but according to the record, immediately before the destruction of the cities of the plain, the men of Sodom had become so sex-crazed that their only apparent real interest lay in having homosexual relations with angels. Thus, because of the widespread prevalence of this gross sexual perversion, God rained brimstone and fire from heaven upon these cities following the removal of Lot, his wife, and his two virgin daughters from Sodom.

ANGELS, NEPHILIM, AND REPHAIM IN TARTARUS

The angels who sinned both before and following the Flood by leaving their positions of power in the heavens, and coming to earth, and taking upon themselves the form of man for the specific purpose of cohabiting with members of the human race are today confined with chains in *Tartarus*. Not only are they confined in this place, but it would appear that their progeny, the *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* are also there. *Tartarus* is located in a particular section of *Sheol* reserved specifically for these individuals.

Sheol (Gk. *Hades*) is the place into which the souls of individuals

go at the time of death. Scripture has very little to say about this place. Scripture doesn't concern itself to any extent with man's existence between death and resurrection, particularly unsaved man. And the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 leaves many unanswered questions if one follows the interpretation normally ascribed to the passage. Suffice it to say, in the Old Testament, Sheol was always spoken of as being *down*, below the surface of the earth. And at the time Christ died, His soul went *down* into *Sheol* and remained in this place until the time of His resurrection (Acts 2:30, 31).

Today, the matter would be different for Christians. They, as Christ, would go into *Sheol* (or *Hades*) at the time of death; but the location of *Sheol* is different today for the saved. Today, for Christians, the place of the dead (which is what *Sheol* [or *Hades*] refers to) is located in the heavens (*ref.* Chapter V).

Sheol in the Old Testament was located beneath the surface of the earth, and, as previously stated, directionally, it was always spoken of as being "down" (*cf.* Num. 16:32, 33; Isa. 14:9; Jonah 2:2, 6). This is where the thought from the so-called "Apostles Creed" concerning Christ descending "into hell [*Sheol*]" is derived. Christ descended into *Sheol/Hades* simply because that place, located beneath the surface of the earth only at that time, was where the soul of every person during those days went at the time of death. When Christ died, His "spirit" went into the presence of the Father in heaven, His "soul" went into *Sheol*, and his "body" was later taken down from the Cross and placed in Joseph of Arimathaea's tomb (*cf.* Luke 23:46-53; Eccl. 12:7; Psa. 16:10).

However, when Christ descended into *Sheol* following the events of Calvary He did not then, as many Bible students believe, go to *Tartarus* and deliver a proclamation to the angels imprisoned in this place. His presence in *Sheol* between His death and resurrection was not in any way connected with this announcement, for the announcement could not be delivered at this time. Although He had paid redemption's price — His Own shed blood — the victory was not yet complete. He must first be victorious over death itself, which awaited His resurrection. It was only following His resurrection, in accord with I Peter 3:18-20 — when body, soul, and spirit were reunited — that Christ went to *Tartarus* and delivered His proclamation to these

imprisoned angels.

Although the angels who had sinned both before and after the Flood were in *Tartarus* at this time (II Peter 2:4-6), only the angels who had sinned before the Flood are mentioned in I Peter 3:20 as being recipients of Christ's proclamation. Their sin was limited to a direct attack against the Seed of the woman, and the folly of what they had attempted could now be demonstrated. The resurrected Christ, the Seed of the woman, stood in their presence. He had paid the price for man's redemption, and He had been victorious over death itself. He was now man's resurrected Redeemer Who held the "keys of hell [*Hades*] and of death" (Rev. 1:18).

The angels who sinned following the Flood, although still seeking to prevent the appearance of the Seed of the Woman, directed their attack more specifically against Israel, seeking the destruction of God's national firstborn son to bring about that purpose. And the demonstration of victory pertaining to Israel awaited, and still awaits, a future date. Thus, they are not mentioned in connection with the proclamation of this message.

The angels who sinned following the Flood, directing their attack more specifically against Israel, have counterparts in angels who will commit this same sin at the end of the present age, at the end of man's 6,000-year day:

"As it was in the days of Noah...Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot...Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed"
(Luke 17:26-30).

The cohabitation of angels with members of the human race will occur once again, both on heterosexual and homosexual levels. This latter-day angelic attack will be directed mainly against Israel through the Gentile nations, as during the days of Lot, which anticipated events during Moses' day. And possibly an announcement similar to the one which Christ delivered to the angels who sinned before the Flood awaits not only the angels who sinned following the Flood but also the angels who are about to commit this same sin once again. If so, such an announcement would be forthcoming only after the corresponding sin of the angels at the end of this age and after Israel has subsequently been elevated to her rightful place at the head of the

nations.

The man of sin will be of the *Rephaim*. He will be the actual son of Satan. Note the expression, “thy [Satan’s] seed,” in Gen. 3:15. He will also have *Rephaim* ruling the earth with him during the Tribulation. Rulers who will possess power directly under the man of sin, mentioned in the Book of Revelation (*cf.* chs. 13, 17), are revealed in Old Testament Scriptures to be *Rephaim* — “men” (*cf.* Rev. 13:18), but not men as we know them today. Satan will rule the earth through his son during the Tribulation; and high-ranking angels in Satan’s kingdom will also rule the earth, with Satan, through sons begotten by angels — possibly their very own sons.

Isaiah 26:13, 14 reveals that during the Tribulation “other lords,” *Rephaim*, will have dominion over Israel:

“O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased [*lit.* ‘they are *Rephaim*’], they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.”

These “other lords” who will have dominion over Israel during the Tribulation, specifically called *Rephaim*, will be destroyed before the Messianic Era commences. And this destruction will be so complete that the *Rephaim* will not even be remembered by Israel.

Isaiah 26:19 reveals the destruction of the *Rephaim*, and Job 26:5 reveals where they will be consigned following their destruction. The passage in Isaiah states, “...the earth shall cast out the dead [*lit.*, ‘...the *Rephaim* will be caused to fall on the earth’]”; and the passage in Job states, “Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof [*lit.* ‘*Rephaim* are put to pain (*i.e.*, writhe like a woman in travail) deep under the waters, and their inhabitants’].” These *Rephaim* are further seen imprisoned in a section of *Sheol* with Satan in Isa. 14:9-11 (the word translated “dead” in v. 9 is *Rephaim* in the Hebrew text. Also, note from this text that the “bottomless pit [*‘abyss’*]” in Rev. 20:1-3 is located in a section of *Sheol*).

The prison where the *Rephaim* from the coming Tribulation are to be confined with Satan appears to be in the section of *Sheol* called *Tartarus*. Other inhabitants are mentioned, which could be not only

the *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* from the days before and after the Flood, but also their angelic fathers. This place is located “deep under the waters,” at the bottom of the sea.

The “sea” in Rev. 20:13 is apparently an allusion to this place. The sea giving up “the dead which were in it” cannot refer to those in the human realm, for they are all included in the expression “death and hell [*Hades*] delivered up the dead which were in them.”

These are two separate groups of individuals. The first group is taken from the sea, and corresponding Scripture locates this place more specifically as being at the bottom of the sea and associated with *Nephilim*, *Rephaim*, and *angels*. The other group is taken from the place more specifically called *Hades* in this passage and has to do with the unsaved dead throughout Man’s Day from the lineage of Adam. Unsaved descendants of Adam, angels who sinned both before and after the Flood, and the progeny of these angels — *Nephilim* and *Rephaim* will one day be removed from their corresponding sections of *Sheol/Hades* and appear before the Great White Throne to be judged.

7

Defiling One's High Calling

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke thee.'

But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves (Jude 8-10).

The message throughout the Epistle of Jude is twofold: 1) Christians are exhorted to *earnestly strive* "for [with reference to] the faith," and 2) Christians are warned concerning apostasy manifested in the lives of those who, instead, *stand away* "from the faith." Verses three and four introduce this message, verses five through seven form examples to illustrate what has been introduced, and verse eight continues within the framework of teachings set forth in verses three through seven: "Likewise [in like manner to the individuals previously mentioned in the examples] also these filthy dreamers [those in verse four] defile the flesh [*cf.* v. 7], despise dominion [*cf.* v. 6], and speak evil of dignities [*cf.* v. 5]." Proper and improper attitudes toward dignitaries are then given in verses nine and ten.

A basic teaching throughout the entire passage, beginning with verse three, has to do with the governmental administration of the earth and with apostasy in relation to this administration. Christians are to *earnestly strive with reference to the faith* in view of attaining the *goal of their faith, the salvation of their souls* (I Peter 1:9). The realization of this salvation will follow the issues of the judgment seat of Christ and involves the placement of Christians in positions of power and authority as joint-heirs with Christ in His coming kingdom. Thus, Christians earnestly striving with reference to the faith is with a view to their occupying positions in the coming governmental administration of the earth following that time when “the kingdom of the world” has become “the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Rev. 11:15, ASV).

EXAMPLES OF APOSTASY

Apostates depart from the faith through various, revealed forms. In the first ten verses of Jude, lessons concerning apostasy are drawn mainly from the three periods in Old Testament history referred to in verses five through seven; and within the spiritual lessons drawn from these verses, apostasy in Christendom, wrought through the deception of Satan and in connection with the doctrines of demons, is always directed toward one goal: to effect failure in the *race of the faith*.

1) *Verse Five*: The Israelites under Moses were to enter the land covenanted to Abraham and his posterity and rule as God’s *firstborn son* over all the nations of the earth. Israel was not only to exercise *national supremacy* in this capacity but Israel was also to be a *kingdom of priests* through whom the nations would be blessed. The promise in Gen. 12:2, 3 was to be, and will yet be, fulfilled through Israel dwelling in her own land in this position.

Spiritual blessings are to flow out to the nations of the earth through God’s *firstborn Sons* from the *lineage of Abraham*. This is the order established in Genesis, and this order does not, it cannot, change. Through sovereign grace alone God chose Abraham and decreed, “...*in thee* shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Beyond this point in Genesis chapter twelve, Scripture up to the time

of Calvary could be summarized by two statements: a) In the Old Testament God so loved the world that He called into existence and sent His son, Israel, the seed of Abraham; and b) in the New Testament God so loved the world that He both sent and gave His Son, Jesus, the Seed of Abraham. The purpose: Spiritual blessings for mankind, beginning with man's salvation and continuing with "all spiritual blessings" (Gen. 12:2, 3; 22:17, 18; John 8:37; Gal. 3:16; cf. Eph. 1:3ff).

The Israelites during Old Testament days, however, apostatized in the matter surrounding their calling. Under Moses they refused to go into the land and occupy the very position for which they had been called out of Egypt. This was done not only to their own detriment but to the detriment of the nations of the earth as well. The generation of Israelites who fell away at Kadesh-Barnea was overthrown in the wilderness; and the nations, consequently, remained alienated from God's blessings.

A second generation of Israelites later entered the land under Joshua; but through continued disobedience lasting for hundreds of years, the nation never realized the goal of her calling. Because of this continued disobedience, God eventually, in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., allowed Gentile nations to come into the land and uproot His people. The Israelites were then scattered among and became subject to the nations, exactly as God had warned (Lev. 26:1ff; Deut. 28:1ff). And, consequently, as at Kadesh-Barnea centuries before this time, the nations have remained alienated from God's blessings.

Since that time, conditions have continued relatively unchanged. Israel has remained scattered among the Gentile nations, subject to Gentile power. There have been partial restorations to the land (following the Babylonian captivity, and today); but the Israelites, by large, have remained in the same subjective position for the entire period — over 2,500 years. And there will be no change in Israel's present status among the nations until Israel's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, effects a change following His return.

As Israel was called out of Egypt under Moses for a purpose, the nation will be called out from a worldwide dispersion under her Messiah for the same purpose; as the old covenant was made with Israel following the nation's removal from among the Gentile nations,

a new covenant will one day be made with the nation; and as Israel was to enter into the land under Moses and exercise supremacy over, being a blessing to, the nations of the earth, the restored nation under Jesus will enter into the land and occupy this position. In that day the nation will realize her calling, set forth 4,000 years ago through God's promises to Abraham.

2) *Verse Six*: The thought of "apostasy" is continued through the acts of angels in the kingdom of Satan. This, of course, is a different type apostasy than is covered in verse five. It is standing away from the position in which one was created rather than standing away from the faith. Apostasy from the faith, the central theme of the Epistle of Jude, is possible only for those in a position to *stand away from* "the faith," *i.e.*, for the saved. However, as illustrated in verse six, spiritual lessons can also be drawn from other forms of apostasy.

Angels apostatized in the sense that they stood away from their positions in Satan's heavenly kingdom. They took upon themselves the form of man, left their positions of power in the heavens, came to earth, and cohabited with members of the human race. God's immediate judgment upon these angels resulted in their being confined with chains in a place of darkness — in *Tartarus* — awaiting judgment by God's Son at a future date.

3) *Verse Seven*: The thought concerning angels entering into a form of "apostasy" in verse six is continued in verse seven by showing the inhabitants in the cities of the plain also entering into a form of "apostasy," committing the same sin as the angels. Apostasy in relation to angels is easy to understand, for they had something from which they could stand away. But, from what did the inhabitants of the cities of the plain stand away? They were not part of a present existing kingdom in the same sense as were the angels.

Thus, since the underlying thought under consideration throughout these verses has to do with the governmental administration of the earth, the inhabitants of the cities of the plain were seemingly in no position to stand away from anything so related. However, bear in mind that the very purpose for man's creation in the beginning had to do with the government of the earth (Gen. 1:26-28); and the inhabitants in the cities of the plain, although fallen creatures and in no position

to rule, were still of the creation which had been brought into existence to exercise this power and authority.

Note in verse seven that the sin for which they were judged had to do with “fornication, and going after strange flesh [a different type flesh — the flesh of angels].” The inhabitants in the cities of the plain entered into this sin “in like manner” to the angels. Both departed from a certain position for the purpose of going after a different type flesh. The angels who apostatized were of the fallen creation presently ruling, and the men who apostatized were of the fallen creation which had originally been brought into existence to assume this power and authority.

Thus, apostasy among angels was associated with a cohabitation among the creation which had been brought on the scene to usurp their positions, and apostasy among the inhabitants of the cities of the plain was associated with a cohabitation among the incumbent rulers which were to be replaced by man. “Fallen ones” cohabiting with “fallen ones” — angels with men, men with angels — is associated with *standing away from* a certain position on the part of both. Standing away from this position had to do with a departure from the position for which both were created, and this departure is dealt with in the Epistle of Jude as a form of apostasy from which spiritual lessons are drawn.

DEFILING THE FLESH (V. 8)

Defiling the flesh refers back to the people in the cities of the plain going after strange flesh in verse seven. There is a parallel drawn in verses seven and eight between the inhabitants in the cities of the plain defiling the flesh and redeemed man today defiling the flesh. In both instances there is a departure from a certain position, and this position has to do with the reason for one's creation. The old creation in Adam and the new creation in Christ were brought into existence for essentially the same purpose — man ultimately exercising governmental power and authority over the earth. And lessons are drawn from the former to teach spiritual truths in the latter. These truths concern Christians who defile the flesh through forsaking their high calling, departing from the revealed reason for their creation in Christ.

Warnings in the Epistle of Jude, derived mainly from spiritual lessons taught through the use of Old Testament historical events, are directed to Christians *alone*. The admonition placed at the beginning of the epistle concerning *earnestly striving with reference to* “the faith” is directed only to Christians, and so are all of the subsequent *warnings* throughout the epistle. God deals with unregenerate man and with regenerate man on two entirely different planes. Unregenerate man is dealt with, not on the basis of admonitions and warnings, but on the basis of Christ’s finished work on Calvary. Regenerate man, on the other hand, has already been dealt with on the basis of Christ’s finished work. He must *now* be dealt with in an entirely different manner. Only *now* do admonitions, promises, warnings, etc. come into view.

This dual aspect of God dealing with man is seen in Old Testament history through two means: 1) God dealing with *ALL* in the land of Egypt the night of the Passover strictly on the basis of the death and proper application of the blood of the paschal lambs, and 2) God subsequently dealing, in an entirely different manner, with those who had appropriated the blood.

They had to *FIRST* appropriate the blood. *Nothing* could be done until they had moved beyond this point. The vicarious death of the firstborn *MUST* be dealt with prior to anything else (Ex. 12:1-13). All warnings concerning sin in the lives of the people, especially relating to things pertaining to the land of Canaan beyond Egypt, would have been pointless prior to the Passover.

The putting out of the leaven (typifying sin) *FOLLOWED* the Passover (Ex. 12:14-20; cf. Lev. 23:4-8), and it *MUST* ever be so. There is no such thing as God commanding leaven to be put out prior to the appropriation of the blood. It is always the blood *FIRST*, and then the leaven. This order has forever been established in the writings of Moses, and it can never change.

The works of the flesh, associated with leaven which is to be put out following the appropriation of the blood, are reiterated in Gal. 5:19-21; and the warning concluding these words *must* be looked upon as directed to *Christians alone*. The list of the sins of the flesh in this passage concludes with the statement, “...they which do such things shall not *inherit* the kingdom of God.” I Corinthians 6:9, 10, a very

similar passage, states exactly the same thing:

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not *inherit* the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall *inherit* the kingdom of God.”

Inheritance is strictly a family matter. One must be a child of the Owner to be in line for the inheritance: “If children, *then* heirs...” (Rom. 8:17). The issue at hand in both Gal. 5:19-21 and I Cor. 6:9, 10 has to do with an *inheritance in the kingdom*, not with eternal life. Thus, only the saved can be in view.

Contrary to what Scriptures such as the preceding teach concerning the sins of Christians, there is a widespread, false teaching in Christendom today which states that all of a Christian's sins — past, present, and future — were taken care of through the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary; and, on the basis of the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, a Christian can never come into judgment for any sin which he commits. Therefore, warnings concerning God's judgment to be visited upon individuals indulging in the sins of the flesh cannot be directed toward Christians.

Romans 8:1 is one of the verses usually cited to support this line of teaching:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to [‘a rendering of judgment against’] them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

However, this verse, contextually, isn't even dealing with eternal salvation. It is dealing with the existing warfare between the man of flesh and the man of spirit. That is what lies before the verse in chapter seven, and that is what lies after the verse in chapter eight. The context on both sides of this verse deals with problems which *this body of death* presents.

The latter part of the verse — “...who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit” — has been questioned by numerous textual critics over the years. This part of the verse is in the Textus Receptus and would account for it being in the Authorized Version. It is also present

in a number of other manuscripts, though it is also absent in a number of different manuscripts as well.

This questioned section of Scripture fits perfectly within the text if one remains within context. However, the opposite of that will be true if one departs from the context and attempts to use this verse relative to eternal salvation. Erroneously viewing this verse relative to eternal salvation probably accounts for the absence of this latter part of the verse in most of the modern-day translations (*e.g.*, NASB, NIV). And viewing the verse after this fashion may, as well, account for the absence of these words in many of the manuscripts which we have today.

A Christian's positional standing *in Christ*, which can never be subjected to judgment beyond Calvary, is one thing; but a Christian's present existence upon this earth *in a body of death*, with a responsibility to expel the leaven, is something entirely different. And Rom. 8:1, contextually, deals with the latter, not the former.

Because of the existence of this *body of death*, housing the old sin nature, Christians can and do sin. In fact, because of this *body of death*, Christians cannot live apart from sin, which necessitates Christ's present high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Sin is wrought in the lives of believers through the old sin nature: "If we say that we have no sin [old sin nature], we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). And the abiding presence of this old sin nature places believers in a position where they can and do sin, necessitating the promise seen in I John 1:9:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Sin manifested in the lives of believers will, without exception, be dealt with by the Lord in one of two ways: 1) through the present *high priestly ministry of Christ during the present day*, or 2) through the issues of the coming *judgment seat of Christ during that coming day*. Christians can either judge their own sins now, confessing them and receiving forgiveness, or they can await the judgment seat of Christ and have their sins judged by the Lord (I Cor. 11:31, 32; II Cor. 5:10, 11; I John 1:9; *cf.* I Peter 4:17).

Christ is presently exercising the office of *High Priest* in the Holy

of Holies of the heavenly tabernacle for the former, and he will exercise the office of *Judge* at the judgment seat of Christ for the latter. Confession now will result in cleansing, but waiting will result in chastisement.

Christ is exercising the office of High Priest to effect a *present cleansing* for the "kings and priests" which He is about to bring forth. These "kings and priests" will be manifested as the "sons of God" at the end of this dispensation and fill positions of power and authority as joint-heirs with Christ in the kingdom. The judgment seat will reveal their approval to occupy these positions.

However, there is another side to the judgment seat. Not only will certain individuals be *approved*, but other individuals, because of the sins of the flesh, will be *disapproved*. Christians who, today, refuse or neglect to avail themselves of the high priestly ministry of Christ will have their sins dealt with before the judgment seat; and this will be done, not by Christ as *High Priest*, but as *Judge*. Chastisement will then follow; and numerous Christians in that day, because of the sins of the flesh, will be shown to have forfeited their inheritance, resulting in their disqualification for positions as joint-heirs with Christ.

DESPISING DOMINION (V. 8)

Despising dominion refers back to the sin of the angels in verse six. The word "despise" is from a Greek word meaning to "set aside," "disregard." Angels in the kingdom of Satan "set aside," "disregarded" their positions of power in the heavens and came to earth in the form of man for the specific purpose of cohabiting with members of the human race. These angels set aside the positions for which they had been created and involved themselves in something completely alien to their very existence.

This account has been recorded in Jude, allowing the Spirit of God to draw spiritual lessons from Jude, showing how Christians can, in like manner, despise dominion; and this dominion is the very same dominion which the angels despised. The Church has been brought into existence to occupy heavenly places, to fill positions of power and authority in the heavens as God's firstborn son during the coming age; and these positions are the same positions presently being occupied

by angels ruling from heavenly places in Satan's kingdom.

Angels holding positions of power and authority under Satan in the present kingdom of the heavens will continue to rule from this heavenly sphere until that day when they, along with Satan, are cast out of the heavens onto the earth. The Church will then be brought to the goal of its calling, and, as the bride of Christ, be placed in this heavenly realm and occupy these positions.

Christians have been saved with a view to their replacing the incumbent rulers in the heavens, and the warning in this passage concerns the present existing danger of Christians "setting aside" or "disregarding" their calling. Angels apostatized in the past by standing away from the position for which they had been brought into existence; and Christians can, in like manner, apostatize during the present time by standing away from the position for which they have been brought into existence. Corruption, followed by judgment, was the inevitable outcome of this apostasy by angels; and corruption, followed by judgment, will also be the inevitable outcome of the same apostasy by Christians today.

SPEAKING EVIL OF DIGNITARIES (VV. 8-10)

Speaking evil of dignitaries in verse eight refers back to verse five and moves forward into verses nine and ten. The same word translated "speak evil" in the Greek text of verse eight is also used in verses nine and ten (*blasphemeo*, the verb form, appears in vv. 8, 10; and *blasphemia*, the noun form, appears in v. 9). The word is translated "railing accusation" in verse nine and rendered, once again, as "speak evil" in verse ten. This is the Greek word from which the English word "blasphemy" is derived; and the translation, "railing accusation," in verse nine actually captures the thought expressed by the word somewhat better than the translation, "speak evil," in verses eight and ten.

Railing accusations, emanating from unbelief on the part of the people of Israel in the historical account covered by verse five, were directed toward Moses. However, by so doing, the people were actually directing these railing accusations against God Himself. Moses was the one whom God had chosen to lead the Israelites out of

Egypt and into the land covenanted to Abraham and his posterity through Isaac and Jacob. His power and authority were of Divine origin; and, consequently, accusations leveled against the leadership of Moses were, in actuality, accusations directed against God Himself.

The people of Israel who questioned Moses' authority, seeking to appoint a new leader and return to Egypt, were questioning the very authority of God vested in Moses (*cf.* Num. 14:2, 27). Because of this sin, resulting from unbelief concerning their ability to go into the land as God had commanded, judgment fell upon the people of Israel. They could no longer enter the land under Moses and realize the purpose for their salvation from Egypt. They had fallen away, apostatized, in such a manner that it was impossible to renew them again unto repentance. As a result, during the next thirty-eight and one-half years, the entire generation — murmuring against Moses, and thus against the Lord — perished in the wilderness.

Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and those who followed them constitute another similar example (Num. 16:1ff). They rose up against Moses and Aaron in matters concerning their authority — Moses as leader of the people, and Aaron as high priest in the camp. When this occurred, Moses “fell upon his face” (v. 4). Moses knew that Korah and those with him were questioning, not just his and Aaron's authority, but the authority of God.

This rebellion against authority led to unacceptable incense being offered upon the altar at the door of the tabernacle by two hundred fifty prominent men who had gathered themselves against Moses with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. This, in turn, led to God's judgment on the entire group. God exhibited his wrath upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram by opening a chasm in the earth and causing them, along with “all that appertained unto them [their wives, children (save Korah's sons; *cf.* Num. 26:11, 58)],” to go down into *Sheol* alive:

“And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

They, and all that appertained unto them, went down alive into the pit [‘into *Sheol*’], and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation” (Num. 16:32, 33).

A fire then came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred fifty men which had offered the incense upon the altar (v. 35).

Immediately after the destruction of Korah and those following him, the people of Israel again murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." Again, as before, this was a murmuring not only against Moses and Aaron but against God. God was the One Who had performed the execution of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, their families, and the two hundred fifty men offering incense. And because of this same sin of murmuring against Divinely established authority, God sent a plague into the camp of Israel. This was done so speedily that before Aaron had time to make an "atonement for the people," standing "between the dead and the living," fourteen thousand seven hundred Israelites perished (vv. 41-50).

According to Scripture, it is a serious thing to murmur against, bring railing accusations against, those whom God has placed in positions of power and authority. Any rebellion against Divinely established authority is a rebellion against the Lord. It was so during Moses' day, and it is no different during the present day. The "powers that be" were during Moses' day, and are today, "ordained of God." All positions of power and authority are by Divine appointment. And whosoever "resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation [‘judgment’]" (Rom. 13:1, 2).

God rules in the kingdom of men and gives it "to whomsoever he will." God is the One Who establishes rulers, and He is also the One Who removes rulers (Dan. 4:17, 25-32). "There is no power but of God" (Rom. 13:1), which today, in view of the coming age, is vested in His Son. Jesus told His disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). In view of this, any rebellion against existing ordained powers — whether in the heavens or upon the earth — is a rebellion against the power vested in God's Son, which is simply a rebellion against Christ Himself.

Note the example given in Jude 9: Michael, the archangel, would not bring a railing accusation against even Satan. He, knowing that Satan held his position by Divine appointment and that Satan possessed no power but that which emanated from God, would go no further than to simply say, "The Lord rebuke thee." Michael knew that

any accusation against Satan would be an accusation against the One Who had appointed him to this position, the One in whom all power and authority reside.

(The parallel section in II Peter 2:11 is expanded to include other angels and other dignitaries as well: "Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them [dignitaries] before the Lord.")

Now, with all this in mind, the particular apostate element existing in Christendom in the latter days — with its parallel drawn from experiences of individuals during the days of Moses — should be clear. Bringing railing accusations against those whom God has placed in positions of power and authority is a form of *apostasy*. It is that simple. Such reviling or railing against Divinely established authority is not only *standing away from* the God-ordained position which a Christian is to occupy, but, as well, it is moving into a position wherein the apostate, in actuality, brings these accusations against the Lord Himself. And through such accusations, these apostates, as "brute beasts...corrupt themselves" (Jude 10; cf. II Peter 2:12).

8

Woe unto Them

Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 11-13).

The admonition to *earnestly strive with reference to the faith* in Jude 3 is followed by the introduction of apostates — those who have *stood away from the faith* — in verse four. Three Old Testament examples concerning apostasy are then given; and the Holy Spirit moved Jude to record a triad in verse eight, drawing from these three examples. The apostates who had been introduced in verse four reappear in verse eight, and verses nine and ten continue with the thought of apostate acts committed by these individuals. Verse eleven then presents another triad concerning these same individuals, continuing with the thought concerning the various forms which apostasy may take.

Jude's manner of teaching is with constant reference to the Old Testament. In verses five through seven he calls attention to three periods in Old Testament history. These form the object lessons, and the central teaching in verses eight through ten is then taken from these three periods. Verse eleven presents three Old Testament individuals, along with events surrounding these individuals; and verses twelve and thirteen describe the folly of those who follow in the paths of these three individuals: "Woe unto them..."

The Old Testament is filled with *word pictures, types, and illustrations*. There is *nothing* redundant or superfluous; nor is *anything* lacking. It is God's Revelation to man, *perfect* in every detail. Every historic event occurred under Divine, Sovereign control; "holy men of God" were then guarded from error as they, "moved ['borne along'] by the Holy Spirit," recorded these events (II Peter 1:21); and this Record has been preserved in order that the Holy Spirit might have these things to draw upon in teaching Christians the deep things of God.

The true nature of the Old Testament is *spiritual*. "God is spirit"; this Revelation emanates from Him; it is the "breath of God"; and the Holy Spirit takes the breath of God and imparts spiritual truth to man through his saved human spirit. Thus, the Old Testament is a book written for the spiritually minded to guide them in their spiritual lives unto spiritual maturity. And the lessons in Jude, drawn from the Old Testament Scriptures, have been recorded for this purpose (*cf.* Luke 24:25-32).

THE WAY OF CAIN

The *way of Cain* is the "way of the man of flesh." It is following the old nature. It is doing things after the manner, wisdom, and strength of man. It is doing things outside the realm of faith, walking by sight.

The great section in the New Testament on walking by faith is Hebrews, chapter eleven. This is a chapter which draws its material entirely from the experiences of individuals in the Old Testament. One central truth pertaining to a walk by faith in relation to the salvation of the soul is presented, and this chapter forms, in this fashion, the capstone to the Book of Hebrews (*cf.* Heb. 10:39). The key

verse in chapter eleven, reflecting on the central message throughout this book, is verse six:

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

Abel offered unto God “a more excellent sacrifice” than Cain. Abel offered his sacrifice “by faith.” Cain did not so do (Heb. 11:4). Consequently, Abel’s sacrifice was accepted, but Cain’s was rejected. Abel brought the sacrifice which God required, but Cain brought something other than that which God required. Abel brought “of the firstlings of his flock,” but Cain brought “of the fruit of the ground.”

This was an offering of the first-fruits (Gen. 4:4). And in an offering of the first-fruits, Cain, “a tiller of the ground,” would be expected to bring of the first-fruits of the field; and Abel, “a keeper of the sheep,” would be expected to bring of the first-fruits of his flock (Gen. 4:2). The acceptance of one offering and the rejection of the other apparently had to do with one person (Abel) bringing the amount which God required and the other person (Cain) not doing so (*ref.* the author’s book, HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES, Chapter X).

God’s acceptance of Abel’s offering and rejection of Cain’s offering followed the principle set forth in Heb. 11:6. God had previously revealed to both individuals exactly what He required, else neither could have acted “by faith.” *Faith* is simply “believing that which God has to say about a matter and acting accordingly.” Abel, believing that which God had to say and acting accordingly (exercising faith), brought the offering which God required. But Cain, rejecting that which God had to say and acting accordingly (not exercising faith), didn’t bring that which God required.

Cain was the first of a long list of individuals, following the fall, who governed their lives in a “way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 16:25). Cain failed to take into account that man’s ways and thoughts are in contradistinction to God’s ways and thoughts: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8, 9). Man’s perspective is finite, emanating from a fallen human nature. God’s perspective is infinite, emanating

from a point where corruption cannot exist. The Creator's ways and thoughts can become the creature's ways and thoughts *only* in the sphere of "faith," *i.e.*, in the sphere where the creature "believes God and acts accordingly." Redeemed man *MUST* follow the man of spirit in a walk "by faith." *There is no other way to please God.*

Christians have a Book, a Book containing the ways and thoughts of God. This Book, the written Revelation of God, has been given for a definite and specific purpose; and that purpose is twofold: 1) unredeemed man being brought into a *right relationship* with God, and 2) redeemed man following the man of spirit in a *walk by faith* within this right relationship.

In order to walk "by faith," man *MUST* know the Revelation of God; for he cannot believe God and act accordingly apart from knowing that which God has to say about the matter. Thus, redeemed man, through the man of spirit, ascertains the ways and thoughts of God through this Revelation; and his pilgrim walk, "by faith," is then governed accordingly.

Going "the way of Cain," *the way of the man of flesh*, is set forth in the Epistle of Jude as a form of "apostasy," *a standing away from the faith*. Christians knowing God's ways and thoughts can apostatize through removing themselves from God's ways and thoughts revealed in His Word and going in a contrary direction, governed by their own ways and thoughts. Man's goals, aims, ambitions, aspirations, plans, methods, and schemes then come into view and find their place among the acts of the apostates and those who do their bidding.

"The way of Cain" is not necessarily something offensive in the eyes of man. In fact, in the eyes of religious man today it is quite the contrary, and the way of Cain is often exalted and held in high esteem. It is not called "the way of Cain," but, rather, it is disguised and clothed in proper religious attire and passed off in Christian circles as the way and work of the Lord. This is a relatively easy task to accomplish because very few Christians are grounded in the Word of God in a manner sufficient to ascertain the ways and thoughts of the Lord; and understanding only the ways and thoughts of man, it is a very simple thing for them to, unknowingly, be led in "the way of Cain."

The only protection which Christians have against the onslaught of the enemy today is a knowledge of the Word of God, providing the

necessary instructions concerning the manner of one's pilgrim walk. Christians *MUST* receive the Word of God into their saved human spirits and allow the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead them into "all truth" concerning the *ways* and *thoughts* of God. *There is NO substitute!* Only in this manner can there be an effective walk *by faith*, one which pleases God and ultimately results in the salvation of their souls.

THE ERROR OF BALAAM

Jude 11 records "the error of Balaam," II Peter 2:15 records "the way of Balaam," and Rev. 2:14 records "the doctrine of Balaam." All three of these are used in passages referring to Christians entering into a state of affairs within Christianity which not only defiles their high calling but also dishonors the Lord Who purchased their salvation with His Own blood.

The *error* and *way* of Balaam appear in companion portions of Scripture and would seem to refer basically to the same thing. The *error* of Balaam is associated with "reward" in Jude, and the *way* of Balaam is associated with the "wages of unrighteousness" in II Peter. Thus, the *error* and *way* of Balaam have to do with "monetary gain"; and, according to the Old Testament account, this monetary gain is acquired through one's willingness to compromise the principles of God and proclaim things contrary to the revealed Word of God.

The *error* and *way* of Balaam can be found in Numbers, chapters twenty-two through twenty-four. Balak, king of the Moabites, hired Balaam to come into his land and pronounce a curse upon the children of Israel. Balak had seen what Israel did to the Amorites; and knowing that this nation would soon be passing through his country, he was afraid. He feared the Israelites because of the power which the nation exercised through God.

Balak knew that the only way the Israelites could be defeated was through severing the relationship which existed between Israel and God. Thus, Balak hired Balaam to come into Moab and pronounce a curse upon the Israelites, incurring God's anger upon them in order to sever this existing relationship and to ultimately bring about their defeat at the hands of the enemy. However, once in Moab, on three separate occasions, only blessings proceeded from the lips of Balaam.

Balak was angered by the turn of events and sent Balaam out of Moab into his own country.

The *doctrine* of Balaam is different than his *error* and *way*. His *doctrine* had to do with that part of his teaching which was contrary to the Word of God. However, an inseparable relationship exists between his *doctrine*, *error*, and *way*. That part of his teaching which was contrary to the Word of God (his *doctrine*) resulted from his willingness to prophesy either good or bad for monetary gain (his *error* and *way*).

And, remaining within this same framework, it would be little different among servants of the Lord today. One's willingness to compromise the principles of God (the *error* and *way* of Balaam) — for whatever reason — would precede and be inseparably linked to teaching that which was contrary to the Word of God (the *doctrine* of Balaam).

1) DOCTRINE OF BALAAM — PAST

Scripture surrounding the doctrine of Balaam and its tragic results is given in Num. 25:1-3:

“And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.”

The Israelites, after coming into Moab, began to commit fornication with the “daughters of Moab,” eat meat sacrificed to idols, and bow down and worship the gods of the Moabites. In order to put a stop to these sins and stay the hand of God's judgment upon the entire nation, Moses was instructed to slay every Israelite who had “joined himself unto Baal-peor.” And twenty-four thousand Israelites perished under God's judgment because of these sins.

What caused the Israelites to depart from the one true and living God Who had delivered them from Egypt? What caused them to

begin serving false gods and following the idolatrous ways of the Moabites? The answer is given in Num. 31:16:

“Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.”

Balaam could not curse Israel. Only beautiful prophecies filled with blessings flowed from his lips when he was called into Moab by Balak. But Balaam did succeed in leading the Israelites astray through his counsel. The Israelites, through the counsel of Balaam, were led to commit fornication, eat things sacrificed to idols, and bow down before other gods. And, because of these sins, the judgment of God fell upon His people.

The counsel of Balaam — i.e., “the doctrine of Balaam” — had to do with the sins committed by the Israelites in view of their covenant relationship with God. Briefly stated, this doctrine had to do with the fact that the Israelites were the covenant people of God, this covenant could not be broken, and consequently the Israelites could sin with immunity.

However, such was not the case. It was true that the covenant established between God and Israel could not be broken; it was also true that Israel’s position as firstborn could not be changed; but it was not true that Israel could sin with immunity. God’s wrath was manifested because of the sins of His people, and the thousands of Israelites who succumbed to the counsel of Balaam were overthrown in the wilderness short of the goal of their calling.

2) *DOCTRINE OF BALAAM — PRESENT*

The doctrine of Balaam is one of the most widely taught doctrines in the Church today. Christians know — as their counterparts in the Church in Pergamos (Rev. 2:14) — that they have been saved by grace through faith, and nothing can alter their positional standing “in Christ.” In view of this unalterable positional standing, they reason that they can conduct their lives in any manner which they choose and it will make no difference.

However, as in the case of the Israelites, so in the case of Christians. Christians, as the Israelites under Moses, have been saved for a specific purpose. Every Christian is enrolled in a race (I Cor. 9:24-27), and every Christian is engaged in a conflict (Eph. 6:10-18; II Tim. 2:4, 5). The goal set before Christians is to win the race, be victorious in the conflict. And God has made provision for Christians in order that at the end of the race they might say with Paul,

“I have fought a good fight [‘I have strained every muscle in (to maintain) the good contest’], I have finished my course [‘race’], I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (II Tim. 4:7, 8).

The enemy, Satan, on the other hand, is doing all within his power to bring about defeat in the lives of Christians. Satan’s main objective in the present warfare is to prevent Christians from qualifying for crowns and thus positions of rulership with Christ in His coming kingdom. God is presently bringing into existence a new order of *sons* to replace the order now ruling in the heavens; and the incumbent rulers — Satan and his angels — are doing all within their power to retain their present governmental control over the earth.

The main facet of the doctrine of Balaam which is being widely promulgated in Churches today is the teaching that future blessings and rewards are guaranteed for every Christian solely on the basis of Christ’s finished work on Calvary and the Christian’s positional standing “in Christ.” Thus, all Christians — regardless of their conduct during the present time — will receive crowns and positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.

However, the teaching throughout the Word of God is to the contrary. The Israelites did not sin with immunity, and neither can Christians. Sin in the camp of Israel resulted in the Israelites being overthrown in the wilderness, short of the goal of their calling. And it will be no different for Christians.

“...and I took the crown that was upon his head” (II Sam. 1:10; cf. Rev. 3:11).

THE GAINSAYING OF KORAH

Korah was a Levite, the cousin of Aaron and Moses (Ex. 6:18-21). His sin was speaking against the authority of God had vested in Aaron and Moses. Korah sought, particularly, to intrude into the priestly office held by Aaron, saying that all the Levites were “holy,” and any of the Levites had as much right as Aaron to perform these priestly functions (Num. 16:1ff).

The word “gainsaying” in Jude 11 is *antilogia* in the Greek text, which means “against the word,” or “speaking against.” Korah *moved against, he spoke against the Word of God*. Aaron was the high priest whom God had appointed, and the power to exercise this priestly office was vested in him alone. Korah dared to question God’s choice of Aaron and the power which He had vested in Aaron, which is looked upon in the three preceding verses (vv. 8-10) as a rebellion against Divinely established authority. A rebellion of this nature is a rebellion against the One in whom all power and authority reside, against God Himself (*ref.* Chapter VII).

Questioning Divinely established authority is a serious matter to say the least. God’s displeasure with Korah and those who followed him is shown by their removal from the camp of Israel through 1) being taken down into *Sheol* alive, and 2) being consumed by fire proceeding out from the Lord (Num. 16:25-35).

Christians following the path trod by Korah and those who followed him are looked upon in the Epistle of Jude as “apostates.” Korah *stood away from* the position which he was to occupy in the camp of Israel, and Christians following his example likewise *stand away from* the position which they are to occupy as *new creations* “in Christ.” They move out of the arena of faith — *stand away from* “the faith” — and become involved in things which are foreign to their very existence. And, as set forth in Numbers chapter sixteen, God will not countenance such acts.

Christendom today is filled with those who follow the “gainsaying of Korah.” They refuse to recognize that power and authority reside in God alone, and that He has vested His power in certain individuals (men and angels) whom He has chosen and placed in various positions. They, as Korah, *move against, speak against the Word*

— whether they realize it or not — when they move against or speak against those whom God has chosen and appointed, in whom He has vested His power.

1) *GOVERNMENT OF THE EARTH*

The government of the earth is presently in a very complex state. Satan was originally given dominion over the earth, and a vast number of subordinate angels were placed in positions of power and authority under him. Following his rebellion, Satan was rejected as the ruler of the earth, but he was not immediately deposed. Satan was allowed to continue exercising dominion over the earth for a period of time. During this time God brought man into existence to assume the governmental power which Satan possessed.

The first man, Adam though was disqualified through sin; and Satan continued to rule. God then sent His Son, the Last Adam, to redeem that which the First Adam forfeited in the fall. Christ not only paid the price for man's redemption but He also showed that He was fully qualified to take the governmental reigns of the earth.

But the incumbent ruler, Satan, was not immediately put down. Jesus did not immediately take the sceptre; nor has He taken it to this day. Jesus is presently in a place removed from the kingdom. While in this place, He is calling out a select group to occupy the throne with Him when He returns to take the kingdom.

And individuals whom He is calling out are *NOT* to become caught up in and involved within in the present system under Satan. The present and future status of both Christ and Christians in relation to the government of the earth is graphically set forth in Biblical typology in the Books of I, II Samuel.

Saul had been anointed king over Israel, but Saul rebelled against the Lord and was rejected by the Lord. David was then anointed king over Israel. There were, following that time, two anointed kings in Israel, but Saul continued to occupy the throne.

As Saul continued to reign, David was forced into exile. The hills of Judaea became the headquarters of David. Certain Israelites gathered themselves unto David. They are described as those who were *in distress, in debt, and discontented* (I Sam. 22:2). Those who

followed David in this manner constituted a hidden group, separate from the camp of Israel under Saul, and separate from the kingdom plans of Saul.

So long as Saul remained in power, neither David nor his faithful followers sought to control any facet of the affairs of the kingdom under Saul. David had already been anointed king over Israel, but the time had not arrived for him to assume power. David and his followers *waited*.

The day though finally arrived when Saul was put down, his crown taken and given to David, and *then* David ruled over Israel. And the faithful men who followed David during his time of exile *then* found themselves occupying various positions of power and authority in the kingdom under David.

In the antitype, Satan has been anointed king over the earth. He is the earth's present ruler. Satan rebelled against the Lord, and was rejected by the Lord. Jesus was then anointed King over the earth. There are presently two anointed Kings, but Satan continues to occupy the throne.

As Satan continues to reign, Jesus has gone into a place of exile. Jesus is presently at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Certain Christians ally themselves with and follow Jesus during this time. They are typified by the Israelites *in distress, in debt, and discontented*, who gathered themselves unto David. They constitute a hidden group, separate from the world system under Satan, and separate from the kingdom plans of Satan and those who rule with him.

So long as Satan remains in power, Jesus will not seek to control any facet of the affairs in the kingdom under Satan. In like manner, neither should Christians. Jesus has already been anointed King over the earth (*cf.* Matt. 2:2; 16:16), but the time has not arrived for Him to assume power. Jesus is waiting *until* "the time," and so should Christians (*cf.* I Cor. 4:5; Heb. 10:13).

The day though will one day come when Satan will be put down, his crown taken and given to Jesus, and *then* Jesus will rule over the earth. And the faithful men who follow the Lord during His time of exile will *then* find themselves occupying various positions of power and authority in the kingdom under Jesus the Christ.

2) *SUBJECT TO — CO-REGENT WITH*

One of the ancient rabbis in Jewish history stated, “The secret of Adam is the secret of the Messiah.” To come into an understanding of the entire panorama of Biblical truths, one must view them after the same fashion in which God gave these truths. And to do this, one *MUST* go back to the very foundation upon which these truths rest — the Book of Genesis — and ascertain the same truths relative to Adam. Scripture *MUST* be interpreted in the light of Scripture, and Scripture *MUST* be interpreted after the manner in which it was written (types, shadows, word pictures, etc.). All other methods of Scriptural interpretation can only lead to the multiplicity of pseudo thoughts and opinions originating from and held by man today.

The Church is to one day reign with the last Adam in the same position that Eve was to reign with the first Adam. But, during the time when the effects of the fall are present, prior to this reign, the Church is to occupy the same position relative to Christ that Eve occupied relative to Adam following the fall. Eve, following the fall, was no longer in the position of *co-regent with* Adam but was placed in *subjection to* Adam (Gen. 3:16; cf. Gen. 1:26-28). In like manner, the Church today is not in the position of *co-regent with* Christ but, rather, is *subject to* Christ (Eph. 5:24; cf. Eph. 3:6). And the Church in this subjective position is completely out of place exercising governmental power and authority today.

As Eve was to reign as *co-regent with* Adam, the Church is to one day reign as *co-regent with* Christ. Eve could not reign while *subject to* Adam; nor can the Church reign while *subject to* Christ. The completion of the redemption of Christians must occur first (body and soul). Then, and only then, can they be placed in the position which Eve occupied in relation to the First Adam prior to the fall. Then, and only then, can they reign as “joint-heirs” with Christ in the kingdom (cf. Rom. 8:16-23; I Peter 1:9-11; 4:12, 13).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

The condition of Christians who follow the “way of Cain,” the “error of Balaam,” or the “gainsaying of Korah” is described through the use of metaphors in Jude 12, 13. Four different metaphors are used to describe their present condition, and one to describe their future

condition. Their present condition is depicted by showing a fruitless, shameful condition in which they are carried about every which way in the world; and their future condition is depicted by the statement, “wandering stars,” to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”

The word “forever [Gk. *aion*]” in verse thirteen should be translated “for an age,” or “with respect to an age.” The age in view can only be the coming age, the Messianic Era.

Apostate Christians described in Jude 12, 13 will occupy no position with Christ in the kingdom. These are the same ones who previously, prior to the establishment of the kingdom, will have found themselves in “outer darkness” during the time of the wedding festivities (Matt. 22:1-14; cf. Matt. 8:11, 12; 25:14-30; Luke 13:28, 29); and the thought of darkness is used by Jude to describe the continued condition of these Christians in the kingdom itself.

Compare Jude 13 with I Peter 1:4. There is an *inheritance* “reserved” for Christians, and there is also the *blackness of darkness* “reserved” for Christians (the word “reserved” is the same in both passages in the Greek text). The former is reserved for faithful Christians, and the latter is reserved for unfaithful Christians.

The “inheritance,” according to I Peter 1:5, is reserved for those “who are kept by the power of God through faith [faith being brought to its goal through works (cf. vv. 6-9; James 2:14ff)] unto salvation [salvation of the soul (cf. vv. 9-11; James 1:21)] ready to be revealed in the last time”; and the “blackness of darkness,” according to Jude 10, 11, is reserved for those who “corrupt themselves” through following the “way of Cain,” the “error of Balaam,” or the “gainsaying of Korah.”

“Faith” is the key issue in both I Peter and Jude. The salvation of one’s soul, associated with the inheritance reserved in heaven, is contingent on “faith” being brought to its proper goal; and the apostates in Jude depart from this path by *standing away from* “the faith.”

Both an *inheritance* and the *blackness of darkness* are being kept in reserve. The *faithful* alone will come into a realization of the “inheritance.” And the *apostates* have only one thing to which they can look forward: that described by Jude as the “blackness of darkness.”

9

Behold, The Lord Cometh

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage (Jude 14-16).

The prophecy of Enoch is one of the oldest prophecies in all Scripture, and it is recorded only by Jude. There is no record in the Book of Genesis concerning this prophecy. There does exist a non-canonical, apocryphal book, the *Book of Enoch*, which contains a prophecy similar to the one Jude records; but this is of no moment whatsoever. Jude derived his information, not from apocryphal writings, but from the same source where he derived his information in all other portions of his epistle — from the Lord. And the Lord has seen fit to reveal Enoch's prophecy through Jude at this exact juncture

in His Revelation to man in order to continue the same line of teaching seen thus far in Jude — drawing from events in the lives of individuals in the Old Testament.

Enoch, as all other prophets in the Old Testament, received that which he proclaimed *from the Lord*. He prophesied about an event concerning which he himself, apart from God, could know nothing — an event which would occur over 5,000 years in the future. Furthermore, the prophecy had to do with judgment upon a particular group of people who would not even be brought into existence for over 3,000 years removed from Enoch's time. Both Enoch's prophecy and the record of this prophecy in the Epistle of Jude are, as "all Scripture," *supernatural* in origin.

(Note that Jude also called attention to another historic event not recorded by any other writer of sacred Scripture — The contention between Michael and Satan concerning the body of Moses [v. 9].)

It is commonly taught by most interpreters of Jude that Enoch's prophecy concerns judgment befalling the unregenerate earth-dwellers when Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation. However, that is not at all what the text states. Enoch "prophesied of *these*" (v. 15). The reference is to individuals in the preceding verses, to apostates. The scope of judgment in Enoch's prophecy is "upon all" Christians, but he particularly singles out the apostates "among them" (v. 16).

Attention has been called in past chapters to the fact that II Peter and Jude are companion epistles, paralleling one another in a number of places. The parallel section to Jude 14-16 is II Peter 2:18, 19. These verses in II Peter, as the verses in Jude, refer to the ones who have corrupted themselves through apostate acts, outlined in the preceding verses. These are the ones for whom the "blackness of darkness" is *reserved* (II Peter 2:17; Jude 13), rather than the "inheritance" to which Christians have been *called* (I Peter 1:4).

II Peter 2:18, 19 leads immediately into the thought of escaping "the pollutions of the world through the *knowledge* of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (v. 20), though being "again entangled therein [again entangled in these pollutions], and overcome" (vv. 21, 22). The same individuals are in view throughout all these verses. Note the

expressions: “For when *they...*” (v. 18); “While *they...*” (v. 19); “For if after *they...*” (v. 20); “For it had been better for *them...*” (v. 21). The entire section refers to individuals who escaped “the pollutions of the world,” and then apostatized — *stood away from* “the faith.” They had come into a *knowledge* of “the way of righteousness,” and then *turned* from this way (*cf.* v. 15).

The words “knowledge” and “known” in verses twenty and twenty-one are translations of a word in the Greek text which means “mature knowledge” (*epignosis*, the noun form, appears in v. 20; and *epiginosko*, the verb form, appears in v. 21). And escaping the pollutions of the world through a mature knowledge (*epignosis*) of the Lord Jesus Christ is impossible for an unsaved individual. He does not possess a saved spirit into which the Word of God can be received; nor does he possess the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead him into “all truth.” Consequently, a mature knowledge of this nature is completely out of the question. Accordingly, it is also completely out of the question to think that Peter and Jude are referring to any group of individuals other than Christians.

THE SEVENTH FROM ADAM

The record is given of only two individuals in the antediluvian world who carried God’s message to man. There were undoubtedly many (*cf.* Gen. 4:26), but God has seen fit to reveal only the one prophecy which Enoch uttered and the fact that Noah was “a preacher of righteousness.” Both of these accounts are passed over without mention in the Old Testament and are revealed only by Peter and Jude in the New Testament. Noah’s preaching is mentioned in II Peter 2:4, 5, and Enoch’s prophecy is recorded in our text in Jude. The parallel section to II Peter 2:4, 5 in Jude (v. 6) does not refer to Noah’s preaching; only Peter records this. And the parallel section to Jude 14-16 in II Peter (2:18, 19) does not refer to Enoch’s prophecy; only Jude records this.

“Enoch,” in typology, has to do peculiarly with *Christians*; and “Noah,” in typology, has to do peculiarly with *Israel*. Enoch was removed into heaven before the Flood, while Noah, remaining here on earth in a place of safety, passed through the Flood. The “Flood”

coming upon the world in the Genesis account typifies the *Great Tribulation* which is to come upon the world yet future (Luke 17:26-30); “Enoch” being removed before the Flood typifies the *Church* being removed before the Great Tribulation; and “Noah” passing through the Flood in a place of safety typifies the *nation of Israel* passing through the Great Tribulation in a place of safety (Luke 17:26ff).

This is the order set forth in the Genesis account, the book wherein the roots of all Biblical doctrine lie (*cf.* Heb. 11:4-7); and the Word of God clearly states, “...as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man” (Luke 17:26). During the days of Noah, preceding the Flood, *one man* was removed from the earth *alive* and taken into the heavens. During the days of the Son of Man, preceding the Great Tribulation, *one man* — the *one new man* “in Christ” — will be removed from the earth *alive* and taken into the heavens. Then, as Noah passed safely through the Flood during his day, Israel will pass safely through the Great Tribulation during that coming day.

In view of the place which Enoch occupies in Biblical typology, it was only natural that God chose this man, millenniums before the Church was even brought into existence, not only to be the one to typify the Church being removed but also to be the one to prophesy concerning judgment upon Christians following their removal. Enoch’s prophecy is a *warning*, not to individuals during his day, but to individuals during our day. It is a *warning* concerning judgment awaiting all Christians at the time of the Lord’s return, with severe consequences awaiting apostate Christians at this time.

Enoch was of the seventh generation from Adam through Seth. Six generations had passed, with the affairs of man moving, in two established genealogies, in a seemingly unchanging pattern: the lineage of the godless line of Cain (Gen. 4:17-22), and the lineage of the godly line of Seth (Gen. 5:6-24). However, in the seventh generation things changed. The record concerning the godless line of Cain was *terminated*, and the record concerning the godly line of Seth shows a *man being taken into heaven alive*. And the entire matter is fraught with spiritual meaning and prophetic significance.

“Six” is *man’s number*, and “seven” is *God’s number*. Man has been allotted six days, 6,000 years. But the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period, belongs to the Lord. This corresponds not only to the six

and seven days of Genesis chapters one and two but to the six and seven generations of Genesis chapters four and five (note that the foundational teaching surrounding the six and seven days is taken from Genesis, chapters one and two [cf. II Peter 1:15-18; 3:3-8]). At the end of six days (*i.e.*, at the end of 6,000 years), at the end of the corresponding time set forth by the six generations (pointing to the entirety of Man's Day during the same 6,000 years), Man's Day will have run its course.

At this time, at the completion of Man's Day, two things will occur: 1) *the present world system will be brought to an end*, typified by the fact that the lineage of Cain was terminated at this point; and 2) *the Church will be removed into the heavens*, typified by the fact that Enoch, "the seventh from Adam" in the lineage of Seth, "was not; for God took him."

COMING WITH HIS SAINTS

1) "HOLY ONES"

At the time of the Lord's return for Christians, as set forth in Jude 14, He will be accompanied by "ten thousands [*lit.* 'myriads' (an innumerable multitude)] of his saints." The word "saints" is a translation of the Greek word *hagios*, meaning "holy," or in its plural form as used here, "holy ones."

The word *hagios* is used in the New Testament to refer to individuals, places, and things which are "*separated* unto the service of God." It is used of Christians, Jewish prophets, angels, the city of Jerusalem, the Holy of Holies in the temple, and the Scriptures, etc. (*cf.* Matt. 4:5; 24:15; Luke 1:70; Rom. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Rev. 14:10). This is also the word used throughout the New Testament referring to the Spirit of God — the *Holy Spirit*. Thus, the manner in which this word is used in New Testament passages *must always be shown* by accompanying, identifying words or textual considerations.

Jude used the word *hagios* four times in his epistle (vv. 3, 14, 20). In verse three the reference is to *Christians*; in verse fourteen the reference is to *angels* (shown by textual considerations, along with related passages); and in verse twenty the reference is to *the faith of Christians* and to *the Holy Spirit*. Enoch's prophecy in verse fourteen

has to do with the Lords coming with His “saints [‘holy ones’ (angels)],” to execute judgment upon His “saints [‘holy ones’ (Christians)],” referred to in verse three. These two groups of individuals, both called “saints [from *hagios*],” must be kept separate and distinct.

Many individuals among those who do not understand that Jude 14 has to do with the return of Christ for Christians (bringing Christians into judgment preceding the Tribulation, rather than judgment befalling the earth-dwellers when He returns at the end of the Tribulation) believe that the word *hagios* in this verse is a reference to Christians accompanying the Lord at the time of His revelation. However, the thought of Christians returning to the earth with Christ at this time is not at all in accord with Scripture. Christ will be accompanied by angels, *not* Christians, when He returns to deal with Israel and the nations. He will be revealed at this time with “his mighty angels,” the “armies” of heaven (II Thess. 1:7; Rev. 19:14; cf. Job 25:3; Psa. 103:20; Zech. 14:5; Rev. 12:7).

Christians at the time of Christ’s return, those retaining their birthright, will constitute the *wife of the Lamb*. And, as Biblical typology plainly reveals, Christ’s wife *will not* accompany Him to the earth when He returns to deal with Israel and the Gentile nations.

Moses’ wife, Zipporah, did not accompany him when he returned to Egypt to deal with his brethren, followed by the destruction of Gentile power in the Red Sea. She remained behind and was reunited with Moses, appearing with him only *after* these events (Ex. 4:19-26; 18:1ff).

Joseph’s wife, Asenath, in the same fashion as Zipporah in relation to Moses, was not with Joseph when he dealt with his brethren. She was in another part of the palace at this time (Gen. 45:1ff).

Thus will it be when Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation. His wife, comprised of those Christians called out of the called, will apparently remain behind in the New Jerusalem and be reunited with Him, appearing with Christ in the antitype of Zipporah in Ex. 18:1ff, only *after* He deals with Israel and the nations.

Deuteronomy 33:2 provides a similar reference to the subject under discussion in Jude 14. In this passage, “ten thousands of saints [*lit.* ‘myriads of holy ones’],” are said to have accompanied the Lord at the time He gave the Law through Moses at Mt. Sinai. These *saints*

were instrumental in giving the law and are identified in Psa. 68:17 as “angels” (cf. Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2).

(The Hebrew word translated “saints” in Deut. 33:2 is *kodesh*, a Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word *hagios* used in Jude 14. See also Psa. 89:5-7; Dan. 8:13; Zech. 14:5; I Thess. 3:13 where angels, called “saints,” are referred to by the Hebrew word *kadosh* [a cognate of *kodesh*] and by the Greek word *hagios*).

Angels (“saints,” “holy ones”) will accompany the Lord when He returns for His Church before the Tribulation and again when He returns to deal with Israel and the nations following the Tribulation (cf. Matt. 16:24-27). Enoch prophesied concerning the former, and his prophecy must not be confused with events surrounding the latter.

2) “MINISTERING SPIRITS”

Angels were instrumental in God’s dealings with Israel in the Old Testament (cf. Gen. 18:1ff; I Kings 19:5; Psa. 103:21; 104:4; Dan. 8:16, 17; 9:20ff); they were instrumental in events surrounding the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ at His first coming (Matt. 4:11; Luke 2:9ff; 22:43; John 20:11ff); they are instrumental in God’s dealings with the Church today (cf. Heb. 1:7, 13, 14; Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14); they will be instrumental in events affecting Israel and the nations during the Tribulation (cf. Rev. 7:1ff; 8:1ff; 9:1ff; 10:1ff...); and they will be instrumental in events surrounding Christ at His second coming.

Angels are “ministering spirits” who execute the will, purpose, judgments, etc. of the Lord; and angelic accompaniment at the Lord’s return will be for this purpose. Angels who accompany Christ when He returns to the earth after the Tribulation, for example, will be instrumental in regathering Israel and in removing from Christ’s kingdom “all things that offend, and them which do iniquity” (Matt. 13:41; 24:30, 31).

TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (I Peter 4:17-19).

1) UPON CHRISTIANS

When the words "ungodly" and "sinner" appear, as in I Peter 4:18 and the text in Jude 15, the normal reaction among Christians is to think in terms of *unsaved individuals* and of *eternal verities*. However, neither the unsaved nor eternal verities are in view in these passages. Thinking along these lines is a shift from the subject matter at hand to things which are not being dealt with at all. These passages concern judgment upon those in the house of God, and this judgment is with a view to a salvation placed in the future, having to do with the Messianic Era.

Not only is it evident from this future aspect that the salvation which we presently possess is not in view, but the words "scarcely be saved [*lit. 'with difficulty be saved'*]" also make this fact clear. No one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is saved "with difficulty," for eternal salvation is based entirely on the finished work of Christ at Calvary. And viewing a person as having come into possession of this salvation "with difficulty" could only emanate from a complete misunderstanding of salvation by grace through faith.

Eternal salvation is the simplest thing in the world:

"What must I do to be saved?"

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:30, 31).

Nothing on man's part involves difficulty. It can't, for unsaved man is "dead in trespasses and sins," totally incapable of operating in the spiritual realm. All he can possibly do is receive that which has already been done on his behalf. And he does this by simply believing, putting his trust in, the One Who did everything on his behalf.

The Epistles of I, II Peter and Jude, as all other epistles, deal specifically with the salvation of the soul. The salvation which Christians presently possess has to do with *the spirit*, not the soul (John

3:6). The epistles though, both Pauline and General, deal with those who already have eternal life — salvation of *the spirit*, wrought through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ — and pertain to things surrounding a salvation to be revealed. Each epistle has its special and particular emphasis in this area; and when studied together, in the light of one another, the epistles present a complete, composite revelation concerning this future salvation.

The special and particular emphasis in the Epistle of Jude is upon exhorting Christians to *earnestly strive with reference to* “the faith,” with attendant warnings against *standing away from* “the faith,” *apostatizing*. The issues surrounding the unsaved, eternal damnation, *do not, in any way*, enter into this subject matter. It is not the unsaved who are called “ungodly,” “sinners,” “murmurers,” “complainers,” etc. NO! These were words which Jude used to describe individuals from among the saved. These were apostates, those who had *stood away from* “the faith” and will, before the judgment seat of Christ, experience the loss of their souls.

I Peter 4:17-19 begins with a reference to *judgment*, which “must begin at the house of God” (v. 17), and there is then an exhortation to suffering Christians to “commit the keeping of their souls to him [God] in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (v. 19). Then, placed squarely between these two verses lies a question, having to do with two groups of Christians:

“And if the righteous scarcely [‘with difficulty’] be saved, where shall the ‘ungodly’ and the ‘sinner’ appear?” (v. 18).

I Peter 4:18 *MUST* be understood and interpreted in the light of its context — the *judgment* of Christians (v. 17), and issues surrounding the *souls* of Christians (v. 19). The salvation in verse eighteen is in connection with both the judgment in verse seventeen and suffering according to the will of God and committing the keeping of one’s soul to the Lord in verse nineteen. To understand this verse in any other fashion is to ignore the context and, in this manner, obscure teachings which the Spirit of God, through Peter, is setting forth.

As evident from I Peter 4:17-19 and Jude 15, the words “ungodly” and “sinner” are used in a broader sense in Scripture than many realize. These words are used of those in the world in relation to

eternal salvation, the salvation of their spirits (Rom 5:6, 8, 19); but, as in both I Peter 4:17-19 and Jude 15, these same two words are also used of Christians in relation to salvation for the age, the salvation of their souls (*cf.* II Tim. 2:16; Titus 2:12; James 4:8; Jude 4, 18). Scriptures dealing specifically with the salvation of the soul in the epistles (Pauline or General) *MUST* be understood and interpreted in the light of their subject matter.

In James 5:19, 20, a *brother* erring “from the truth [truth revealed in the message of James]” is called a “sinner.” This sinning brother is in danger of losing his soul, and the only thing which will prevent this from happening is his *conversion* (his being turned about, turned back to the truth expounded in James).

There is nothing in this passage about eternal verities. James, in his epistle, deals with an entirely different subject. James expounds on works, emanating out of a Christian’s faithfulness, which bring faith to its proper goal (James 2:14ff; *cf.* I Peter 1:9). And a man who turns aside from the truth expounded in James places himself in danger, not of suffering eternal damnation, but of experiencing the loss of his soul. Faith will not have been brought to its proper goal. James 5:19, 20 must be understood and interpreted in this light.

Thus, always follow the text, context, and message of the book when interpreting Scripture. Making certain basic errors through erroneous interpretations one place in Scripture will, more often than not, open the door for other erroneous interpretations elsewhere in Scripture; but, realizing certain basic truths one place in Scripture will always, at some point, open the door for one to see and grasp other truths elsewhere in Scripture. Then, once a person begins to build upon these basic truths, he begins moving from *gnosis* (knowledge) to *epignosis* (mature knowledge); and the great truths of Scripture throughout the Word of God begin to unfold before him.

2) AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...” (II

Cor. 5:10, 11a).

For over 1,900 years Christ has been exercising the office of High Priest in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly tabernacle on behalf of Christians. Although all judgment has been committed into His hands (John 5:22), He has not been judging during this time. Judgment has been deferred to a future date. Christ will execute judgment only *after* He comes forth from the tabernacle at the end of the present dispensation.

Following the present high priestly ministry of Christ, when He comes forth as Judge, Christians will come under His judgment *first*. This will be followed approximately seven years later by judgment upon Israel and the nations; and then, 1,000 years later, the unsaved dead from all the ages will stand before God's Son to be judged (Isa. 1:18-31; Ezek. 20:33-44; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:11-15).

Every person who has ever lived or ever will live *MUST*, at some point in time, appear before God's Son in judgment. There is no escaping this fact; for, in connection with "death," either *in Christ* or *outside of Christ*, this is an appointment which *MUST* be kept (Heb. 9:27).

The principle that judgment must begin at the house of God establishes a certain order for future judgments. God is today dealing with *the Church*, during which time Israel has been set aside. And God will conclude His dealings with the Church, which include both Christ's present high priestly ministry and Christ's future appearance upon the judgment seat, before resuming His national dealings with Israel.

Then, once God resumes these national dealings, the principle concerning judgment beginning at the house of God will hold true relative to *Israel*. The Tribulation itself will be a time of judgment upon all who dwell upon the earth — Israel *first*, and then the nations. This period of time is specifically called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). After the Tribulation, when Israel and the Gentiles stand before God's Son in judgment, Israel will still retain priority. Judgment must begin at the house of God. Israel will, at that time, be judged *first*.

There are a number of parallels between the judgment of Israel and the judgment of Christians which should not be overlooked, for

one will cast light upon the other. Preceding both judgments, Christ will come forth accompanied by angels. Preceding both judgments, the dead will be raised and, together with those who are alive at that time, will be taken to designated places to be judged. Christians, before the Tribulation, will be taken into heaven; Israel, after the Tribulation, will be taken into “the wilderness of the people” (Ezek. 20:34-37), which is possibly a reference to the Sinai area (the new covenant to be made with Israel could very well be instituted in the same place that God brought Israel into the bonds of the old covenant).

Both the judgment of Christians and the judgment of Israel have to do with the house of God. These constitute judgments upon the people of God, and both judgments are for the same basic purpose. The Church and Israel constitute two separate and distinct groups of individuals which are about to assume positions of power and authority over and on the earth, and these individuals must first appear in judgment before God’s Son to either be apportioned or be denied positions in the kingdom.

At the time Christ judges Israel, following His return to the earth, there will be two classes of individuals: *faithful*, and *unfaithful*. At this time He will “purge out” the *rebels* and *transgressors*, “and they shall not enter into the land of Israel.” One Scripture passage showing exactly what is involved concerns God’s judgment upon the Levites at this time (Ezek. 44:10-16). Among the Levites there will be those singled out who had previously involved themselves with idolatry and, in this manner, had led other Israelites astray. These individuals will, during the coming age, bear their “shame” and “abominations” by being servants rather than priests in the Lord’s house (cf. Ezek. 20:37, 38).

The judgment of Christians, preceding Israel’s judgment, will be identical in nature. There will be a division between the *faithful* and the *unfaithful*, and only the faithful will be apportioned positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom. In the coming age, the lot of unfaithful Christians in the heavens will be comparable to that of unfaithful Israelites on the earth. They — the “murmurers, complainers...” — will bear their *shame*, occupying no place among the “kings and priests” reigning with Christ (Jude 16; cf. v. 13; I Cor. 3:11-15).

Decisions and determinations rendered at the judgments of the

Church and Israel precede and anticipate the kingdom to follow. Out of these judgments will come the ones who are to exercise supremacy — from the heavens, and on the earth. And in that day, following these judgments, God's complete purpose surrounding the existence of both the Church and Israel will be brought to pass.

10

Mockers in the Last Time

But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit (Jude 17-19).

Verses seventeen through nineteen conclude Jude's remarks on the apostasy prophesied to prevail throughout Christendom in the latter days. In this passage we are introduced to "mockers," who are specifically associated with "the last time." The apostles had previously spoken of their appearance (*cf.* I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 4:1-4; II Thess. 2:2, 3), and their appearance near the close of the dispensation results from the terminal corrupting process of the leaven placed in the three measures of meal by the woman in Matt. 13:33 ("...till the *whole* was leavened"). From the place which these mockers occupy in Jude, it seems evident that Satan has reserved *his most corrupt work* for that period of time when the Church will have reached *its most corrupt state*.

The spiritually destitute condition of the Church in the end-time is not a state into which the Church is yet to move, except for the fact that the leaven is still working, producing further corruption. Christians in the world today are living during the time prophesied in Scripture, when the leavening process has already worked into the

entire mass. This is a time immediately preceding Christ's return, when the prophesied apostasy of Scripture is rapidly nearing its pinnacle. This is a time depicted by the Laodicean period of Revelation chapters two and three; and the present spiritual condition of the Church, typified by the spiritual condition of the Laodicean Church, is described by the words, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:14ff). It is in these days, in the very time during which the Church in the world finds itself, that the "mockers" from Jude appear.

MOCKERS

Jude's point of termination for his discourse on apostasy is the same point of termination which Peter records in the parallel section of his second epistle. This, of course, is easy to understand, for the Holy Spirit moved both of these men to write about the same thing, revealing the end of the matter through both men. These are the words of Peter and Jude only insofar as they were the human instruments used to record the words. These passages are, as all Scripture, the very Word of God. God Himself, near the beginning of the present dispensation, revealed through Peter and Jude exactly how conditions would be at the end of the dispensation, immediately preceding His Son's return.

II Peter 3:1-13 forms the parallel section to Jude 17-19. In the Authorized Version of Scripture, the word, "scoffers" appears in II Peter (v. 3) rather than the word "mockers," as in Jude. However, the same word (*empaiktes*) appears in both passages in the Greek text; and there should be no difference in the way it is understood, for both passages refer to the same individuals, etc.

Empaiktes means "mockers," or "scoffers." The only other appearance of this word in the New Testament is in its verb form (*empaizo*) in the gospel accounts. With two exceptions (Matt. 2:16; Luke 14:29), *empaizo* is used in these accounts only in passages describing the degradation which Christ endured at the hands of both the Roman soldiers and the religious leaders in Israel during His trial and crucifixion (cf. Matt. 20:19; 27:29, 31, 41; Mark 10:34; 15:20, 31; Luke 18:32; 22:63; 23:11, 36). The same basic thought is in view throughout all

these references, including II Peter 3:3 and Jude 18. *Mockers*, in the Word of God, are those who “belittle,” “ridicule,” “scorn,” “make light of” both the living Word and the written Word.

A cognate form of *empaiktes* is the word *paizo* used in I Cor. 10:7 (the only appearance of this word in the N.T.). This word means “amuse” or “play” and is itself closely related to the word *pais*, meaning “child.” Thus, the thought behind *paizo* has to do with “acting as a child,” “childlike,” etc. Moving the thought of “acting as a child” into the rationale of the mockers in II Peter 3:3 and Jude 18 will illustrate one facet of their actions.

Another facet of their actions can be derived from the way *paizo* is used in I Cor. 10:7. Events in this passage have to do with the time in the wilderness of Sinai when the Israelites *reveled* in pagan idolatry (Ex. 32:1ff). They “sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to *play*” (a direct quotation from Ex. 32:6). This occurred after Moses had been away from the camp, in the Mount, for many days. The people “saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount,” and their thoughts turned toward new leadership.

They desired to make a god (*elohim* [cf. vv. 1, 4, 8, 23, 31], same Hebrew word used for the one True and Living God throughout the O.T.) who would “go before” them, for they didn’t know what had become of Moses. A “molten calf” was formed to serve as their god (their *elohim*), sacrifices were offered to this calf, and within the festivities surrounding these sacrifices there were times of eating and drinking. The people rising up to *play* was associated with the gay times of pagan dancing, etc. attending such festivities. All of these things were performed after the manner, customs, and idolatrous practices of the Egyptians.

Moses in the Mount, away from the camp of Israel for a period of time, forms a type of Christ in heaven, away from the Church for a period of time. The Israelites, because of Moses’ lengthy stay in the Mount, not knowing what had become of him, looked toward new leadership and fell into idolatry; and Christians, because of Christ’s lengthy stay in heaven, not knowing what has become of Him, have done exactly the same thing (e.g., the “scoffers” question from II Peter 3:4, “Where is the promise of his coming?”).

Upon Moses’ return, God’s judgment fell upon His people (Ex.

32:15-35); and upon Christ's return, God's judgment will, once again, fall upon His people (Jude 14-16).

Thus, putting these things together, the "mockers" in II Peter and Jude are seen as individuals who have not only *stood away from* "the faith" but their actions are associated with both those of a *child* and those of *the world*. They, in their oft'times pretense of exhibiting a spiritually mature, superior knowledge, in reality exhibit a carnally immature, inferior knowledge (*cf.* II Peter 2:18; Jude 16). They, as their counterparts in the wilderness of Sinai during Moses' day, *revel*, not in the things of God, but in the things of the world. They have rejected the wisdom that comes from above and resorted to that which is base, from below.

DIVISIVE, SENSUAL

The *mockers* who appear in "the last time" are said to "separate themselves [*lit.* 'cause divisions']" (Jude 19a). They, through their false doctrines, cause schisms among Christians, seeking to overthrow the faith of those whom Jude warns about. They themselves are no longer *earnestly striving with respect to* "the faith"; and their efforts are directed toward, not those in the arena which they now occupy, but those in the arena which they left.

The method which they use to produce divisions among Christians, according to II Peter 3:4, is questioning the Word of God. Through *their* "great swelling words" they make light of that which God has promised in *His Word*; and Peter, introducing his message on apostates, stated that *many* would follow the "pernicious ways" of men such as these, "by reason of whom the way of truth" would be "evil spoken of." These apostates have defiled their own garments; and, through "damnable heresies," they seek to lead other Christians to do the same (II Peter 2:1, 2, 18).

These *mockers* are further described as being "sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19b). The word "sensual" is a translation of the Greek word *psuchikos*, meaning "soulical," "natural." The soul is that part of man associated with the natural life. The soul is the seat of a person's emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious existence. Christians possess an unredeemed soul, and Christians resort-

ing to the soulical nature are following the man of flesh rather than the man of spirit.

The thought in this passage is not at all that the Spirit of God does not indwell these individuals, for He indwells every believer; and these are “apostates” — believers who have *stood away from* “the faith.” The thought centers around the fact that here are individuals who, within their apostasy, now “mock” the things of God. They follow the ways of the man of flesh, and the Spirit of God has nothing to do with the entire matter. The leaven has done its work, everything is alien to the Spirit’s control, and these apostates are completely estranged from the Spirit’s work in their lives.

THEIR MESSAGE

1) *WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING*

The pseudo message proclaimed by the mockers who appear during the latter days is given in II Peter 3:4. This message involves a naturalistic, uniformitarian outlook which smacks at the very heart of all prophetic Scripture:

“Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

This message sequentially appears immediately following Enoch’s prophecy. Enoch prophesied during the days before the Flood — five millenniums ago — concerning the very thing which the mockers of the end-time deny. Enoch’s prophecy pertained to a judgment which would come upon the mockers, other apostates, and all other Christians — faithful and unfaithful alike — at the time of Christ’s return. The Lord is going to “judge his people”; and Scripture states, concerning Christians in relation to this judgment, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:30, 31; cf. I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10, 11). Many Christians deny that such a judgment will occur, but the mockers carry this one step further and deny the very return of Christ to bring about this judgment. They deny Enoch’s prophecy *in toto*.

God, in His Word, is very specific and clear concerning the fact of

His Son's return. *Jesus will return*; and insofar as Scripture is concerned, that's the end of the matter. The subject is not open for discussion. Jesus' words, "And if I go...I will come again" (John 14:3), mean exactly what they say. He *has* gone away to prepare a place for Christians, fulfilling the first part of this verse; and He *will* come again to receive Christians unto Himself, fulfilling the latter part of this verse.

His departure, as Moses' departure into the mount, was fulfilled in a literal manner; and His return, as Moses' return back to the camp, will, likewise, be fulfilled in a literal manner. Moses, prior to his departure, promised that he would return, and *he did* (Ex. 24:15; 32:15ff); Christ, prior to His departure, promised that He would return, and *He will* (John 14:3; I Thess. 4:16, 17).

The mockers, however, in spite of all the great prophecies of Scripture, ridicule and belittle the doctrine of Christ's return. Their reasoning is built around a naturalistic, uniformitarian premise that nothing has changed since the creation of the heavens and the earth, and nothing is going to change. Time, as we know it, will continue on and on, uninterrupted. God is not going to intervene in the affairs of man. He has not so done in the past, nor will He so do in the future. This is their reasoning, but this is not at all in accord with that which the Word of God has to say about the matter.

2) *WILLINGLY IGNORANT*

The interesting point which Scripture reveals concerning these mockers and their message is the fact that they are *willingly ignorant* concerning their false claims of uniformitarian theology. The word "ignorant" in the Greek text is *lanthano*, which means to "escape notice," or "be hidden." They have *willingly* allowed that which Scripture has to say about the matter to escape their notice, be hidden from them. They are in a position to understand God's Word. They possess a saved human spirit into which the Word of God can be received, and they possess the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead them into "all truth." But they have resorted to the soulical man, rejecting the leadership of the Holy Spirit in their lives (Jude 19). Through this means, they have willingly allowed a veil to be placed over their eyes (cf. II Cor. 4:3-5).

That which the mockers have willingly allowed to be hidden from them is something which would expose the entire pseudo uniformitarian claim upon which their pseudo message rests. They seek to substantiate their question concerning Christ's return by resorting to that which is itself false. And the Holy Spirit, through Peter, showing the utter futility of their ways, exposes their pseudo message by destroying the false premise upon which it is built.

The Holy Spirit draws from Biblical history to show that all things *have not continued* "as they were from the beginning of creation." God *has intervened* in affairs as they relate to this earth in the past (vv. 5, 6). The Holy Spirit then advances this same thought into the future to show that all things *will not continue* indefinitely as they presently exist. God *will intervene once again* in affairs as they relate to this earth (v. 7).

3) THE WORLD THAT THEN WAS

II Peter 3:6 has to do with a destruction of the world following its creation, referred to in verse four. There is some controversy in the theological circles concerning whether this pertains to the pre-Adamic destruction in Gen. 1:2a or to the post-Adamic destruction produced by the Flood during Noah's day (Gen. 6-8). Either of these destructions would serve to expose the mockers' false uniformitarian theology in verse four. However, even though this is true, it must be kept in mind that Scripture at this point is only dealing with one of these two destructions; and it is necessary that the correct destruction be ascertained in order to properly understand this section of the Word of God.

As will be shown, "the world that then was," refers to the pre-Adamic world, not to the post-Adamic world of Noah's day. Peter dealt with the Noachian Flood in chapter two (v. 5), but in chapter three he dealt with something entirely different.

First of all, the text has to do with a destruction of the earth following its creation, *not* a destruction of the earth following its restoration. This destruction came upon a creation which, "by the word of God," was "of old" (v. 5). These words are a direct allusion to the creation of the heavens and the earth in verse four, referring to Gen. 1:1. The world of Gen. 1:1 (a *cosmos*, an orderly arrangement) is

the world which was destroyed (became a *chaos*) in II Peter 3:6. Genesis 1:2a, revealing this destruction, forms the Old Testament commentary for II Peter 3:6, not the Flood during Noah's day.

Second, the parallel drawn between past and future destructions in II Peter 3:5-7 will show that *only the destruction of Gen. 1:2a* can possibly be under consideration in verse six. The pre-Adamic destruction was quite different than the post-Adamic destruction during Noah's day. The destruction of Gen. 1:2a involved not only the earth but the heavens as well. The light of the sun, moon, and stars was blotted out (*cf.* Gen. 1:2a, 3, 14-19). Nothing comparable to this occurred during the Noachian Flood. II Peter 3:7, paralleling the past destruction, reveals a future destruction of the earth which will also include the heavens. Thus, in the sense of *parallel counterparts* — past and future — only the destruction of Gen. 1:2a can be considered in past time.

Further, the emphasis, and really the only matter under consideration in the pre-Adamic destruction was upon the material creation, as in the future destruction. However, the emphasis or main thrust of the matter under consideration in the destruction during Noah's day was upon a people inhabiting this material creation — upon the people of the earth. The pre-Adamic destruction was of such a nature that God had to restore the heavens and the earth. This He did over the six-day period of Gen. 1:2b-25. God brought into existence order out of disorder. He brought into existence a *cosmos* out of a *chaos*. The destruction during Noah's day, however, was quite different. The heavens were untouched, and the earth itself was not destroyed in the same sense as the destruction in Gen. 1:2a. No restoration of the earth followed the Flood during Noah's day, as in the pre-Adamic destruction, simply because no restoration was necessary.

4) THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, WHICH ARE NOW

The expression, "the heavens and the earth, which are now," refers to the heavens and the earth existing since the restoration of Gen. 1:2b-25. Both the heavens and the earth were destroyed in the previous destruction, and both will be destroyed in the future destruction. This future destruction will occur at the end of the coming Day of the Lord, which has to do centrally with the coming Messianic Era.

At the close of the millennial reign of Christ the present heavens and earth will, through a destructive process, pass out of existence; and a new heavens and earth will, through a creative process, be brought into existence (II Peter 3:7, 10-13; cf. Isa. 65:17).

Following the Day of the Lord, following the time of the destruction of the present heavens and earth and the creation of a new heavens and earth, the “day of God” will be ushered in (II Peter 3:12). At this time, the Son will *deliver up* the “kingdom to God, even the Father.” All rule, authority, and power will have been “put down,” *abolished*; “the last enemy,” *death*, will have been “destroyed”; all things will have been placed under the Son’s “feet,” “subdued unto him.” Then, the kingdom, in this state, will be *delivered up* to God the Father that “God may be all in all” (I Cor. 15:24-28). At this time, beginning the Day of God, the first of the endless ages, comprising eternity, will commence.

Mockers in the last days have willingly allowed both Biblical history and Biblical prophecy to escape their notice. The leaven in the meal has accomplished its deteriorating work, and this leaven will be allowed to continue working — the mockers will be allowed to continue their pseudo message — until Christ Himself returns and puts a stop to the entire matter. That is, the mockers will be allowed to continue their pseudo message until the time when the very event which they have been speaking against occurs. They will then be brought into judgment, as unfaithful servants, to render an account.

God has intervened in the affairs of man in the past, and God will intervene in the affairs of man yet future. Make no mistake about these matters set forth in Biblical history and Biblical prophecy.

THIS ONE THING

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (II Peter 3:8).

Peter’s summation of the matter concerning “the world that then was” and “the heavens and the earth which are now” involves a period of time referred to by the expressions “day” and “one thousand

years”; and he does not want Christians to be ignorant concerning this *time*. The word “ignorant” is a translation of the Greek word *lanthano*, the same as in verse five; and the manner in which the prohibition appears in the Greek text of verse eight indicates that those addressed were, as the mockers in verse five, allowing something to escape their notice. Literally Peter states,

“But, beloved, *stop allowing this one thing* to escape your notice, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

1) ONE DAY, ONE THOUSAND YEARS

The *time* in verse eight is to be ascertained by reference to the preceding verses. These preceding verses set forth Biblical history as it relates to Biblical prophecy. This section covers the complete scope of revealed events pertaining to the heavens and the earth — from the point of their creation, through the time of their first destruction, to the time of their second and final destruction.

Time, however, does not come into view until the restoration of the ruined creation following its first destruction. Behind this is a dateless past, wherein time, insofar as the revealed scope of time in Scripture is concerned, is not reckoned. Thus, *time* in verse eight, within its context, must be reckoned to begin at the point of the restoration of the heavens and the earth (“the heavens and the earth, which are now”) in verse seven.

II Peter 3:5-8 can be outlined under four headings: *Creation*, *Ruin*, *Restoration*, and *Rest*.

a) *Creation* (v. 5b): Parallel II Peter 3:5b with Gen. 1:1.

“...by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water [‘the earth having been placed together out of water and by water’].”

“In the beginning God created the heaven [‘heavens’] and the earth.”

b) *Ruin* (v. 6): Parallel II Peter 3:6 with Gen. 1:2a.

“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water,

perished.”

“And the earth was [‘became’] without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep [‘became upon the face of the raging waters’].”

c) Restoration (v. 7): Parallel II Peter 3:7 with Gen. 1:2b-25.

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, *by the same word* [ref. v. 5]...”

“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters [beginning the restoration process for ‘the heavens and the earth, which are now’]...”

d) Rest (v. 8): Parallel II Peter 3:8 with the septenary arrangement of time set forth in Gen. 1:2b-2:3.

(God worked six days and rested the seventh in the past restoration; and, following man’s sin, bringing both himself and the material creation under “the bondage of corruption,” God began working to bring about another restoration — that of the creature and the creation. The latter restoration and rest is patterned after the former. God will, once again, work six days and rest the seventh. In the latter restoration and rest, each day is one thousand years in length. This is the teaching set forth in II Peter 3:8.

Note that within the septenary arrangement of time in II Peter 3:8 attention can be directed *only* to the restoration of the heavens and the earth destroyed in Gen. 1:2a. Thus, the destructions of Gen. 1:2a and II Peter 3:6 *MUST* be looked upon as synonymous, for the septenary arrangement of time in verse eight is drawn from its context [vv. 5-7].

Note also that the epistle beginning in chapter one [vv. 15-18; cf. Matt. 16:28-17:5], is seen to be built around the same septenary structure which pervades all Scripture. Refer to the author’s book, *THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE*, Chapters II-IV for a detailed discussion of the septenary structure of Scripture.)

2. THE SABBATH

According to Ex. 31:13-17, the Sabbath was given to Israel to keep the thought ever before them that the present six- and seven-day (six- and seven-thousand-year) pattern of restoration and rest is based on

the original pattern of restoration and rest in Genesis chapters one and two. Just as God rested on the seventh day following six days of restoration work in the Genesis account, He is going to rest for one day following the present six days of restoration work. The Sabbath was a “sign” established between God and the children of Israel forever. It was a sign which drew from the day of rest in Gen. 2:2, 3 and pointed forward to the day of rest yet future.

Every time the Israelites kept the Sabbath they were acknowledging the God-ordained pattern of one day of rest following six days of work. They were acknowledging that the six and seven days of Genesis chapters one and two form a pattern of God’s present restoration work and future rest. Their failure to keep the Sabbath, on the other hand, was looked upon as a rejection of this truth. Such failure always ultimately resulted in God’s judgment, with dire consequences befalling both individuals and the nation as a whole (*cf.* Num. 15:32-36; II Chron. 36:18-21).

The present day counterpart to the Israelites failing to keep the Sabbath, and thereby rejecting that which God had to say concerning a day of rest following six days of work, is Christians who reject that which Scripture has to say concerning the coming Sabbath of rest. These individuals in Christendom today are called “amillennialists,” a word designating their belief that there will be *no* Millennium or Sabbath rest following the present six days of work.

And it should come as no surprise that amillennial teaching has become far more prevalent in Christendom than millennial teaching. Why? Simply because of the corrupting process of the leaven over a period of nineteen hundred years. God judged the Israelites in the Old Testament for their failure to recognize the *sign* of the Sabbath, and God will judge Christians for exhibiting this same attitude toward that which Scripture teaches today.

A Sabbath rest is coming. Hebrews 4:9 states, “There remaineth therefore a rest [‘Sabbath keeping,’ ‘Sabbath rest’] for the people of God.” The word translated “rest” is *sabbatismos* in the Greek text. This is a form of the word for “Sabbath,” referring to a “Sabbath keeping,” which is a *seventh-day rest*.

The allusion is by no means to a present rest into which Christians enter, for such has nothing to do with the seventh day. The *sabbatismos*

can only be millennial in its scope of fulfillment. This is in keeping with the context (vv. 5-11), the septenary arrangement of the pattern established at the very beginning of Scripture (Gen. 1:1-2:3), the reason why the Sabbath was given to Israel in the Old Testament (Ex. 31:12-17), and the meaning of the word *sabbatismos* itself.

God answers the mockers in II Peter 3:3, 4 by calling attention to a panorama of events which encompasses the entire scope of God's Revelation to man, written particularly around the septenary arrangement of time established in the Book of Genesis. *All the Scriptures* are about Christ (Luke 24:27), and His first coming is incomplete without His second coming.

"Where *is* the promise of his coming?" It's in Genesis... Psalms... Malachi... Matthew... Acts... Revelation. The enlightened Christian might well ask, "Where *isn't* the promise of His coming?"

11

“But Ye, Beloved...”

As foretold in Jude 17-19 and II Peter 3:3ff, “mockers” will appear “in the last time” with a pseudo message concerning Christ’s return. They will follow a uniformitarian philosophy that nothing has changed in the past, and nothing is going to change in the future. God has not intervened in the affairs of man in the past, and He is not going to intervene in the affairs of man in the future. Through this form of reasoning, originating *from man’s wisdom during Man’s Day*, mockers appearing in Christendom during the latter days will *scoff at, make light of, belittle* the great doctrines surrounding the return of Christ.

The Old Testament counterpart to that which Scripture has foretold will occur in Christendom during the latter days is the experiences of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai during the time Moses was in the Mount. A word study of “mockers” from Jude 18 will lead directly to this particular time in the history of Israel, referred to in I Cor. 10:7 (*ref. Chapter X*). And we’ve been instructed in I Cor. 10:6, 11 that “all these things” occurred within the sphere of God’s sovereign direction and control in order that He might have these experiences to draw upon in teaching Christians the deep things in His plans and purposes.

Moses in the type, before departing the camp of Israel and ascending the Mount, left specific instructions for his people: “*Tarry ye here* for us [Joshua accompanied Moses], *until we come again* unto you...” The people of Israel were to tarry in the wilderness of Sinai,

awaiting Moses' (and Joshua's) return. But after a lengthy period of time, seeing that "Moses delayed to come down out of the mount," the people grew weary and sought new leadership. They went to Aaron (who, along with Hur, had been left in charge) and said,

"Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Ex. 32:1b).

Aaron, acceding to their request, collected gold from the people, melted the gold and formed a "molten calf." The people then offered sacrifices unto the calf, worshipped the calf, and engaged in times of festivities surrounding the sacrifices and worship. In this manner the people of Israel, during the wilderness journey, become involved in pagan idolatry (Ex. 32:2ff).

Because of this lapse into idolatry, God's thoughts turned toward the destruction of the entire nation. God revealed both the idolatry and His intentions to Moses while he was still in the Mount, and Moses then interceded and fasted for "forty days and forty nights" on behalf of the nation. As a result, God stayed His hand (*cf.* Ex. 32:10-14; Deut. 9:13, 14, 18-20, 25-29).

But upon Moses' return from the Mount, even though the nation itself had been spared, God's judgment still fell upon His people. The molten calf was burned and ground to powder. The powder was then cast "into the brook that descended out of the mount," and the children of Israel were made to drink of the water. Following this, three thousand Israelites were slain by the sword; and a plague was sent throughout the camp (*cf.* Ex. 32:15ff; Deut. 9:21).

Had the Israelites believed Moses and followed his instructions — *tarrying* in the wilderness of Sinai, *awaiting* his return — they would not have fallen into idolatry, incurring God's wrath.

Thus, carrying this over into the antitype, one can immediately see the importance of Christians understanding and following exact Biblical guidelines concerning activity during Christ's absence while awaiting His return.

Christ, as Moses, is away from the camp today. He is in heaven, interceding on our behalf; and He has been there for an extensive period of time. Before His departure into heaven, He, as Moses before

his departure into the Mount, left specific instructions for His people: “*Occupy till I come*” (Luke 19:13). Christians are to be *engaged* in the Lord’s business, *awaiting* His return.

However, Christians, as the Israelites, have taken their eyes off this command. They have grown weary, ceased to be engaged in the Lord’s business, and ceased to await His return. And they, as the Israelites, have become involved in other things, namely idolatry.

The “molten calf,” formed by Aaron during Moses’ stay in the Mount, was an idol apparently derived from the Israelites’ former association with Egypt. According to Joshua 24:14, the Israelites had previously worshipped the false gods of Egypt; and the ox was the principle Egyptian god (“Apis”) with which the Israelites had been familiar.

In the antitype, idolatry in which Christians find themselves involved during the time Christ is in heaven, has, in like manner, been derived from their former association with the world. Anything coming between a Christian and God, in actuality, constitutes an idol (e.g., note that “covetousness” is called *idolatry* in Eph. 5:5); and the Church today is filled with Christians following the ways and practices of the world from which they have been delivered. One need only look at the state of Christendom today to see that idolatry of this nature is rampant.

NAKEDNESS, SHAME

Scripture reveals three very significant points concerning Israel’s degenerate condition at the time Moses returned: 1) The people were *naked*, 2) the people were *ashamed*, and 3) Aaron was held *responsible* (Ex. 32:25). This refers, in the antitype, to a parallel degeneracy which will exist in Christendom at the time Christ returns: 1) The people will be *naked*, 2) the people will be *ashamed*, and 3) the leaders (shepherds of the flock) will be held *responsible*.

(The Hebrew word translated “naked” [KJV] in Ex. 32:25 has to do with “loosening,” from the idea of *loosening* or *casting off* one’s garments, *shaving* the head, etc. [cf. Lev. 10:6; 13:45; 21:10; Num. 5:18; II Chron. 28:19]. Most translators and interpreters have understood the thought

of “loosening” in this verse to be a reference to the *removal of all restraints* upon individuals, *i.e.*, to “lawlessness,” to “running wild,” etc. [ref. NASB, NIV]. However, understanding the word in this latter sense is still only another apt illustration of Christians in the latter days, with *nakedness* at Christ’s return being the end result.)

Nakedness and *shame* are subjects which have their roots in the second and third chapters of Genesis, in Scriptures surrounding the creation and fall of man. Adam and Eve, in an unfallen state, following their creation, were both “*naked*” and “were *not ashamed*.” However, in a fallen state, following the entrance of sin, they “knew that they were *naked*” and were “*afraid*.” They attempted to hide their nakedness by constructing fig-leaf aprons, and they then “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (Gen. 2:25; 3:6-10).

God, rejecting their fig-leaf aprons as completely unsuitable for covering their nakedness, provided His Own covering made from animal skins (Gen. 3:21). This provision was from God, He performed the work to bring about the covering, a vicarious sacrifice was involved, and blood was shed. This is the method which God used at the very beginning to cover fallen man’s nakedness, *i.e.*, to effect fallen man’s redemption; and this method, originally set forth by God in Genesis, establishes a pattern which can never change throughout Scripture.

The promised Redeemer in Gen. 3:15 *MUST*, at some following point in time, effect man’s redemption after the established pattern in Gen. 3:21. That is, first of all *the Redeemer must be God*, for only God can perform the work of redemption; second, *the Redeemer must provide a vicarious sacrifice*; and third, *blood must be shed*.

Christians today, because of Christ’s vicarious sacrifice and shed blood, are clothed in the righteousness of Christ — the antitype of Adam and Eve clothed with the provided animal skins in Gen. 3:21. Christians, in this respect, now possess a right relationship with God, for this relationship is based entirely on the righteousness of Christ and His finished work. Nothing which man does — typified by the fig-leaf aprons — can have anything to do with either establishing or adding to this right relationship. Man’s reception of imputed righ-

teousness is *entirely of God*. Man can bring nothing whatsoever into a work — either before or after his salvation — which God Himself, in the person of His Son, has finished. Consequently, Christians *MUST* remain clothed in the righteousness of Christ forever, else the completeness, sufficiency, etc. of the very redemptive work of God Himself would be brought into question. Hence, in this respect, Christians can *NEVER* be found naked.

Thus far the subject under discussion has been "nakedness" relative to the *righteousness of Christ* and *eternal salvation*. However, there is another type "nakedness" in Scripture. The Israelites had appropriated the blood of the paschal lambs in Egypt. Yet, they were later found "naked" in the wilderness (or in a "lawless" state, which would, of necessity, be associated with *nakedness* through the exact meaning of the Hebrew word in relation to the antitype).

Individuals in the Laodicean Church in Rev. 3:14ff (saved individuals, those clothed in the righteousness of Christ, those who [in the preceding respect] could never be looked upon as naked) were said, among other things, to be "naked" (v. 17). In Rom. 8:35, "nakedness" is mentioned alongside six other things — "tribulation," "distress," "persecution," "famine," "peril," and "sword" — as something possible for Christians to experience.

The main thrust of this verse though has to do with something which Christians cannot experience — *separation* "from the love of Christ." Since the things listed in this verse cannot separate one from the love of Christ, it becomes evident immediately that "nakedness," as used here, can have nothing to do with Christians being clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Rather, the possibility of Christians appearing *naked*, as in Rom. 8:35, as well as in Rev. 3:17, refers to something else entirely (*cf.* Rev. 16:15).

TWO JUSTIFICATIONS

Understanding the matter surrounding more than one type nakedness is contingent on understanding that there is more than one type justification. This is dealt with in James, chapter two (vv. 14-26). There is a *justification by faith*, and there is also a *justification by works*. Accordingly, there is a covering for one's nakedness associated with

each.

Justification *by faith* has to do with the salvation which we presently possess, *the salvation of the spirit*; and justification by works has to do with the salvation to be revealed at the time of our Lord's return, *the salvation of the soul*. The covering for nakedness which we presently possess, associated with eternal salvation, is the *righteousness of Christ*; and the covering for nakedness, associated with the hope set before Christians, is the *righteous acts of the saints* — the wedding garment.

"Justification" is *NEVER* by faith *and* works (*i.e.*, a single justification where faith and works are both involved). It is always by one or the other, *NEVER* a combination of the two (though, in the salvation of the soul, works emanate out of faith); and justification *by faith* *MUST* always precede any mention of justification *by works*.

Justification *by works* emanates out of a person's faithfulness *following* his justification by faith, and works of this nature bring faith to its proper goal (James 2:22; I Peter 1:9). Thus, a person *MUST* first be in a position to exercise faith before works can enter. That is to say, he *MUST* first be justified by faith before he can be justified by works.

The wedding garment ("fine linen") in Rev. 19:8 is specifically said to be made up of the "righteous acts of the saints" (ASV). The word translated "righteous acts" ("righteousness," KJV) is plural in the Greek text (*dikaïomata*) and cannot refer to the imputed righteousness of Christ. *Dikaïomata* in this verse has to do with "righteous acts" producing *justification*. In this respect, these are "justifying acts" *of the saints* (the same word, appearing in the singular, is translated "justification" and "righteousness" [referring to *justification by faith*, made possible through Christ's *righteous, justifying act*] in Rom. 5:16, 18; and the cognate verb [from *dikaioo*] is translated "justified" [referring to both *justification by faith* and *justification by works*] in James 2:24). Works emanating out of faithfulness, resulting in one's justification by works, provide the Christian with a wedding garment.

Apart from the wedding garment, a Christian will be found *naked* at the time of Christ's return. Having been justified by faith and clothed in the righteousness of Christ, he can never be separated from the love of Christ. He can never be found *naked* relative to his justification by faith. But, failing to be justified by works *following* his justification by faith — resulting in no wedding garment (*nakedness*

relative to justification by works) — dire consequences will follow at the time of Christ’s return (note: “judgment” on the basis of *works* [I Cor. 3:12-15; cf. Matt. 16:24-27; Luke 19:15-26]).

Appearing in the presence of Christ without a wedding garment is portrayed in Matt. 22:11-14 by the man appearing at the marriage festivities without a wedding garment (the man from among the “guests” [Gk. *anakeimenon*, “reclining ones” — *i.e.*, not ‘guests,’ but *those reclining at the table*]). This man would not have been at these festivities in the first place had he not previously been justified by faith.

This section of Scripture is prophetic in its scope of fulfillment. The festivities portrayed here have to do with events surrounding the marriage of the Lamb; and this marriage, with its festivities, will occur *in heaven* at the end of the present dispensation.

The man without a wedding garment was questioned concerning both his *presence* at the festivities and the *manner* in which he appeared. The subtle distinction between two different negatives in the Greek text of verses eleven and twelve (*ou* and *me*) show that the man knew he was supposed to have a wedding garment, but he knowingly, defiantly appeared without the necessary attire.

Because the man was not properly clothed, he was denied admittance, bound, and cast into the darkness outside. That is, he was found *naked*, denied admittance, bound, and cast into a place comparable to a darkened courtyard outside a brilliantly lighted banquet hall.

This man sets forth the fate awaiting, not unsaved individuals, but certain saved individuals. The wedding garment (righteous acts of the saints) is in view, not the imputed righteousness of Christ. This man typifies those Christians who, in that coming day following their removal from the earth, seek admittance to the festivities surrounding the marriage of God’s Son without being clothed in the proper attire — the wedding garment.

Apostasy in the camp of Israel during Moses’ day could have been prevented had the Israelites followed Moses’ instructions: “*Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you.*” Apostasy in Christendom today could, likewise, have been prevented had Christians followed Christ’s instructions: “*Occupy till I come.*”

During Moses’ day the blame for the Israelites’ departure from

Moses' instructions was laid directly at the feet of the leadership in the camp during the time Moses was in the Mount. And the blame for Christians presently refusing to follow Christ's instructions must, in like manner, be laid directly at the feet of the leadership in Christendom during the time Christ is in heaven (*cf.* Deut. 9:20; Jer. 23:1, 2; I Peter 5:1-4; Matt. 24:45-51).

The shepherds in Christendom, the ones who are supposed to keep the great truths surrounding Christ's return ever before the people, have become engaged in other activities; and they have led their flocks into these other activities. The end result, foretold thirty-five hundred years ago during the days of Moses, has been *apostasy*. The mockers are present, and the great Laodicean Church of the end-time is in existence.

It is all *exactly* as foretold. We're seeing on every hand in Christendom today the antitype of activities in the camp of Israel immediately *before* Moses descended the Mount, and it is only a matter of time before we witness in Christendom the antitype of activities in the camp of Israel *at the time* Moses descended the Mount.

BUILDING ONESELF UP, PRAYING...

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on [by means of] your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).

Immediately preceding Jude's discourse on apostasy (vv. 4-19), he exhorted Christians to "earnestly contend for ['earnestly strive with respect to'] the faith." Then, immediately following Jude's discourse on apostasy, he again refers to the proper relationship of *Christians to faith*: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on [by means of] your most holy faith..." (v. 20). Rather than an exhortation though, as in verse three, verse twenty simply refers to Christians being *built up in the faith*.

The thought from the Greek text has to do with building upon an existing foundation. Verse twenty is actually a continuation of verse three, with the intervening section on apostasy separating the verses. Jude exhorted Christians concerning "the faith" prior to his discourse on apostasy; and now, having completed this discourse, he picks up

with the Christians’ relationship to faith exactly where his discourse leaves off.

How does a person “earnestly contend for [‘earnestly strive with respect to’] the faith”? Jude’s response to the manner in which this exhortation is to be carried out is given in the continuation of the subject in verse twenty. A person *earnestly strives with respect to* “the faith” through building himself up by means of his “faith.” This is in perfect agreement with the parallel section to Jude 3 in II Peter 1:5-8 (*ref.* Chapter II). In this parallel section, Christians are exhorted to “add to [‘abundantly supply in’] your faith...” II Peter 1:5-8 and Jude 3, 20 refer to the same thing.

Christians are presently engaged in a battle. This battle is *spiritual*. It is not against “flesh and blood,” but “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places [‘against the spirit forces of wickedness in heavenly places’].” In this battle, Christians are to properly equip themselves with an armor, and among the pieces of this armor is “the shield of faith.” Christians holding forth this shield in the warfare against the spirit forces of wickedness will be able “to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [‘wicked one’]” (Eph. 6:11-17).

According to Rom. 10:17, “faith cometh by [‘out of’] hearing, and hearing by [‘through’] the word of God.” Individuals equip themselves with the shield of faith by being *built up in* “the faith.” It is in this manner, *and in this manner alone*, that Christians are able to protect themselves from the wiles of Satan — “fiery darts” in the form of *apostasy* as in Jude, etc.

Immediately following the statement concerning individuals being *built up* by means of their “most holy faith,” Jude refers to “praying in the Holy Spirit.” The Divine commentary on this verse is Rom. 8:26, 27:

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself [‘Himself’] maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Praying in the Holy Spirit is prayer motivated by the Holy Spirit which emanates from the man of spirit. It is praying by means of and dependance upon the indwelling Holy Spirit. Prayer of this nature plays an integral part in Christians being built up in the faith. The Word of God is “spiritually discerned,” and Christians receiving this Word into their saved human spirits *MUST* rely upon the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead them “into all truth” (I Cor. 2:14; John 16:13). Christians *MUST* ever combine their study with prayer after this fashion.

CONCLUDING EXHORTATION

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for [‘awaiting’] the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life [‘unto life for the age’]” (Jude 21).

Jude, in his discourse on faith and apostasy, has been building toward a climactic exhortation. He previously exhorted Christians to *earnestly strive with respect to* “the faith” (v. 3); he warned Christians concerning *standing away from* “the faith” (vv. 4-19); and he then came back to the positive side of the *Christians’ relationship to faith* (v. 20), continuing from verse three. All things in the first twenty verses point to that which Jude states in verse twenty-one: “Keep yourselves in...looking [‘awaiting’]...”

The “love of God” in which Christians are to keep themselves is the same love previously mentioned in verse two. The word “love” in both instances is *agape* in the Greek text, the same as in II Peter 1:7. *Agape* refers to “Divine love” which God is in His character and nature. “God is love,” *i.e.*, “God is *agape*” (I John 4:8). This is the highest type love attainable. It is the love produced in the life of faithful believers by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and Christians are to keep themselves within the sphere of this love.

Agape appears at the conclusion of the list of things to be “abundantly supplied in” a Christian’s faith in II Peter 1:5-8. And it is placed last, as also in Jude 20, 21, because it is the height of Christian experience, and nothing can be added therein.

Christians — being brought unto *maturity* through being built up

in the faith (v. 20; cf. “knowledge,” Gk. *epignosis* [II Peter 1:8]), keeping themselves in *the love of God* (v. 21a) — are to *await* “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life [‘unto life for the age’]” (v. 21b). This, of course, is the goal upon which all things in the present pilgrim walk focus. The goal of faith is the salvation of the soul (life), which has to do with life in the coming age. The entire concept concerning *faith* in relation to *one’s calling* and *life in the coming age* set forth by Jude is identical to that set forth by Paul in I Tim. 6:12:

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life [*lit.*, ‘Strive in the good contest of the faith; lay hold on life for the age’], whereunto thou art also called...”

Jude directs his entire epistle toward *exhorting* and *warning* Christians, with one thing in view. Jude looked out toward that day when Christians would be called to an accounting and, at that time, either realize or be denied the goal of their calling.

Jude’s concluding exhortation centers around Christians awaiting Christ’s return in a prepared, ready manner. The failure of innumerable Christians to so do has resulted in the present apostasy throughout Christendom — *as Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, so Christians in the world today*. Unto them that “look for him” will He “appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28). No such promise is given to those who do not *await His return*.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

“And of some have compassion, making a difference [*lit.*, ‘And you show mercy to the ones who are wavering (or “doubting,” “being contentious”)]’]:

And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 22, 23).

As Christians are to await “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ,” they are, themselves, to show mercy, have compassion on other Christians. The words, “making a difference” (KJV) in verse twenty-two are the translation of the Greek word *diakrino*, which is often used in other portions of the New Testament in the sense of “wavering,”

“doubting,” or “being contentious” (cf. Matt. 21:21; Acts 10:20; 11:2, 12; Rom. 14:23; James 1:6; Jude 9). This would appear to be the way it should be understood in Jude 22. Those Christians who are wavering, doubting, or ever being contentious concerning the great truths set forth in verses twenty and twenty-one are to receive mercy at the hands of Christians who understand these truths, *not* a contentious, doubting, or wavering spirit in return. Such responses as the latter will only serve to further alienate them. *Mercy* is the quality which must be exhibited to win them.

The salvation in verse twenty-three has nothing to do with eternal life. That’s not the issue being dealt with at all. The text is dealing with Christians *awaiting* “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ” unto *life for the age* (vv. 22, 23). The same basic thought is set forth in James 5:19, 20:

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him [turns him back to the truth];

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

Turning Christians either to the truth or back to the truth, as in James 5:19, 20 and Jude 22, 23, has to do with *the salvation of the soul* alone. The entire matter of the unique relationship which Christians have with one another occurs on the basis of the fact that both are *new creations* “in Christ”; but, within this relationship, Christians *MUST* look from the present forward, not from the present back. Christians *MUST* keep their eyes fixed on the goal of their calling, the goal of faith, the salvation of their souls.

The thought of pulling Christians “out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (v. 23) is similar to Joshua the high priest in Zech. 3:1-7 being clothed in filthy garments and plucked as a brand “out of the fire.” The thought in Jude though would have to be brought over into the context of Christians being clothed in the wedding garment rather than unsaved individuals, as portrayed by Joshua, being clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

The thought in Jude extends into the area with which Joshua found himself confronted *following* his being plucked as a brand from

the fire and being clothed with a change of raiment. He was then told,

“If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, *then* thou shalt also judge my house” (v. 7).

Just as there are two different justifications and two different garments in connection with these justifications, there are also dual truths on being removed as a brand from the fire. Zechariah 3:2-4 sets forth one, and Jude 23 sets forth the other.

How are Christians able to so live as Jude has previously exhorted? How are Christians able to govern their lives in such a manner that an *abundant entrance* “into the everlasting [‘age-lasting’] kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” will be their portion? (II Peter 1:11). They are able to so live and govern their lives in this manner only because the One Who loved them and gave Himself for them continues to love them and is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph. 3:20). The concluding words of Jude sum up his entire epistle after this fashion:

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

— Jude 24, 25

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Jude is a book dealing with *apostasy*. More specifically, Jude is a book dealing with Christians caught up in apostasy, detailing the course and nature of this apostasy, along with the end result.

We're living very near the close of the present dispensation, during the time when the Laodicean period of Church history is rapidly nearing completion. Throughout the remainder of this dispensation, according to Scripture, there can only be *a further deterioration* of existing conditions. And *the only recourse* which Christians have to avoid being engulfed, to some degree, in this departure from the faith is a knowledge of the Word of God.

There will be no *great awakening, great revival* in Christendom during days ahead. Rather, deteriorating conditions will only intensify during the closing days of the dispensation. And the end result of this deterioration — total apostasy, resulting from the working of the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal (Matt. 13:33) — will mark conditions in Christendom as the dispensation is brought to a close.

Jude, as all of the New Testament epistles, deals specifically with *the salvation of the soul*. And the special and particular emphasis in Jude is upon an *ever-intensifying deterioration relative to correct Biblical teaching surrounding this proffered salvation*.

This is the main thesis of Jude's epistle, and this is also the main thesis around which this commentary on Jude has been written.
