

A Commentary on the Book of Matthew

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INTRODUCTION

This is the commentary of one Unificationist, not an official publication of an organization. Several comments are offered but certainly not intended to be the whole of the Unificationist view, nor intended to be the fullest of comments on the *Gospel of Matthew*. The sources listed below have been very much appreciated and their thoughts as well as quotes are included in this work. All references to the Gospel of Matthew in *The Divine Principle* book have been included in the footnotes.

SOURCES & ABBREVIATIONS

CSG = Cheon Seong Gyeong, 2009, (Translated into English) Family Federation for World Peace and Unification.

DP = *Divine Principle*, 1973, NY, NY, The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity.

DP&A = *Divine Principle and Its Application*, Editions 1960 . . . 1969, Young Oon Kim.

EBC = *Expositor's Bible Commentary with The New International Version*, Matthew by D.A. Carson.

KM = Kevin McCarthy lectures on YouTube.

MHC = *Macroscopic Historical Correlation – Jacob is Revealed and God Affirmed*, Scholar's Edition, 2016, CFT Press, Brisbane, Qld., Australia.

NT = New Testament; Mt. = Matthew, Mk. = Mark, Lk. = Luke, Jn. = John, Rev. = Revelation.

OT = Old Testament; Is. = Isaiah, etc.

RSV = Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

SMM = Sun Myung Moon (1920 – 2012).

TGC = *The Great Controversy* by Ellen White.

TGM = *The Gospel of Matthew* by Craig S. Keener.

TNB = *The NET Bible*.

A Commentary on the Book of Matthew

Comments of Unificationist James A. Borer

Matthew 1 ¹

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. ² Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴ and Ram the father of Ammin'adab, and Ammin'adab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ and Salmon the father of Bo'az by Rahab, and Bo'az the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uri'ah, ⁷ and Solomon the father of Rehobo'am, and Rehobo'am the father of Abi'jah, and Abi'jah the father of Asa, ⁸ and Asa the father of Jehosh'aphat, and Jehosh'aphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzzi'ah, ⁹ and Uzzi'ah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezeki'ah, ¹⁰ and Hezeki'ah the father of Manas'seh, and Manas'seh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josi'ah, ¹¹ and Josi'ah the father of Jechoni'ah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹² And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoni'ah was the father of She-al'ti-el, and She-al'ti-el the father of Zerub'babel, ¹³ and Zerub'babel the father of Abi'ud, and Abi'ud the father of Eli'akim, and Eli'akim the father of Azor, ¹⁴ and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eli'ud, ¹⁵ and Eli'ud the father of Elea'zar, and Elea'zar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.²

Lineages presented in Matthew and Luke differ and lead to Joseph while it is written that he was not the father of Jesus. Numerous scholars find little historical value in Matthew's genealogy. Matthew's goal is to show that Jesus is truly in the kingly line of David; heir to the messianic promises.

Four women are mentioned in the genealogy – Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheeba (“Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife”). Inclusion of the four women in the Messiah's genealogy instead of the customary all-male listing indicates that Matthew is conveying more than merely genealogical data.

¹ Although attributed to Matthew on the strength of early oral tradition, many scholars conclude the book was written around 80 A.D. by an unknown Jewish author. The author of this gospel repeatedly cited prophecy from the Jewish scriptures to prove that Jesus was their long-awaited Messiah. The problem that perhaps motivated the author was that while Gentiles were receiving Jesus as the Messiah, the Jews were not.

Scholars find other problems with the author of the book of Matthew. They maintain that he was not a good reader of Hebrew and misread several of the books of the Old Testament.

² Matthew shows Jesus' historic inseparability from the history of Israel and emphasizes Jesus' descent from Abraham and David; son of the father of faith and Messianic son.

Three of the women were Gentiles and the fourth was probably regarded as such. Uriah was not an Israelite but a Hittite (2 Sam. 11:3; 23:39). Bathsheba's marriage to Uriah must've had her regarded as a Hittite.

Three of the four women in Jesus' lineage can be seen as involved in gross sexual sin. And the fourth, Ruth a Moabitess, had her origins in incest (Gen. 19:30-37). Tamar seduced her father-in-law in a sexual relationship (Gen. 38). Rahab, the prostitute, saved the spies and joined the Israelites (Josh. 2, 6). Bathsheba left her husband to marry the man who had him killed. These are the women Matthew lists in Jesus' lineage. In the world of satanic love begun by Eve, these women violated customary norms of satanic love to give their love to God. This compels us to take a deeper look into the providential work of God in preparation for Jesus' birth.

Tamar risked her life to carry on the lineage of Judah from which Jesus was born. Tamar was married to Judah's first son who died. Then, Judah told his second son to take Tamar as his wife, according to the levirate system to ensure that no line of the family would become extinct. The purpose of the custom was to maintain the name of the deceased by having a child by the nearest relative; to produce an heir for the deceased brother. But, in Tamar's case, the second son had no intention of doing that. He used the law to gratify his desires, but was not willing to fulfill his responsibility. He had sexual relations with Tamar but withdrew prematurely and ejaculated to prevent his brother's widow from becoming pregnant. He was evil and was killed by the Lord.

Judah promised the third son to Tamar when he grew up but didn't want to risk the third son's life in the same way as his brothers lost theirs. When Judah's wife died and Tamar realized he did not intend to complete his promise, she disguised herself as a prostitute and seduced Judah in order to carry on the lineage. When discovered, she was to be killed but Judah realized that she was more righteous regarding the lineage God was preparing to give birth to Jesus, than he himself who had defaulted on his promise (Gen. 38).

“In order to establish the providence of restoration, God must work from the bottom of the fall. In order to open the way of salvation, it is more effective to start from extreme evil. When Eve had the relationship with Lucifer, she deserted Adam. To restore this, Tamar was deserted by Judah's sons. From that reverse state, she restored herself, receiving the seed of Judah. From this relationship came Perez and Zerah.” (SMM)

“Restoration, the separation from Satan, has to be fulfilled through the Cain and Abel relationship. Cain and Abel, therefore, had to struggle between themselves. The God-favored Abel position required Cain to subject himself to Abel, or for Abel to subjugate Cain. This was the first such instance in the history of the restoration after the fall. The next instance was Esau and Jacob. At this time, Jacob laid the foundation because Esau subjected himself to Jacob. The struggle which occurred between Esau and Jacob actually occurred in a closer relationship than that between Cain and Abel, because Esau and Jacob were not only brothers but twins. This means that God was narrowing down the person from whom the line of the Messiah would come. This narrowing down process reached its ultimate conclusion in the line of Judah with Perez and Zerah. These were the children of Judah and Tamar, and they struggled for their position in the womb of their mother. The struggle then had been narrowed down from brothers to twins to children as yet unborn. In this last case, the one in the Abel position overcame the one in the Cain position in the womb. Perez was to have been the second son, but he overcame this in the womb and was the first to be born. [See Gen. 38:27-30]. In this way, the birthright of the first son was restored by birth. By doing this, Perez restored the heavenly lineage, the bloodline. He then could be the ancestor of the Messiah. Without this process, Jesus could not have come from this lineage.” (SMM)

Rahab risked her life for God's providential will to move forward. She hid the Israeli spies even though the King of Jericho demanded that she turn them over to him. Later, she left Jericho and lived with the Israelites. (Josh. 2, 6) Rahab was a prostitute. Some Bible readers

judge her. They forget that we are all sinners. Not one of us is righteous. (Rom. 3:10) We are all descendants of the love of Satan. From God's viewpoint, we must all appear as prostitutes who deal in satanic love. We are all born in Satan's lineage, and need to be re-born into the lineage of the Messiah.

Bathsheba committed adultery with David who murdered to cover it up.

“The mother of King Solomon was Bathsheba, originally the wife of Uriah before King David stole her. Then how could the child from that union become King Solomon? Bathsheba was in the providential position of Eve in the Garden of Eden, before the fall. David was in the position of Adam, and Uriah was in the position of the archangel. The archangel distracted the spouse of Adam with love and stole her away, making her fall. A reversal course is needed in order to indemnify that; therefore, a person in the position of the archangel's wife had to be restored to the position of Eve. Therefore, the child who was born on the foundation of that reversal could be born as a child of heavenly love, a child of glory. Solomon was such a child of glory.” (SMM)

Ruth may not be accused of sexual sin but as a Moabitess, she had her origins in incest (Gen. 19:30-37). Ruth was a Moabite woman married to an Israelite. When her husband died leaving her childless, she left her homeland and returned with Naomi, her widowed mother-in-law, to settle in Bethlehem. This was a bold move; Moses had forbidden the Israelites sexual relations with Moabite women. (Deut. 23:3)

Ruth was extraordinarily loyal to Naomi. Unbeknownst to them at that time, Ruth would later marry, by way of a levirate marriage similar to the situation of Tamar, into the Israelite lineage of Naomi that would produce King David and Jesus.

“But Ruth said, ‘Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God;’” (Ruth 1:16)

Boaz married Ruth to maintain the lineage. (The greatness of the levirate marriage is that it honors the lineage of love more than individual love.)

Then Bo'az said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Na'omi all that belonged to Elim'elech and all that belonged to Chil'ion and to Mahlon. ¹⁰ Also Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his native place; you are witnesses this day.” (Ruth 4:9-11)

Finally, we come to focus on Jesus' mother Mary. Mary was committed in a love relationship; betrothed to Joseph. God, then, sent a messenger to Mary asking her to renounce her commitment and become pregnant without Joseph's involvement.

“Mary, the mother of Jesus, regarded the historical significance of her actions to be more important than her own dignity or her own social environment. She regarded God's will as the highest priority. Mary maintained the standard of victory and Satan could not accuse her. So, on the foundation established by Mary, Jesus was conceived. It was that victorious foundation which qualified Jesus to be born from God. Without coming on such a historical foundation, nobody could be qualified to be the Messiah.” (SMM)

Mary became pregnant out of wedlock. She risked everything in order to give birth to Jesus. All of the women mentioned in Jesus' lineage risked everything for God. This included their lives; i.e, the totality of their connection to Satan. Having reduced their association with Satan to a point where they were ready to reject it altogether (die) for God's sake, they were pure from God's viewpoint. Unlike Eve in the Garden of God's ideal creation, they were ready to die

(Deut. 22:20-24) rather than abandon their love of God's lineage. Their efforts allowed God's Providence to move forward, purifying the lineage in preparation for birthing a sinless baby.

“Because Jesus was born from that unique victorious blood lineage, he could be the only begotten son, beloved by God. This is logical. If you do not believe in Jesus, you cannot go back to God. That is the absolute truth, but so far, nobody has been able to understand the true meaning of this. There are many religions, but only Christianity can stand in the absolute position of true son. All other religions stand in the position of servants or adopted sons.” (SMM)

Jesus came into the world as God's baby. He could grow up as Adam was growing up but Jesus' environment was hostile, not the Godly environment Adam enjoyed. Satan had taken control of the whole of creation, separating it from relationship with Creator God. Satan had become the “god of this world.” (2 Cor. 4:4)

Even though God had guided the “Chosen People” for thousands of years, they remained under Satan's dominion to a great extent. Thus, every moment of Jesus' life was opposed by Satan acting thru the people and the environment. We see this clearly from the beginning to the end of Jesus' life on earth; from conception to death. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit of God, in a manner unapproved of by Satan and his descendants. They considered him illegitimate. He was born among animals, in a miserable situation. His execution involved torture and an excruciatingly painful death as a treasonous criminal. (In reductionist analysis, Satan killed him for treason against Satan.) But Jesus, the Son of God, brought the Spirit of the Living God to earth; defeating Satan in all things spiritual.

God made a covenant with David that David's kingdom and throne would endure forever: “I will establish his line for ever and his throne as the days of the heavens.” (Ps. 89:29)

“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; ¹⁵ but I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established forever.” (2 Sam.7:12-16).

David's throne was in Jerusalem. The offspring promised to David “shall come forth from [his] body”, i.e., the body of his physical lineage. The Jewish people understood this and kept records of David's lineage. Thus, we can understand that the desperate efforts of Tamar and others in Jesus' lineage were certainly guided by God.

The kingdom promised David must have been understood by both – God and David – in order to constitute an agreement, a meeting of the minds. David, definitely, would've understood the kingdom to be a physical presence on the earth as was his own kingdom. (Isa. 9:6-7) The king was to be physical [“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the “antichrist.” (2 Jn.1:7).]; and the kingdom likewise physical. David was never dispossessed of this thinking. He received the promise of God, the Creator of all things spiritual and physical.

The “throne of David” was a physical throne; the kingdom on the earth. Jesus taught his followers to pray to God that His kingdom come, His will be done “on earth.” Jesus immediately distinguished this physical kingdom from an exclusively spiritual one – “on earth, as it is in Heaven.” (Mt. 6)

Jesus came as the Messiah fulfilling the promises God made to Abraham and David as well as His guidance to the prophets. Jesus always preached the gospel of the establishment of

the kingdom on earth (Mt. 4:17, 23; 6:10; 9:35). The kingdom is mentioned 53 times in the Gospel of Matthew alone.

“Another way we may know that Jesus was crucified due to the disbelief of the people is from the fact, as Jesus foretold, that the chosen nation of Israel declined after his death (Luke 19:44). Isaiah 9:6-7 says: ‘For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called ‘Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.’ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.’” (DP 146)

When Jesus was rejected, he told his close followers that he would return, come back to earth, to complete the Will of his Father. As in Eden, God created the earth for humankind to give birth and grow spiritually; Jesus left the keys on the earth (Mt. 16:19).

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph³, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit;⁴ ¹⁹ and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream,⁵ saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take

³ Betrothal was a serious commitment. A certificate of divorce was needed to break its bonds. It is comparable to marriage in the phrase “and her husband Joseph . . . resolved to divorce her quietly.” It is notable that, like Eve, Mary had committed her heart to the archangelic figure; but then, unlike Eve, she honored and kept God’s word.

⁴ Other chosen men were also conceived by the Holy Spirit, including Isaac, Samson, Samuel, Elijah, and John the Baptist.

“There have been a number of instances in the Bible where the Spirit of God has acted in a birth. For instance, in the story of Abraham and Sarah, Sarah was too old and Abraham was also old. But the Bible says God quickened the womb of Sarah so that she could bear a son. In the same way, the Holy Spirit worked with Mary. It was not done in the sense of producing a child from the union of God with man, but in the sense of God participating in the event. Jesus was born of a father and a mother, just as anyone else is, but in his case the Spirit of God was working also.” (SMM)

⁵ “God created the angels as servants who were to assist in the creation of the universe, and in His dispensation for it (Heb. 1:14). The angels conveyed to Abraham the important words of blessing from God (Gen. 18:10), heralded Mary’s conception of Christ (Matt. 1:20, Luke 1:31), and unchained Peter and led him out of prison (Acts 12:7-11). We can find numerous examples in the Bible of the angels working for God. In Revelation 22:9 the angel calls himself a ‘servant’, while in Hebrews 1:14, angels are said to be ‘ministering spirits’”. (DP 76)

Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit;⁶ ²¹ she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,⁷ and his name shall be called Emman’u-el” (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

The historicity of the virgin birth is questioned for many reasons. Some simply discount the supernatural. Virgin Birth was (allegedly) more accepted in the ancient world than in the modern era. Yet, millions of modern Christians apparently believe in the Virgin Birth, accepting it with their great faith.

A related objection insists that these stories are kerygmatic not didactic. They are intended as proclamations about the truth of the person of Jesus but not as factual information.

Matthew focuses on Joseph while Luke focuses on Mary. Luke, in the first chapter, paints a more complete picture of how Mary became pregnant. She was not pregnant when she entered Zechariah’s house and she was pregnant when she returned to Joseph some months later.

It is essential to note that the Creator did not violate, or change, the principles of His creation in order to prevent the Fall. God did not change the plan that people are responsible for developing their spirits. Humankind turned away from the absolute and perfect principles of Creator God. They must return to the absolute, eternal, unchanging God.

If God had changed the plan:

- 1) The original plan would be proven imperfect,
- 2) Satan would be a co-creator of the *new* and *improved* plan (The world could never know peace having two gods.), and
- 3) Humankind would no longer possess the integrity qualified to exercise their creative dominion, endowed by the one God, over all the creation. (DP 95-97)

If God had changed the Plan of Creation after the Fall, the new Re-Creation Plan would have destroyed the original design of the one true God. God’s creation efforts would have resulted in failure. The image of the Creator God, embodied in humankind, would be shattered as it warred with the image of the two Gods. (We participate now in the battle with the “god of this world” but we retain our integrity and the hope and promise in the one unified family of the one Creator God.)

⁶ The Holy Spirit as used here is the Spirit of God. Joseph was told that what was conceived in Mary was “of the Holy Spirit.” And “Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit,” (Lk. 1:67). Mary and Zechariah were guided by God. Mary was pregnant when she returned from staying three months in Zechariah’s house.

(Lk. 1:56) “And Mary remained with her [Elizabeth] about three months, and returned to her home.”

⁷ This is intended by Matthew to be a prophecy from Isa. 7:14 fulfilled by the virgin birth of Jesus. The only fact or reason that Matthew gives is fulfillment of Scripture.

Isa. 7:14 “a young woman shall conceive and bear a son”

“Though the Hebrew word used in Isaiah (“almah”) can sometimes refer to a woman who is a virgin, it does not carry this meaning inherently. The word is simply the feminine form of the corresponding masculine noun (“elem”, young man; 1 Sam 17:56; 20:22). The Aramaic and Ugaritic cognate terms are both used of women who are not virgins. The word seems to pertain to age, not sexual experience, and would normally be translated “young woman”. Regardless of the meaning of the term in the OT context, in the NT Matthew’s usage of the Greek term “parthenos”, clearly indicates that from his perspective a virgin birth has taken place.” (TNB p.1276, fn 10.)

Some scholars see this prophecy as fulfilled in Isaiah’s time.

The point of the Christian accounts is that God miraculously made Mary pregnant apart from sexual means. The Greeks and others already had divine impregnation legends. The Christian intent is to facilitate rebirth from Lucifer/Satan’s lineage into God’s lineage. The more theologically comprehensive view would involve God working thru people, as God’s providence had done for thousands of years, to give birth to sinless Jesus.

Concerning the topic of the Virgin Birth, the integrity of the physical realm would be violated if spiritual beings were to impregnate physical women who then birthed new physical lives. The Plan of Creation would be changed, resulting in the three outcomes outlined above.

All people are descendants of Adam and Eve who fell under the influence of the archangel Lucifer who came to be known as Satan. They are born of the lineage of the devil. There is no way to be removed from the “fallen lineage” without help from outside the lineage. Jesus is the victorious, sinless son of God. Believers must die to themselves and unite with Jesus to be reborn as children of God.

More miraculous than the impregnation of a physical body by a spirit, is the miracle of dead people (Gen. 2:17; 3:3) coming back to life; and loving their previously unknown Father. Jesus taught us that we resemble our false father, Satan.

“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires.” (Jn. 8:44)

The people who responded to God’s call are especially amazing. They sought to accomplish the Will of God above anything else. Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, and Elizabeth were guided by God to be involved in Jesus’ birth. God wanted humans to love Him, the source of love; forsaking satanic processed love. Jesus said “He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;” (Mt. 10:37). He is the Savior who would save us from loving Satan’s ways. God guided Mary and Zechariah to love God above all.

Adam and Eve, at Lucifer’s instigation, loved each other with his love more than they loved God’s Word. To restore this, the process of the fall (separation from God) must be reversed. Thus, Mary as Fallen Eve loved Joseph who was in the position of Archangel Lucifer. But, Mary chose to love God more than the love she shared with Joseph. This reversed Eve’s action in Eden. Mary loved God’s word more than Joseph’s love. Unlike Eve, she obeyed God’s direction. If Eve had obeyed God, she would have given birth to God’s children. Mary gave birth to Jesus. After thousands of years of the unfolding of God’s Providence of restoration, Mary successfully conceived God’s son. Elizabeth (fallen Eve’s position), similarly subjugated her love for Zechariah to allow God’s will to be done thru them.

Archangel Lucifer had dominated the angelic world that assisted in the process of creation. He had never before seen the love of God manifest in such a creation as beautiful, loving, human beings. He sought more love and dominated beautiful Eve as he had dominated and ruled the angelic world. Instead of receiving the love of God thru humankind, he took control of them in their immature state.

Adam and Eve, the image of God, were created to rule over the angels. (1 Cor. 6:3) But Eve responded to Lucifer’s love instead of keeping the commandment and growing further in love with God. Our ancestors made Lucifer the god of this world by loving him more than they loved God. God loved them before, throughout, and after designing and creating an environment where they would be immersed in His love. But instead of returning that love, they loved Satan. As recorded in Genesis, they became dead to God.

Eve came to know the evil in the Tree of Knowledge potential of good and evil. In the plan of creation, Adam and Eve were open to their spiritual senses. They walked and talked with God. The figure represented by the serpent was also spiritual. He could communicate with man and he knew God’s intentions. After violating God’s command spiritually with Lucifer, Eve went to Adam. It is important to note that no physical offspring was produced until after Eve had a physical relationship with Adam producing the first son, Cain. God did not interrupt His design of creation even to prevent its distortion. The unchanging God never changed His plan. The central purpose remains love freely exchanged.

Adam and Eve then covered their physical sexual organs. They lost their relationship with God, becoming spiritually dead while looking alive. The traditional teaching that Jesus was born without sexual relations between a man and a woman is a testimony to the essence of the fall of mankind. The physical realm, including the sexual organs wherein the usage of the love of God is most deeply expressed in an intimate relationship, requires restoration.

“[T]he whole point of the Christian accounts is that God miraculously made Mary pregnant apart from sexual means.” (TGM, 83) This is unnecessary. God is God of everything. He created all things physical as well as spiritual. Jesus is the first man; the image of God; the original unfallen Adam. The spirit of God lives within him. Thus, Jesus could say: “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” (Jn. 8:58)

The misuse of the love of God thru premature sexual relations constituted the sin of the fall. This is the reality of how Adam and Eve’s spiritual development was limited and passed on to their descendants. This is the reality today. (Most crimes can be traced to the lack of love in dysfunctional families.)

There is no sadder verse in the Bible than Genesis 6:6. It expresses how God was so deeply grieved that He regretted that He had made mankind. God lost everything. He lost His connection to the hearts of humans and thus his relationship thru them to all of His creation. After that time, it could be said that “God is dead” because we were dead to God.

After thousands of Biblical years, and numerous people willing to give their lives for the sake of keeping their relationship with God, Jesus could be born sinless thru a purified lineage. Finally, Jesus’ mother Mary risked her life, to follow God’s direction, by becoming pregnant in Zechariah’s house. Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit of God (Luke 1:67) and the Holy Spirit came upon Mary. (Luke 1:35). The Spirit was alive! Unlike all of us who were spiritually dead.

To be conceived by the Holy Spirit means that Jesus was not born of the lust of his parents. He was not born by human desire alone. Zechariah and Mary were inspired by God, and both relinquished all relationship with Satan; including all social relationships, even their loved ones. They facilitated the love of the Living God to flow into Jesus. As Eve died to God in following Satan, Mary died to Satan in following God’s direction.

Mary was betrothed to Joseph. They had pledged their love to each other. This was the best love commitment that could be achieved in the satanic world. God asked them, God required them, to go beyond this love. They answered the call of God. (Jesus would later compare the best of love in this satanic world to the Love of God: “If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”) (Lk. 14:26) Thus, the conception and birth were different from an ordinary birth. Mary, untouched by satanic love or satanic hand, beloved of the Spirit of God, gave birth to Jesus, the Messiah.

If the Spirit could impregnate Mary without physical presence, God would have done that without delaying for thousands of years of suffering. But that would have violated and changed the original plan of creation. Jesus was fully physically human but had the original Spirit of God within him.

Misconceptions are based on ignorance of human potential. The truth is clearly taught in Genesis where we read that God made man in His own image. It is Satan and his influence that disconnects and separates us. Jesus is not an alien from another planet. He completely embodied the Spirit of the Living God as intended in creation and recorded in Genesis. Jesus worked to establish God’s authority on earth.

The natural conception of Jesus was the original intent from the beginning. Humans were intended to embody the Spirit of God. This was prevented by Satan’s intervention. God had

worked throughout providential history to re-create His image from a purified lineage. It is not difficult to see, from this perspective, that Jesus was a divine being and at the same time genuinely human.

Docetism is the belief that Jesus only seemed to be human but his human form was an illusion. It was unequivocally rejected at the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and is widely regarded as heretical by the Catholic Church and other churches.

Joseph, like Mary, was a remarkable person. How many men could accept that their fiancée had become pregnant without them involved? He must have had many dark nights of the soul where he was required to overcome the jealous heart of archangel Lucifer, who was jealous of Adam and made a relationship with Eve.

Jesus' playmates, as reported in apocryphal writings, made fun of him. They treated him as an illegitimate child. This may explain why nothing of Jesus' childhood is recorded in the Bible. The actions of children derive from the views of their parents. Thus, we can understand the view of the society concerning Jesus.

Jesus was born "illegitimate" when viewed from secular eyes. Although he came from a special lineage within the lineage of the Israelites, he was born outside of their matrimonial tradition. This was neither a mistake nor a casual circumstance. For thousands of suffering years, God planned Jesus' birth. God is God. God did not ask for permission from Satan, or his minions, for His son to be born. God did not require Jesus' parents to get a certificate of marriage from Satan's descendants in order for His Spirit to enter the world thru Jesus. Jesus' only legitimacy came from his Heavenly Father.

Adam and Eve were in a committed relationship but not yet blessed by God in holy matrimony. Joseph and Mary reversed and restored the catastrophic failure in Eden by responding to and following God's word.

Matthew 2

The Visit of the Wise Men

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod⁸ the king, behold, wise men from the East⁹ came to Jerusalem¹⁰, saying, ²“Where is he who has been born king¹¹ of

⁸ **King Herod** the Great was the only one in his family to have the title of “king.” There were several Herods. The ambitious **Herod Antipater** was his father; the founder of the Herodian dynasty. **Herod Archelaus** was the oldest son and **Herod Antipas** was also a son of King Herod. **Herodias** was the second wife of Herod Antipas. **Herod Agrippa**, the brother of Herodias, became a close friend and patron of Emperor Caligula. **Herod Agrippa** was a son and **Herod Agrippa II** was the great grandson of King Herod and the last of the Herods. The following brief biographies are taken from several sources.

King Herod was appointed governor of Galilee by his father. Six years later, Mark Antony made him tetrarch. Six years later, the Senate in Rome named him king of Judea and gave him an army. He ruled Palestine from 37 B.C. until he died in 4 B.C. He was of Arab origin on both sides, a fact his Jewish subjects never forgave. He resented the loyalty his subjects had for the former royal family, the Hasmoneans, and ended up murdering most of the members of that family, including his wife Mariamme, their two sons, his young brother-in-law, his mother-in-law, and Mariamme’s aged grandfather. When Herod had his two sons strangled, Augustus commented that it was safer to be Herod’s pig than his son, since Jews do not eat pork. During his last years – the years in which the massacre of the infants took place – Herod was consumed by madness and paranoia. Soon after a failed suicide attempt, he died.

Herod Archelaus was named in his father’s will as ruler of the largest part of the Judaeen kingdom—Judaea proper, Idumaea, and Samaria—Archelaus went to Rome (4 BC) to defend his title against the claims of his brothers Philip and Antipas before the emperor Augustus. Augustus confirmed him in possession of the largest portion but did not recognize him as king, giving him instead the lesser title of ethnarch to emphasize his dependence on Rome. Archelaus was half Idumaeen and half Samaritan and, like his father, was considered an alien oppressor by his Jewish subjects. Their repeated complaints against him caused Augustus to deprive him of his throne and he was exiled to Gaul.

Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee (home territory of Jesus of Nazareth) at the time of Jesus’ ministry and ruler of Perea (John’s native province) from 4 B.C. until 39 A.D. He divorced his Nabatean wife (this hurt him politically as the Nabateans warred against him) to marry Herodias, formerly the wife of his half-brother Philip. The marriage offended his Jewish subjects, including John the Baptist who was outspoken, and alienated his Nabatean ex father-in-law, Aretas IV. Although he had befriended John who had a large following, he ordered John executed which the gospels blame on Herodias and her daughter but which may have been more politically motivated.

Roman procurator Pilate sent Jesus to him because Jesus came from territory governed by Antipas. Antipas, like many of that day, believed in magic and wanted Jesus to perform miracles. When Jesus did not reply to his many questions, he sent him back to Pilate and they became friends.

Herod Agrippa lived in Rome, became a close friend of Caligula, and had Herod Antipas banished to Gaul. When Antipas was banished, Agrippa got his territories; and when Caligula was assassinated, Claudius granted him all of Judea. Agrippa supported conservative Jewish policies and repressed the Jewish Christians. He imprisoned Peter and executed James, son of Zebedee. (Acts 12 concern his actions and death.)

Herod Agrippa II worked to avoid the catastrophe when the Jewish Rebellion broke out in 66 AD but sided with the Romans because he knew they would win. In 60 AD, Festus, procurator in Judea, consulted him concerning Paul’s case. He advised that Paul be acquitted but Paul had appealed to the emperor.

⁹ “The spirit men who in their lifetime did not believe in any religion but lived conscientiously, also come again at permitted times in order to obtain the benefit of resurrection through second coming. In this way, they cooperate with earthly men of conscience to find and serve the Lord of the Second Advent and participate in accomplishing the will of God. The story of the three wise men coming from the East and worshipping the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:1-16) is one such example.” (DP 190)

¹⁰ “Thus says the Lord of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities; ²¹the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I am going.’ ²²Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of the Lord. ²³Thus says the Lord of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’” (Zech. 8:20-23)

The prophecy of foreigners coming to Jerusalem to find the Lord is a repeated prophecy. (See also Is. 60 & 61) The Magi must have assumed that they would find the newborn king in Herod’s palace in Jerusalem. They followed a star but it had not rested yet and they were not in Bethlehem. From the East they would probably have crossed the Jordan River north of the Dead Sea, passing by Jerusalem before reaching Bethlehem which is several miles further to the South.

If Matthew was thinking of 1 Kings 10, where the gentile Queen of Sheba came to Solomon bringing gold and many gifts, he is portraying Jesus as King Solomon’s greatest descendant. (See Mt. 1:6-7)

the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.”³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;^{12 4} and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.’”^{13 7} Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared;⁸ and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”⁹ When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was.¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy;¹¹ and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.¹⁴ Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.¹² And being warned in a dream¹⁵ not to return to Herod, they departed¹⁶ to their own country by another way.

¹¹ The wise men were guided to find a king. Jesus was a king from birth. Jesus was born from the beginning as the Prince of Heaven, to be the Messiah. In that sense, he was God's only begotten son. From his birth he probably felt different from other children, but the full consciousness of his mission grew with him.

¹² “When Jesus was born, the news that the King of the Jews was born reached even to King Herod in the Satanic world, and the whole of Jerusalem was troubled, as the Bible says (Matt. 2:2-3). At the time of the Second Advent, the news of Christ's coming will be transmitted between East and West as rapidly as a flash of lightning, because, at that time, the means of transportation and communication will be highly developed.” (DP 506-7)

¹³ This is a quotation from Mic. 5:2 which foretells that a ruler from Bethlehem will govern the people of Israel. All Christians welcome Jesus as this ruler but the Israelites rejected Jesus and did not allow him to govern them. Thus, although the prophecy came to pass, it was not successfully fulfilled.

“At the time of Jesus' coming, many scholars knew that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judea as the offspring of David. But on the other hand, it is not difficult to imagine that there were many saints who believed that the Messiah would come on the clouds, according to the Biblical record that said, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man...." (Dan. 7:13). Therefore, the Jewish people, even after the crucifixion of Jesus, aroused an anti-Christian movement, saying that Jesus, born in the flesh on the earth, could not be the Messiah. The apostle John named "antichrists" all those who denied that Jesus was born in the flesh, saying: For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. (II John 7:8)” (DP 501)

“The Jewish people believed that the Messiah would be born as their King in Bethlehem only after Elijah would come down from heaven.” (DP 503)

¹⁴ The three visitors were spiritually wise but politically naïve. Can you imagine going to a king and asking him where to find the new king? Their visit to satanic power caused the imminent danger of death to the infant Jesus, and did in fact cause the death of many infants. They are not to be honored as “wise”; they were foolish.

¹⁵ Alternative interpretations of the dream may have suggested that they do more to support Jesus who was in danger because of them. They may have avoided King Herod because they feared for their lives. [Fear comes from the devil who knows he has done wrong and fears God. The wise men failed Jesus. Everyone failed Jesus; everyone. No one understood him until after his resurrection, and then only in part. If we say we fully comprehend Jesus, we are saying that we are without sin. The Bible teaches that “no one understands”. (Rom. 3:10-11)]

¹⁶ The worshippers left to go home. They must have been shocked. They were spiritually guided to travel a great distance to meet a king but found only a baby in a feed trough for animals (Lk. 2). They gave gifts and they left. There is no record of a continued relationship. Nothing further about them is recorded.

Joseph had gone to his home town for the census but none would allow the baby to be born at their house. Mary was not even allowed to give birth at an inn where a hallway, meeting room, or closet would've been healthier than giving birth among animals (Lk. 2:7). The reaction of Joseph's relatives, friends, and strangers constitutes clear evidence that the child was seen as illegitimate, the result of fornication.

The Jewish people challenged Jesus.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."¹⁷ ¹⁴ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod.¹⁸ This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."¹⁹

The Massacre of the Infants

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years

They said to him, "***We were not born of fornication***; we have one Father, even God."⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ ***You are of your father the devil***, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (Jn. 8:41-44) (Emphasis added.)

Jesus was the only man who could be seen as legitimate from God's viewpoint. All others came from the lineage of the devil. God did not seek permission from Satan's rulers for Jesus to enter the world; there was no marriage license to attest to legitimacy.

Repentance and re-birth is required. To be re-born is to come out of Satan's lineage and be born again in God's lineage thru Jesus and the Holy Spirit. All, even the lineage of Abraham, need re-birth.

The magi departed but they could go nowhere that would benefit them more than staying with Jesus. Their presence, attending him as he grew up, would have brought great status to the boy.

¹⁷ "Eve's sin formed the root of all sin, and her sin became fruitful when Cain killed Abel. According to the principle of restoration through indemnity, a mother and a son have to effect separation from Satan in mutual cooperation, because Satan invaded man through a mother and a son, thus producing the fruit of sin.

Accordingly, Jacob could separate from Satan after the blessing, because his mother cooperated with him in a positive way (Gen. 27:43). Without his mother's cooperation, Moses, too, could not have served God's will (Ex. 2:2). Jesus, too, had the cooperation of his mother, who took refuge in Egypt, with her son, escaping from King Herod, who sought to kill him (Matt. 2:13)." (DP 290)

Satan, thru Herod, sought to kill Jesus but God took action to preserve the Messiah, His son. God wanted Jesus to live. Jesus, who felt the same as God, wanted to live and establish God's Kingdom on the earth. As we know, Jesus was killed by the very people to whom God sent His son; the people who were waiting for the Messiah. God delivered Jesus from death in order to send him back to His people but, they killed him.

¹⁸ King Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. It appears that Jesus, most likely born in 6 B.C., spent approximately 2 years in Egypt.

¹⁹ This is a quotation from Hos. 11:1-3. In that context, God is speaking to the Israelites about how He brought them out of Egypt and loved them but they did not know how much they were loved. They did not return love to God.

"When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.

² The more I called them,
the more they went from me;
they kept sacrificing to the Ba'als,
and burning incense to idols.

³ Yet it was I who taught E'phraim to walk,
I took them up in my arms;
but they did not know that I healed them.

This is similar to the situation of Adam and Eve whom God loved but who turned from loving God to make Lucifer/Satan the god of their world. But God was working throughout providential history; constructing the circumstances that would allow a special lineage within the lineage of the Israelites to separate from sin and give birth to a sinless baby. The long-awaited Messiah, the man Adam should have become, embodied and revealed the heart of the Father. The Will of God was to have the people turn back to Him; love Him by loving His Son.

"Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.'" (John 6:29)

old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men.²⁰ ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.”²¹

The Return from Egypt

¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ²⁰ “Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” ²¹ And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archela’us²² reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee.

²³ And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”²³

²⁰ Although there is no other historical record of this incident, given Herod’s madness and paranoia, this event may have actually happened.

²¹ This is a quote from Jer. 31:15. Rachel, recorded in the book of Jeremiah, was weeping for her descendants who had been carried away into captivity.

²² It was fear of Archelaus’ tyranny that led the holy family to settle outside his domain at Nazareth in Galilee. Archelaus was banished in 6 A.D.

²³ No prophet of the Old Testament is found who used the word “Nazarene.” The author of the gospel bases the prophecy in the plural, “prophets”, indicating the exact location of the quote is elusive. Perhaps the author was using a then-current expression of scorn that conceptually (but not verbally) found its roots in the Old Testament.

Matthew 3

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”²⁴ ³For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”²⁵

⁴Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair, and a leather girdle around his waist;²⁶ and his food was locusts and wild honey.²⁷ ⁵Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers!²⁸ Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit that befits repentance, ⁹and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.”²⁹ ¹⁰Even now the axe is

²⁴ “Jesus came in order to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, having restored fallen men as citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom. For this reason, he told his disciples to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven (Matt. 6:10). He also urged the people to repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand (Matt. 4:17). For the same reason, John the Baptist, who had come to prepare the way of the Lord, also announced the nearness of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 3:2).” (DP 140 - 1)

²⁵ This is a quotation from Isaiah 40:3 “A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare a way for the Lord, Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’” More precisely to the point of the Messiah’s arrival is the last book of the Old Testament which prepares for, and leads to, the coming of the Messiah: Mal. 4:5 “Behold, I will send you Eli’jah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.”

Jesus said John was the Elijah (Mt. 11, Mt. 17, Mk. 9) but John denied it (Jn. 1). This was the key factor in determining whether the Jews believed in Jesus or rejected him.

²⁶ John’s appearance was similar to the Prophet Elijah who was well known to dress in such a way.

He [King Ahaziah] said to them, “What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?” ⁸They answered him, “He wore a garment of haircloth, with a girdle of leather about his loins.” And he said, “It is Eli’jah the Tishbite.” (2 Kings 1:7-8)

²⁷ John’s clothing and diet portrayed him as someone who lived in the desert and designated him as one in the role of God’s prophet. Locusts (dried insects) are listed in Lev. 11:22 among “clean” foods.

²⁸ “In Matthew 3:7, John the Baptist reproached the faithless people, calling them a "brood of vipers" -- sons of Satan. Again, in Matthew 23:33 Jesus rebuked the Jews, saying, ‘You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?’ From these Biblical references we can ascertain that there was an adulterous relationship between the angel and man, and this became the cause of the fall of man.” (DP 73)

“God intended to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, with His children of direct descent. However, as discussed in the "Fall of Man", all men, due to the first human ancestor's blood relationship with the archangel Lucifer, have become the children of the devil, inheriting Satan's blood lineage (Matt. 3:7, 23:33, John 8:44). Thus, the first human ancestors fell into a position in which they were cut off from the lineage of God, and this is the fall.” (DP 366)

²⁹ “Israel is a name meaning "he prevailed", which Jacob received from the angel of the Lord after he had prevailed in wrestling with the angel at the ford of Jabbok, which he did in order to establish Abel's position for the substantial offering (Gen. 32:28). Jacob, by succeeding in the substantial offering after thus establishing Abel's position, could lay the family-level foundation for the Messiah. Therefore, his offspring who succeeded this will on that foundation are called "Israel". God's elect, Israel, thus means the people of God who have triumphed in faith, and does not necessarily mean the lineal descendants of Jacob.

This is why John the Baptist said to the Jews, "Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham." (Matt. 3:9). Paul said, "For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal." (Rom. 2:28-29). Again, he testified, saying, "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel." (Rom. 9:6). These were Paul's words to reproach the Jews who were proud of being the chosen nation just because they were lineal descendants of Abraham, even though they did not live in accordance with the will of God.

laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.³⁰

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry;³¹ he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.³² ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.” Then he consented.³³ ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove,³⁴ and

Therefore, it can be said that Jacob's descendants had been the chosen people of Israel at the time of their departure from Egypt, but they were no longer "Israel" when they rebelled against God in the wilderness. Therefore, God abandoned all of them to perish in the wilderness, and led into Canaan only their descendants who followed Moses, as the real Israel. Of the descendants who went into the land of Canaan, those of the Northern Kingdom, which consisted of the ten tribes that rebelled against God, perished because it was no longer the chosen nation of Israel; only the Southern Kingdom of Judah, which consisted of the two tribes which followed God's will, could, as the true chosen people of Israel, receive Jesus. Nevertheless, these Jewish people, too, completely lost their qualification as the chosen people when they crucified Jesus.

Who, then, would be the chosen people of Israel after Jesus' death on the cross? They are the devout Christians who, taking up the faith of Abraham, have succeeded to the mission which his lineal descendants have failed to carry out. Therefore, the Bible clarified that the center of God's providence of restoration has been shifted from the Israelites to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46), by saying, "Through their [the Jews] trespass, salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous." (Rom. 11:11). Therefore, we may understand that the chosen people of Israel, who are to establish the foundation for the Messiah of the Second Advent, are not the lineal descendants of Abraham, but the devout Christians who have taken up the faith of Abraham." (DP 517-18)

³⁰ The term “trees” refers to people as the two distinct trees in the Garden of Eden also did. The first Adam failed to become a “Tree of Life” (Gen. 3:24) because of the spiritual death resulting from the “fall” but Jesus, the last Adam, did become the “Tree of Life” (Rev. 22:14). Eve was destined to mature as the Tree of Knowledge of good but she realized evil by her relationship with archangel Lucifer instead of relating with her intended spouse, Adam. Thus, all descendants – all humankind, are rooted in evil and cannot bear good fruit unless cut off and engrafted into the Tree of Life. Re-birth is the best analogy for the process of dying and engrafting into the lineage of God to escape the fire which is the destiny of all trees that do not bear good fruit.

³¹ This was one of the menial tasks of a slave. John acknowledges that he already knew of Jesus, and respected him.

³² “In this way, God directly manifested to John the Baptist that Jesus was the Messiah, and even John himself testified to him as such, while in John 1:23 he said he came with the mission of making straight the way of the Messiah. In addition, he declared in John 3:28 that he was the one who had been sent before the Christ. Therefore, John the Baptist should have known through his own wisdom that he was Elijah. Even if John the Baptist had not realized on his own that he was Elijah, he should have nonetheless declared that he was Elijah in obedience to Jesus' testimony, since he knew Jesus as the Messiah through the testimony from God (John 1:33-34), and he knew that Jesus bore witness that John was Elijah.” (DP 158)

³³ John could connect the chosen people and their Old Testament history to Jesus. John, according to Jesus (Mt. 11:11), was greater than all their prophets because instead of prophesying that the Messiah would come at some time in the future, he could personally introduce the Messiah.

³⁴ “What did God foreshadow when Noah sent a dove three times from the ark? It is recorded in the Bible that the dove was sent forth to find out if the water had subsided. However, if that had been the only purpose, we may think that Noah could look out directly through the window to learn for himself, instead of sending out the dove. Therefore, we can imagine that the purpose of sending for the dove lay in something more important than seeing if the water had dried up.

We must understand the significance of God's providence in this situation. Seven days after God announced the flood judgment through Noah (Gen. 7:10), the flood came. It was after the 40-day period of judgment that Noah first sent out the dove. The Bible says that the dove went to and fro over the water but finding no place to set her foot, she returned to the ark, and Noah brought her into the ark (Gen. 8:9). The first dove symbolized the first Adam. Therefore, this story means that God created man on earth so that His ideal of creation, which had been in Him even before creation, might be realized in Adam as the perfect incarnation. But due to

alighting on him;¹⁷ and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."³⁵

Adam's fall, God could not realize His ideal of creation on earth through Adam, so God had to take back His ideal from earth for the time being and postpone the realization of His will.

Seven days later, Noah sent out the dove the second time. She could not set foot on the earth then because the water had not dried up. She returned to the ark with an olive leaf in her mouth, signifying that she would be able to alight the next time (Gen. 8:10-11). The second dove symbolized Jesus, as the second Adam, who would come as the perfect incarnation of the ideal of creation. Therefore, this second story signifies that Jesus would come to earth in order to accomplish the providence of restoration. But in case of the Jewish people's disbelief, he would go back to God's bosom, through the cross, leaving a promise to come again, because, with no place to "set his feet", he could not fulfill the will on earth. Of course, this foreshadowing indicates that, if the water had dried up so that the dove could alight and find something to eat, she did not have to return to the ark, but she had to go back because the water had not yet subsided. Likewise, this indicates that if the Jewish people were to believe in him and serve him, Jesus would not die, being able to realize the Kingdom of Heaven on earth at that time. But in the case of their disbelief, Jesus would have to die on the cross and come again later at a more favorable time.

After another seven days, Noah sent out the dove the third time. It is written that this time the dove did not come back to the ark because the water had dried up (Gen. 8:12). The third dove symbolized the Lord of the Second Advent who would come as the third Adam. Consequently, this story indicates that, when Christ comes again, he will be able to realize God's ideal of creation on earth without fail so that the ideal will never have to go back to God's bosom. When Noah found that the third dove would not return, he then came down from the ark to the earth and enjoyed the new heaven and earth. This foreshadows that, when the ideal of creation will be realized on earth through the third Adam, then the new Jerusalem will descend from heaven and God's dwelling will be among men (Rev. 21:1-3)." (DP 255-6)

³⁵ "In order for Abraham to become the father of faith, he had to restore through indemnity the position of Noah whom God intended to set up as the father of faith, and of his family. Naturally, he had to stand also in the position of Adam and his family. So, he had to offer a conditional object as a symbol enabling him to restore through indemnity all the things which were supposed to be restored in Adam's family, centering on the offerings of Cain and Abel. Further, he had to offer, as acceptable sacrifices before God, certain symbolic things to re-store through indemnity all the things intended to be restored centering on the ark of Noah's family. Abraham's symbolic offerings were of such a nature.

What then, did Abraham's symbolic sacrifices, namely, the dove, ram and heifer, symbolize? These three symbolic offerings symbolized the whole universe which was created to be perfected through three stages of growth. First, the dove symbolized the formation stage. Jesus came as the perfection of the providence in the formation stage, which was represented by the doves. Therefore, when he was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, the Spirit of God descended like a dove, alighting on him (Matt. 3:16). On the other hand, Jesus came to restore Abraham's failure in the offering. Naturally, he had to stand in the position to have restored the dove which was invaded by Satan at that time. Therefore, God showed by the dove that Jesus came as the perfection of the Old Testament providence in the formation stage." (DP 265-6)

"John the Baptist had to establish the foundation to receive the Messiah by completing all the missions left unaccomplished by all the central figures who had come in the course of providential history until then with the purpose of restoring the foundation of faith and the foundation of substance. Then, leading the Jewish people, who would believe and follow him on this foundation, he would have handed them all over to Jesus, together with the whole foundation of the providence. After this, he himself should have followed Jesus with the utmost faith and loyalty. John the Baptist baptized Jesus at the River Jordan (Matt. 3:16) without knowing the significance of the deed, but it was a ceremony of handing over to him all that John had done for the will of God." (DP 347-8)

Readers of Matthew's gospel hear the voice of God the Father proclaiming His Son. If Jesus is central to the Father's love and His plan for relationship throughout providential history, how could they reject him? How could they reject Jesus and believe they pleased God the Father, as they claimed? Jewish traditions emphasize God's special love for Israel. Jesus was more than a prophet. He was the ultimate revelation (Mt. 16:14-16).

The Chosen People did not receive the long-awaited Christ. Believers, forced to accept the crucifixion, decided that Jesus' death on the cross must have been the plan of the Father. Thus, they escape the greatest tragedy of all time. Yes, Jesus died because of our sin. He died for our sin that we might believe and come to eternal life. However, he promised that he would come again to complete the will of God.

Matthew 4

The Temptation of Jesus

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.³⁶ ² And he fasted forty days and forty nights,³⁷ and afterward he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."³⁸

⁴ But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"³⁹ (Jesus quotes scripture: Deut. 8:3)

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"⁴⁰ ⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"⁴¹ (Jesus quotes scripture: Deut. 6:16)

³⁶ "John the Baptist became faithless, and Satan invaded the foundation of faith which he had laid. With this as the immediate cause, Jesus had to suffer the 40-day fast and the three great temptations in the position of John the Baptist, in order that he might restore through indemnity the foundation of faith by setting up the 40-day foundation to separate Satan. Then, what was Satan's purpose in offering Jesus the three great temptations? In the Bible (Matt. 4:1-10) we read that Satan showed him stones and told him to command them to become loaves of bread. Then he took him to the pinnacle of the temple and told him to throw himself down. Finally, he took him to a very high mountain and told Jesus that he would give him the whole world if Jesus would fall down and worship him, thus giving Jesus three temptations. In the beginning, God created man and blessed him in three ways: the perfection of individuality, multiplication of children, and dominion over the world of creation (Gen. 1:28). God's purpose of creation was for man to accomplish all of these. However, Satan caused man to fall, making him fail to accomplish the three blessings. So, the purpose of creation remained unfulfilled. Jesus came to fulfill God's purpose of creation by restoring these three blessings that God had promised. Therefore, Satan tried to prevent him from fulfilling the purpose of creation, by offering him the three temptations in order to block the way of restoring the blessings." (DP 349-50)

³⁷ Separation period of 40 as in . . . days of rain, at the time of the flood ([Genesis 7:17](#)), days of flood, before sending forth the raven ([Genesis 8:6](#)), days for embalming ([Genesis 50:3](#)), days by Moses ([Exodus 24:18;34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9,25](#)), days by Elijah ([1 Kings 19:8](#)), days by spies in the land of promise ([Numbers 13:25](#)), days of probation, given to the Ninevites ([Jonah 3:4](#)), days by Jesus ([Matthew 4:2](#)), days of Christ's stay after the resurrection ([Acts 1:3](#)), years of wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness ([Exodus 16:35; Numbers 14:34](#)), years of peace in Israel ([Judges 3:11;5:31;8:28](#)).

³⁸ "After Jesus fasted 40 days, Satan appeared before him and tempted him, saying, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." (Matt. 4:3). Meanwhile, the stone was in Satan's possession, due to Moses' action of breaking the tablets of stone and of striking the rock, and due to the disbelief of John the Baptist. Therefore, in order to restore the stone, Jesus had to go into the wilderness and separate Satan by fasting for 40 days. Satan knew well enough that Jesus had come into the wilderness to restore the stone. This temptation signified that Satan would hold possession of the stone forever, if Jesus, in his wilderness course for the worldwide restoration of Canaan, should become faithless and choose to command the stone to become loaves of bread in order to fill his hungry stomach without trying to restore the stone -- just as in previous days, the Israelites could not endure hunger and had fallen into faithlessness in the nationwide restoration of Canaan." (DP 350-1)

³⁹ "Jesus' answer to this temptation was, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4). Originally, man was created to live on two kinds of nutriments. That is to say, man's physical body lives on the nutriments taken from the natural world, while his spirit lives by the words proceeding from the mouth of God. However, fallen men became unable to receive God's Word directly and their spirits live by the words of Christ, who came to earth as the incarnation of God's Word, as is written in the Bible (John 1:14). Therefore, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48), and went on to say, "Truly, truly I say to you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." (John 6:53). Therefore, even if man's physical body may have life by eating bread, he cannot enjoy a wholesome life with that alone. Man can become wholesome if, in addition he lives by Christ, who came as the incarnation of God's Word and as man's food of life." (DP 351)

⁴⁰ "Jesus called himself the temple (John 2:19-21), and the saints were called the temple of God (I Cor. 3:16). It is also recorded that the saints are the members of the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27). Therefore, we can understand that Jesus is the main temple and the saints are the branch temples. Thus Jesus came as the master of the temple, and even Satan could not help but recognize his authority. So he set Jesus on the pinnacle of the temple; then he told Jesus to throw himself down from there. This signified that if Jesus threw himself down from the position of

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; ⁹ and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."⁴² ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"⁴³ (Jesus quotes scripture: Deut. 6:13)

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.⁴⁴

Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee

¹² Now when he heard that John had been arrested,⁴⁵ he withdrew into Galilee; ¹³ and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Caper'na-um⁴⁶ by the sea, in the territory of Zeb'ulun and Naph'tali, ¹⁴ that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

master to that of fallen man, Satan would occupy the position of the dominator of the temple in place of Jesus." (DP 352)

Satan quoted scripture - Psalm 91:11-12. This is not surprising. In Eden, the serpent (Lucifer) knew the word of God. (Gen. 3)

⁴¹ "Originally angels were created to be dominated by a man of the original state of creation; therefore, a fallen angel was naturally to be dominated by Jesus. Consequently, the angel's attempt to stand in the position of the lord of the temple was a non-principled act. Therefore, he should not have stood in the position of tempting God with such a non-principled act, by tempting Jesus, the body of God, who works His providence by the Principle alone. Moreover, Jesus, by overcoming the first temptation, firmly established his position as master of the temple, as the substantial temple, with his individuality restored. Therefore, he was not in any position whatsoever to be tempted by Satan; Satan should have left without tempting Jesus again. Thus, by overcoming the second temptation, Jesus, who came as the main temple and bridegroom, and the True Parent of mankind, set up the condition enabling him to restore all the saints to the position of his branch temples and brides, and true children, thus creating the foundation for the restoration of God's second blessing." (DP 352-3)

⁴² "Next, Satan led Jesus to a very high mountain, and, showing all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, tempted him, saying, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." (Matt. 4:9). Originally, Adam, due to his fall, lost his authority as the master of all creation, being dominated by Satan, and naturally Satan became the dominator of all creation in place of Adam (Rom. 8:20). Jesus, who came in the capacity of a perfected Adam, was the dominator of all the creation, since it is written that God put all things in subjection under Christ (1 Cor. 15:27). Therefore, Satan who knew this principle, led Jesus to a mountain top, putting him in the position of the master of all things, and then tempted him in order that Jesus, the second Adam, also might yield before him, just as Adam had yielded in the beginning." (DP 353)

⁴³ "Originally, an angel was a ministering spirit (Heb. 1:14), and was supposed to worship and serve God, his Creator. Jesus answered, signifying that it was the Principle that Satan, the fallen angel, should also worship and serve God. Naturally, it is the Principle for Satan to also worship and serve Jesus, who appeared as the body of God, the Creator. Moreover, Jesus had already established the foundation enabling him to restore God's first and second blessings, by overcoming the first two temptations. Therefore, it was natural for him to dominate all creation by restoring God's third blessing on that foundation." (DP 353-4)

⁴⁴ "In the case of Moses, in order for him to become the lord of the restoration of Canaan on the national level, returning to Canaan with the Israelites, he had to overcome a trial in which God tried to kill him (Ex. 4:24). If man had been given the trial not by God but by Satan, he would fall prey to Satan if he were defeated. Therefore, we must know it is from God's love of man that He would test man from His side. Jesus, too, had to win the fight against Satan at the risk of his life in the 40 days of temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11)." (DP 288)

⁴⁵ The timing of John's arrest, relative to other events, is varied in the gospels. Nevertheless, even before his arrest it must have been clear to Jesus that John was not with him. John did not become Jesus' disciple. The gospels report that John's disciples remained his disciples instead of following Jesus. (Mt. 9:14, Mt. 11:2, Mk. 2:18, Lk. 5:33, Lk. 7:18, Lk. 11:1, Jn. 3:22-26) Jesus went to the desert to accomplish John's mission. See footnote 36.

⁴⁶ After Jesus' fasting and temptations, he went to Capernaum. Luke tells of his rejection in Nazareth after Capernaum (Luke 4). In the synagogue, Jesus read Is. 61 which he said was fulfilled in him. (It is noteworthy that, in Isaiah, he passed by the suffering Messiah prophecies in Is. 53, to read this.) His audience marveled and wanted him to do the works they heard he had done in Capernaum. But he wanted more from them, the people prepared, than to have them believe on account of miracles. They became upset when Jesus told them that their great prophets Elijah and Elisha helped Gentiles, not Israelites.

¹⁵ “The land of Zeb’ulun and the land of Naph’tali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— ¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”⁴⁷

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”⁴⁸

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him.⁴⁹ ²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zeb’edee and John his brother, in the boat with Zeb’edee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ This is a quotation from Isaiah 9:1 that Matthew uses as evidence that Jesus is the Messiah. However, the verses foretell Jesus’ establishing a government that will continue forever. But this did not happen.

⁴⁸ “What is the purpose of the providence of restoration? It is to realize the Heavenly Kingdom, God's eternal object of goodness, which was His original purpose of creation. In the beginning, God created men on earth and intended to realize the Kingdom of heaven on earth centering on them. However, He could not fulfill His will because of the human fall. Therefore, the primary purpose of the providence of restoration can only be to restore the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.” (DP 105)

“Jesus came in order to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, having restored fallen men as citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom. For this reason, he told his disciples to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven (Matt. 6:10). He also urged the people to repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand (Matt. 4:17). For the same reason, John the Baptist, who had come to prepare the way of the Lord, also announced the nearness of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 3:2).” (DP 140-1)

“If Jesus had not been crucified, what would have happened? He would have accomplished the providence of salvation both spiritually and physically. He would have established the Kingdom of Heaven on earth which would last forever, as expressed in the prophecy of Isaiah (Is. 9:6-7), in the instruction of the angel appearing to Mary (Luke 1:31-33), and in Jesus' own words announcing the imminence of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 4:17).” (DP 147)

Jesus spoke the same words that John the Baptist had used before he was arrested. This indicates Jesus succeeded to the unfinished mission of John – the returning Elijah. This put Jesus in an untenable position. For the Jewish people, it appeared that Elijah had not returned to introduce the Messiah. Someone (Jesus) who claimed to be the Messiah was proclaiming himself.

⁴⁹ Jesus witnessed directly to his apostles. Other than the spiritual experience at Jesus’ baptism, there is little evidence that John witnessed to anyone about Jesus. In John 1:35-37 it is reported that two of his disciples followed Jesus. However, those same disciples are recruited by Jesus himself in all of the synoptic gospels: Matthew 4, Mark 1, and Luke 5.

⁵⁰ Jesus witnessed directly to fishermen, not the leaders. The King of all kings asked the humblest people to believe in him. It is tragic that the leaders wouldn’t listen. From several sources, it appears that around the time of bar mitzvah there was a division made between those who would continue in their education and those who would not. The men witnessed directly by Jesus were not advanced in their studies. It appears that Jesus also was not chosen to continue in his studies.

“Once you were around thirteen years old you either stopped your education and started working in your father's trade which would have been taught to you at home, or you continued your studies at *Bet Midrash*, the House of Study.” <https://sites.google.com/site/educationinjesustime/>

“The Mishnah describes the educational process for a young Jewish boy in Jesus' time. At five years old [one is fit] for the Scripture, at ten years the Mishnah (oral Torah, interpretations) at thirteen for the fulfilling of the commandments, at fifteen the Talmud (making Rabbinic interpretations), at eighteen the bride-chamber, at twenty pursuing a vocation, at thirty for authority (able to teach others). This clearly describes the exceptional student, for very few would become teachers but indicates the centrality of Scripture in the education in Galilee. It is interesting to compare Jesus' life to this description. Though little is stated about his childhood we know that he "grew in wisdom" as a boy (Luke 2:52) and that he reached the "fulfilling of the commandments" indicated by ones first Passover at age twelve (Luke 2:41). He then learned a trade (Matt. 13:55, Mark 6:3) and spent time with John the Baptist (Luke 3:21; John 3:22-26) and began his ministry at-about-thirty (Luke 3:23). This parallels the Mishnah description quite closely.” <https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/rabbi-and-talmidim>

Jesus Ministers to Crowds of People

²³ And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom⁵¹ and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.⁵² ²⁴ So his fame⁵³ spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. ²⁵ And great crowds⁵⁴ followed him from Galilee and the Decap'olis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

The author of this Commentary has a different view of Luke 2:41-51 which involves the failure of the Holy Family concerning Jesus. These issues include: i) the reason Jesus did not tell his parents where he was going, ii) Mary speaking in the temple, iii) Mary scolding Jesus, even though the leaders were "amazed" by him, and iv) Jesus' parents not agreeing with the leaders and leaving him there, as was done in 1 Samuel 1.

Samuel, raised in the temple, was so respected by the people that he gave them a king. Jesus, raised in the temple, would certainly surpass such respect and authority.

⁵¹ Jesus preached "the gospel of the kingdom". He came to establish the proper order on earth under the sovereignty of God.

"Because virtually every stratum of Gospel tradition testifies that Jesus regularly announced the kingdom, there should be no doubt that this was a characteristic emphasis of Jesus' teaching (Sanders, 1985: 139-40)." (TGM 68)

"Jesus taught about the kingdom; he was executed as would-be king; and his disciples, after his death, expected him to return to establish the kingdom. These points are indisputable. Almost equally indisputable is the fact that the disciples thought that they would have some role in the kingdom. We should, I think, accept the obvious: Jesus taught his disciples that he himself would play the principal role in the kingdom." (Sanders, 1985:307) (TGM 63)

⁵² Jesus healed individuals so that the people might believe in him; believe that he had God's authority. The ones who were healed believed in Jesus. They would never reject, persecute, and kill him. If the chosen people had believed in him, they likewise would not have crucified their Lord.

⁵³ By his own effort, Jesus became famous.

⁵⁴ Multitudes followed Jesus. This appears to be the high point in his ministry.

In the following chapter, Jesus set out his plan of restoration, or re-creation. It is the same plan God set out in the Garden of Eden recorded in Gen. 1:28. "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'"

The Beatitudes are the plan of Jesus Christ to restore the three blessings. There are nine Beatitudes. The first three accomplish "fruitful" as they develop the intellect, heart, and character of the individual. The second three Beatitudes accomplish "multiply" as they involve relations with others and conclude in qualification for holy marriage. Beatitudes seven thru nine involve "dominion". Once freed from sin and slavery to Satan, we can have authority with Christ for the Holy Spirit of God to enter the world thru our families which are blessed by God. With the Spirit of God, we will suffer but subdue the satanic world. Finally, in the ninth Beatitude which has been lost since Jesus was crucified, we will establish God as sovereign of His creation.

Matthew 5

The Beatitudes

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain,⁵⁵ and when he sat down his disciples came to him.² And he opened his mouth and taught them⁵⁶, saying:

³ “Blessed⁵⁷ are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.⁵⁸

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.⁵⁹

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ The scene parallels Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. The stage is set for a new Moses to give a new law.

⁵⁶ This indicates that the occasion is formal – an important message.

⁵⁷ The Beatitudes constitute Jesus’ plan of restoration/re-creation. This, naturally, is the very same as God’s plan in the Garden of Eden; corresponding to the three blessings God gave mankind.

And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28)

⁵⁸ The first three Beatitudes (1 – 3) concern the development of the individual and correspond to the first of the three blessings in Genesis 1:28. Individuals can be described as “fruitful” when their minds and bodies are united, functioning as unique expressions of the living God. Their foundation of faith in God is accomplished; they grow as God’s children. This is like the fruitfulness of a healthy plant that becomes mature enough to multiply by bearing the seeds for future generations. A person’s intellect, emotion, and will unfold in that order in the first three Beatitudes. We realize our spirit is meager, we weep for the separation from God which the Messiah both reveals and heals, and we combine that intellect and emotion in our character which awaits grace and guidance from God while refraining from pursuing earthly pleasures. We are as “meek” as Moses, who opposed Pharaoh and led mighty armies, but was “the meekest man on earth” (Numbers 12:3). When Jesus connects us with our Creator as His children, all that God created is ours.

⁵⁹ The second group of Beatitudes (4-6) corresponds to the second blessing in Eden. Fruitful individuals multiply. They engage in relationships. The parent – child relationship, a vertical path, now multiplies. The horizontal relationships of brothers and sisters, friends, and all people manifests in righteousness that leads to mercy, understanding, and forgiveness.

The Fourth and Fifth Beatitudes involve intellectual and emotional training in building relationships. These can culminate in the Sixth Beatitude – seeing the substantial God in others.

Jesus referred to Hosea’s call for repentance (Hosea 6:6) when he answered the Pharisees’ question about the law: “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Mt. 9:13) Jesus calls sinners home to relationship with his Father, and their Father.

In the Sixth Beatitude, individuals see the Spirit of God in each other (Jn. 14:9). They see the true reality. They don’t see others as dominated by Satan. Those who understand and love Jesus expand this foundation to include all their relationships. They love God and love their neighbor as themselves. (Mt. 22:39, Mk. 12:31, Lk. 10:27)

⁶⁰ The third group of Beatitudes (7-9) corresponds to the third blessing in Eden – to have dominion.

Salt and Light

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.⁶¹

The Law and the Prophets

¹⁷ “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them.⁶² ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.⁶³ ¹⁹ Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven;⁶⁴ but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.⁶⁵

Righteous, merciful people seeing the Spirit of God in others become qualified to be blessed by God in holy marriage. They share in the joy of God’s creativity; creating life thru the intimacy of God-given love.

“Peacemakers”, in the Seventh Beatitude, are couples blessed by God in holy marriage. There can be no peace in the world unless the Spirit of God comes into the world thru the prophesied Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (Rev. 19:9) Jesus was persecuted and killed. He (Second Adam) was not received and allowed to restore Second Eve. The Returning Christ completes Jesus’ plan set out in the Beatitudes; God’s plan in Eden. Blessed are those who are invited to join the Lamb in holy marriage with God for the first time in human history.

The second part of the Seventh Beatitude reads: “they shall be called children of God.” This is the change of lineage – from the lineage of Lucifer/Satan to that of Creator God thru the Returning Christ. This is rebirth. Thus, the people of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth are created. A kingdom requires people, territory, and sovereignty.

The Kingdom’s territory grows as the Blessed Families expand in society. This is the development in the Eighth Beatitude as Christians overcome the many persecutions in Satan’s world as they build the Kingdom.

Finally, by grouping the Beatitudes in the pattern of the Blessings in Eden, we find nine. Jesus’ plan of restoration/re-creation is the same as God’s plan in Eden. Although most Christians teach, and are taught, that there are eight Beatitudes; there are nine repetitions of “Blessed are . . .”

The Ninth and final Beatitude establishes sovereignty in the Kingdom. Jesus teaches his followers how special the moment is when he is on the earth. They can receive persecution for “my [his] sake”. This is significantly distinguishable from the Eighth Beatitude where the persecution is received for “righteousness sake.” God, thru Jesus, is King of all He created – the physical as well as the spiritual realm. The Returning Christ completes the plan of restoration set out in the Beatitudes by Jesus. He makes all things new (Rev. 21:5). Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, are one and the same (Rev. 21:6).

⁶¹ Guidance for restoring the first Blessing in Genesis 1:28 (“be fruitful”): salt, light, good works.

⁶² “Jesus came to be known as one who wanted to abolish the Law, which was the symbol of salvation to the Jews.” (Matt. 5:17). (DP 155)

⁶³ Jesus was the completion of the law. If the Israelites had not fallen into faithlessness in their first course of restoration into Canaan on the national level, the family law of Moses could have been the substitute for the heavenly law (Divine Principle). The law constitutes guidelines for the development of heart, which is the essence of Creator God, invested in humankind. The Israelites honored the tabernacle, and later built the temple. They honored the central relationship with God and ordered their lives accordingly. The temple signified the Messiah. They had been prepared to receive and honor Jesus, in their tradition of honoring the temple, and build their relationship with God around him. Jesus, the Messiah, was the substantial temple where God could fully dwell.

⁶⁴ Jesus said John the Baptist was the greatest man ever born (He could lead the people to the Messiah.) but then called him less than the “least in the kingdom” because he failed to do this. He said this when John had been arrested and John had sent “two of *his* disciples” to ask Jesus if he was the Messiah (Mt. 11:11). (John’s disciples did not become disciples of Jesus.) John failed to understand the purpose and meaning of the laws of the Chosen People. The Israelites were not chosen in order to be satisfied by rules and regulations about God. They were intended to behold the Spirit of God Himself in the form of Jesus Christ. They were to bring the Spirit of God to earth and establish His Kingdom.

⁶⁵ This guidance for the Fourth Beatitude uses the same word as the Beatitude: “righteousness.” The righteousness of the “scribes and Pharisees” implied that a person’s actions are justified by adherence to the law. They believed

Concerning Anger

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.’ ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be liable to the hell of fire.⁶⁶ ²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.⁶⁷ ²⁵ Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; ²⁶ truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.⁶⁸

Concerning Adultery

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.⁶⁹ ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.⁷⁰

that by keeping the law, they were leading the best life that was pleasing to God. Jesus invited them to learn more about the God who made the law; the God whose essence is heart.

⁶⁶ Fifth Beatitude guidance goes beyond “don’t kill”; Jesus expects us to be “merciful.” He advises us to discard the heart that would allow our mouth to speak of our brother as a fool. Throughout the ages, God’s providence advances as He guides humankind to return home to His heart. The understanding of what is sinful becomes more comprehensive as humankind draws near to the God of pure goodness. Christians know forgiveness and are compelled to forgive others.

⁶⁷ The guidance for the Sixth Beatitude directs us to first resolve things with our brother if we want to see God. We should then see God in others. Adam & Eve cut off mankind’s relationship with God, which cut us off from each other. We are not aware that we are one family from a common Father. Mankind became “dead” to God as they made Satan the god of this world. The progenitors of humankind loved Lucifer’s word more than they loved Creator God’s Word. Before we are re-born, we see the hereditary characteristics of Satan in each other. Cain killed Abel. This has been repeated throughout providential history. The lesson is for people to unite in order to have an acceptable relationship with God who loves all. When we see God in each other, we do not see Satan residing there. We realize the one family of God, and can come to Him as our Creator Father.

⁶⁸ This guidance for the Fifth and Sixth Beatitudes is again emphasized in Jesus’ ministry and in the prayer, he taught his followers to pray. We can only receive forgiveness from God, to the extent that we forgive others. See Mt. 6:12-15.

⁶⁹ This guidance for the Seventh Beatitude concerns marriage and the relevant laws. This is another example of our becoming aware of our sinfulness before God. Jesus teaches that lust is like the sin of adultery. All sin, separation from God, comes thru the lineage of the devil and is a consequence of the original sin – the misuse of love. The process begins with the spiritual, then mental, and is confirmed in the physical. The spiritual fall occurred when archangel Lucifer dominated Eve as he had dominated the angelic world; instead of submitting to the proper order of receiving God’s love thru Adam and Eve. The physical fall occurred when Eve seduced Adam before they had matured for God to bless them in holy marriage. Lucifer / Satan joined with them in marriage and manifested himself in their offspring as Cain killed Abel instead of joining him in his acceptable offering to God. God’s plan for people was to grow up their spirits on earth, unselfishly, before entering the spiritual world after death. This is why Jesus left the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth. He promised to return and complete the establishment of God’s Kingdom. The victorious Returning Christ is the first to bring about God’s Marriage Supper (Rev. 19:9) and he invites us all to be re-born and join him in holy marriage.

⁷⁰ This is a very graphic illustration of the hurtfulness of sin, especially sexual sin. Intimate spousal sexual unity wherein Creator God creates new children is the most sacred moment in all of God’s creation. This moment has been taken from God and profaned by Satan. Jesus teaches clearly that it is better to destroy the body than to commit adultery with it. He teaches the spiritual reality. In adultery, the spirit becomes deformed as we choose the way of Satan who would destroy people to satisfy himself. Adultery displays a love of Satan that is greater than a love of God. The spirit is damaged to such an extent as to be “dead” to God, as foretold in the Genesis account. Therefore, it is better to destroy the temporal body than to allow Satan to use it to destroy our eternal spirit. Since God created both, the proper order is for the spirit to rule over the body and use it properly.

Concerning Divorce

³¹ “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³² But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.⁷¹

Concerning Oaths

³³ “Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ ³⁴ But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.⁷²

Concerning Retaliation

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;⁷³ ⁴⁰ and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; ⁴¹ and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.⁷⁴ ⁴² Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Jesus gives additional guidance for the Seventh Beatitude of holy marriage. He teaches more strictly about divorce. He is very sensitive and serious about loving God and meeting God in our spouse. The “Marriage Supper of the Lamb” prophesied for the Returning Christ is truly the marriage of Adam and Eve that God originally planned in Eden. The Omega is the Alpha.

⁷² Jesus gives guidance for the Eighth Beatitude concerning governance. Since all authority in the fallen world comes from Satan, Jesus advises us to participate only minimally in the systems of government. Jesus brought a new root; by engrafting into the Tree of Life we can be reborn into his spiritual lineage. The Returning Christ brings the same lineage of God and through the Marriage Supper of the Lamb gives spiritual and physical rebirth for all believers on earth. Jesus left the keys to the Kingdom on the earth where we are to grow up our spiritual bodies while we have physical bodies. The Kingdom comes from within and expands in the family, society, nation and world. Jesus urged his followers to build the Kingdom with him. A kingdom is comprised of people, territory, and sovereignty. The Seventh Beatitude creates the people of God, their territory is expanded in the Eighth Beatitude, and the sovereignty of God is acknowledged in the Ninth Beatitude. Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom and made plans to bring the Will of God to fruition on the earth as he prayed (Mt. 6:10).

⁷³ Question: What is meant by turning the other cheek?

Answer: “If this were a normal world in the eyes of God, He would not like His children to bow down before the servants of Satan. But at the time of Jesus, Jesus did not have enough foundation or foothold; he was all alone in the satanic world. He had to serve people in a most humble way. Although people struck him on the left cheek, he had to turn the other cheek to show humility, love, and the spirit of service. In that way, he extended his foundation or his territory of good. By doing so, Jesus intended to pay indemnity.

After he had paid enough indemnity and had changed the world and made it normal, why should the children of the Supreme be insulted and despised by the servants of Satan? If we have to show our humility without reason, without purpose, without any limitation to the evil, then the idea conflicts with the idea of judgment which is also written in the Bible. God cannot judge evil if we are to surrender to evil without limit. When the time comes that God executes His judgment, it will be the other way round. Evil will surrender to good. In the first and second World Wars, the evil side took the initiative and struck the good side. They were defeated. So will the third World War be. Now the time is coming when the sovereignty of God is established. Evil cannot strike good. Good must judge the evil and destroy it. In other words, this is a satanic world. To do the right thing, we have to make a detour. Abel has to subjugate Cain in order to be blessed by God.” (SMM)

⁷⁴ Roman soldiers, occupying Israel, could requisition what they required. They could demand local inhabitants provide forced labor. Jesus asks his followers, in a situation where they are forced to carry luggage, to do more. (See also Mt. 27:32, where Simon of Cyrene is compelled by the soldiers to carry the cross for Jesus.)

⁷⁵ Others are your brothers and sisters in the big family of God. Avoiding sacrificial obligations is like telling the archangel to do it. (Government welfare programs don’t work well to change people because governmental power

Love for Enemies

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; ⁷⁶ for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁷⁷ ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁷⁸ ⁴⁸ You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. ⁷⁹

is derived from the devil. The archangel only cares for control. He does not truly care for improving the body and soul of the needy person.)

⁷⁶ The guidance for the Ninth Beatitude concerns the ultimate sovereignty of God. Jesus was born a King. He brings a new type of kingship. He asks us to liberate the limited – those who persecute us, those who don’t like us, those who don’t see God in us. We need to show our allegiance to our King and demonstrate His nature and authority. (Please read Heb. 12:3-11.)

⁷⁷ Jesus presents an analogy that we can easily understand to help us understand God’s love.

⁷⁸ The new King comes with an authority that has not been known in Satan’s world. Kings have had power of life and death. They’ve promoted those who liked them and killed those who didn’t. Jesus is teaching about a new sovereignty that comes from the heart of God. It is not like the sovereignty of those empowered by Satan. Jesus is training us to see God in others. We must build the Kingdom where Satan is the servant of the citizens – the children of God. From the cross, Jesus forgave those who were insulting, torturing, and killing him. He loved them from God’s viewpoint even as he saw Satan urging them to reject and kill him. In Jesus, God manifests His awesome love that truly overcomes the world.

⁷⁹ “Perfect” is translated from the Greek word “teleios”. It is better translated as “complete” or “mature.” God planned for us to grow up on the earth according to His principles. Our spirits would grow while experiencing all manner of temporal things during our life on earth. Jesus works to re-create fallen mankind according to the same plan of God. Jesus teaches the steps to maturity in the Beatitudes.

Many Christian leaders, great men, have taught that we cannot be “perfect” as God is perfect. However, the better translation truly is fitting for the conclusion of this chapter. Jesus taught the steps to maturity – from individual, to family, to responsibility for governance of all creation under God. Thus, in conclusion, Jesus directs us to follow his teaching and grow up as God would have us mature.

“When Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 5:48, “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect”, he meant that they should be restored to the position of the original man of creation. Seen from the principle of creation, the original man of creation should be as perfect as God, having eternal deity because of his oneness with God.” (DP 104)

“The purpose of Jesus’ coming as the Messiah was to fulfill the providence of restoration; his coming was primarily to save fallen men. Consequently, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth should have been established by Jesus. We may see this even from what Jesus said to his disciples, “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48). According to the principle of creation, a man who has fulfilled the purpose of creation becomes one body with God, possesses deity, and cannot commit sins. This kind of man, seen from the purpose of creation, is one who is perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect. Therefore, Jesus’ words to his disciples meant that they should become citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom, after having been restored as men who have fulfilled the purpose of creation.” (DP 140)

“In this way, a man who attains the purpose of creation would become the temple of God’s constant abode (I Cor. 3:16), thus assuming deity. As Jesus said, man must become perfect as our heavenly Father (Matt. 5:48). Therefore, the man who has attained the purpose of creation would assume the divine value of God.” (DP 206)

“Let us here consider the difference between Jesus and perfected man. As we well know from the previous discussion, a perfected man, in light of the purpose of creation, should become perfect, as God is perfect (Matt. 5:48); thus, he is so valuable as to even possess deity. Since God is eternal, man, who was created as His substantial object, should also become eternal, after his perfection.” (DP 209)

Matthew 6

Concerning Almsgiving

“Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.⁸⁰ ²“Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,⁸¹ ⁴ so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.⁸²

Concerning Prayer

⁵ “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.⁸³ ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷ “And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words.⁸⁴ ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.⁸⁵ ⁹ Pray then like this:

Our⁸⁶ Father⁸⁷ who art in heaven,⁸⁸
Hallowed be thy name.⁸⁹

⁸⁰ If you do something for the sake of being acknowledged, you are not doing it with the heart that puts God first. Having left God out of the action, you will not improve your relationship with God.

⁸¹ How is this possible? Question: How can your left hand not know what your right hand is doing?

Answer: Between the right hand and the left hand, there is a brain. That's the short answer.

However, the brain processes things so quickly that it seems simultaneous. The brain is powerful. It receives information from, and gives direction to, all parts of the body. While most intake and output is primarily composed of objective realities such as hot or cold, and derivatives such as pleasure or pain; an emotional element is dominant. Consequently, the objective reality of the right hand is processed by the brain using an intellectual/emotional mix. For example, if the giver doesn't feel that she is being sacrificial, no thought of "sacrificial giving" is transmitted. She is thankful to be giving. The mind/heart is so powerful.

⁸² She, the example in the previous footnote, feels the vibrations of God's impulse to love as it resonates within her while she delivers that love.

However, fallen mankind wants to give from God (all good things are from the Creator), without recognition, and wants to receive for self. This is the pattern of fallen mankind established by Adam & Eve. They were growing up in an environment that conveyed the pure love of Creator God but they chose to receive love from Lucifer. They received love from God but chose to love Lucifer who opposed God.

⁸³ Those who pray or act for show, obtain only the superficial transitory reward of being seen. This is gone in the blink of an eye. On the scale that spans eternity, where life is a blink; a blink of a blink is unworthy of attention.

⁸⁴ Being heard for speaking is like being seen for show – worthless.

⁸⁵ God already knows. If you remind God that you are suffering, you cause Him to suffer more. It's best to pray for others.

⁸⁶ Please note the plural first-person pronoun throughout the model prayer. This includes our neighbor as it expresses the two Great Commandments. Jesus teaches us to realize that we are children in a very large family. "Heaven is a place which you cannot enter alone." (CSG 885)

⁸⁷ The fatherhood of God is not a central theme in the Old Testament. It is rarely used as an analogy for God. Jesus' habit of addressing God as his Father, and teaching his followers to do likewise, must have appeared presumptuous to his opponents. Jesus' reference to God the Father in the third person shows that Jesus and Creator God are distinct beings although one in spirit.

⁸⁸ God lives in the ideal. He knows only the good. He suffers as His children created hell for themselves. He knows that one day they will return to His heart.

¹⁰ Thy kingdom come,⁹⁰

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.⁹¹

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread;⁹²

¹² And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors;⁹³

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.⁹⁴

¹⁴ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.⁹⁵

Concerning Fasting

¹⁶ “And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”⁹⁶

Concerning Treasures

⁸⁹ As soon as Jesus greets His Father, he reveres the name of his Father above all. Mankind gave names to all creation but Jesus teaches that God is our real father.

“Earthly Men Caught Up to Meet the Lord in the Air (I Thess. 4:17) The "air" mentioned here does not mean the sky. In the Bible, "earth" generally means the fallen world of evil sovereignty, while "heaven" means the sinless world of good sovereignty. Our understanding is increased when we read the Biblical verse which says, "Our Father who art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9), though God is omnipresent. Also, we find, "...but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man" (John 3:13), even though Jesus was born on earth. Thus, "to meet the Lord in the air" signifies that the saints will receive the Lord in the world of good sovereignty when Christ comes again and restores the Kingdom of Heaven on earth by overthrowing the Satanic sovereignty.” (DP 117)

⁹⁰ Jesus taught the gospel of the Kingdom. (Mt. 4:17, 6:10, 21:43, 23:13; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 1:33, 13:29; Rev. 11:15) His purpose was to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth which God created out of nothing but His heart – His impulse to love. Like God, Jesus gave everything.

⁹¹ “Jesus, who came in order to fulfill the purpose of the providence of restoration, told his disciples to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven (Matt. 6:10), and warned his people to repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand (Matt. 4:17), because the purpose of the providence of restoration is to restore the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.” (DP 105)

“Jesus came in order to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, having restored fallen men as citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom. For this reason he told his disciples to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven (Matt. 6:10). “ (DP 140-1)

⁹² This is a request for sustenance although, in the plural, and in the context of realizing the Will of God on earth. Most Christians would not be satisfied with only this – food for today. In Jesus' model prayer, we see the discipline that teaches us to seek little for ourselves. Certainly, we can pursue more according to our abilities in order to share by helping others.

⁹³ Some scholars suggest Jesus was speaking in a “Jubilee year.” (A Jubilee year was a special year of remission of sins and universal pardon which occurred every fiftieth year, during which slaves and prisoners would be freed and debts would be forgiven.) However, “debts” and “debtors” are translated differently in other Bible versions and are certainly applicable on a broad scale. Many parables support the proposition that we are forgiven our transgressions to the extent that we forgive those who offend us. This is certainly logical.

⁹⁴ This is a plea for redemption, for freedom from Satan's lineage and control.

⁹⁵ Again, Jesus speaks of forgiveness. If there was only one word allowed to sum up Christianity, I believe it would be “forgiveness.”

⁹⁶ This is a repeat of the advice to serve God in prayer and fasting without a show for others.

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.⁹⁷

The Sound Eye

²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; ²³ but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Serving Two Masters

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.⁹⁸

Do Not Worry

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?⁹⁹ ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.

³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day’s own trouble be sufficient for the day.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Spiritual matters come first; the material world is the environment to advance spiritual growth.

⁹⁸ Mammon is also translated “wealth” or “possessions.” Jesus said one cannot serve both. This calls to mind the young man with great possessions mentioned in Mt. 19. For a young man to have great wealth in those days, he had to be connected to the establishment. That is, he must’ve been one of the elites. Those in power derived their authority from their father the devil.

⁹⁹ This is a reminder of man’s special place in all of creation. Mankind lives in both spiritual and physical worlds at the same time, and can relate directly to God.

¹⁰⁰ To be anxious about the basics – food, clothing, or shelter – for tomorrow, is selfish. This must be resisted. It will only escalate since one’s needs are never fully satisfied.

Matthew 7

Judging Others

“Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.¹⁰¹ ³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

Profaning the Holy

⁶ “Do not give dogs what is holy;¹⁰² and do not throw your pearls¹⁰³ before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you.

Ask, Search, Knock

¹⁰¹ Jesus does not forbid all judgment or discernment. The moral distinctions drawn in the Sermon on the Mount require that judgments be made. In other places he demands that people judge correctly: “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.” (John 7:24)

“Today’s Christians say that God is sitting on the throne as the all-knowing and all-powerful God.

They say that, as the Judge, He sends bad people to hell and good people to heaven. But if God were joyful to see this, He would be a crazy God. God dwells in the place of absolute goodness, which transcends good and evil.” (CSG 83)

Jesus is the absolute standard by which all things are judged. We judge ourselves and determine our eternal lives, whether heaven or hell.

“True Christianity is a religion of life, through which men can restore the vertical give and take circuit with God by establishing, through love and sacrifice, the horizontal give and take circuit between men centering on Jesus. The teachings and deeds of Jesus were solely for this purpose, as he indicated on numerous occasions.” (DP 30)

This is similar to forgiveness discussed in the previous chapter. See also Matt. 5:21-24 where Jesus explains the progression between the fifth and sixth Beatitude. He teaches that if you want to see God, first go see your brother and reconcile with him.

Jesus warns against hypocrisy – enforcing your law of goodness on others while exempting yourself. I think the ultimate expression of this is to blame others.

¹⁰² What is holy to the Jews, is their scripture. However, this is not a prohibition against evangelizing Gentiles. Jesus praised the great faith of two people; neither of them were Jews. In the case of the Canaanite woman, he referred to the Jews as “children” and called her a “dog.” However, when she overcame this challenge, he praised her faith and granted her request in a miraculous way. This teaches us deeply about the quality of faith in God required by Jesus.

“And he answered, ‘It is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.’ ²⁷ She said, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.’” (Mt. 15:26-27)

Although Jesus first directed his followers to witness to the Jews, when the Jews were not receptive, he directed them to go to all people. God so loved the world and all people. His plan was to have ever-expanding circles of influence like a rock thrown into a pond which stimulates the whole pond. The rock was Christ.

“These twelve Jesus sent out, charging them, ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’” (Mt. 10:5-6)

But he concluded with the Great Commission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” (Mt. 28:19-20)

¹⁰³ A pearl is formed when an irritant enters a shelled mollusk (clam, oyster) which responds by depositing successive enveloping layers of membrane to overcome the irritation. Believers experience irritation when they share what is holy. As the mollusk takes in the irritating object during feeding or respiration, likewise believers receive persecution when opening their hearts to witness for God in an ungodly world. Jesus said they should never discard these precious experiences; throwing them away to the unclean. Believers must suffer thus in order to enter the ideal city which can only be entered thru twelve gates of pearl. (See Rev. 21:21.)

⁷ “Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.¹⁰⁴
⁸ For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.¹⁰⁵ ⁹ Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!¹⁰⁶ ¹² So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.¹⁰⁷

The Narrow Gate

¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.¹⁰⁸

A Tree and Its Fruit

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. ¹⁸ A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will know them by their fruits.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ “When we read in Matthew 7:7, “Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”, we can see well enough that all things are not accomplished merely by the predestination of God, but by human endeavor. If all things are to be accomplished solely by God’s predestination, why did God so emphasize human efforts? Again, when we read that we should pray for sick brothers (James 5:14), we can understand that suffering due to sickness is not by the predestination of God. If all things were inevitably decided by God’s predestination, there would be no need for man’s tearful prayers.” (DP 194-5)

¹⁰⁵ “The Bible says, ‘The prayer of faith will save the sick man.’ (James 5:15); ‘Your faith has made you well.’ (Mark 5:34); ‘For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.’ (Matt. 7:8). All these Biblical passages prove that the will is predestined to be fulfilled by the accomplishment of man’s own portion of responsibility. We can understand well enough how small were the responsibilities men took charge of in all these instances, compared to God’s responsible portion of toil and grace. At the same time, from the fact that through their failure to accomplish their portions of responsibility, the central figures in the providence were compelled to cause the prolongation of the providence of restoration, we can well imagine how extremely difficult it was for them to fulfill even a relatively small responsibility.” (DP 198-9)

¹⁰⁶ The “good things” indicates that we may not receive everything we want but will receive the good that God knows we need. This is especially true because we were born into, and live in, a sinful world and are tainted by it. We need to pray unceasingly (1 Thess. 5:17).

¹⁰⁷ Although this is often mistaken as Jesus’ command for how to treat people (the “Golden Rule”), we can read clearly in the same verse that it constitutes his summation of the Old Testament – “for this is the law and the prophets.” However, Jesus brings a “new commandment”. (Jn. 13:34; “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”) (See also Jn. 15:12.)

¹⁰⁸ Seekers of spiritual truth must have self-discipline to find the narrow path of true spirituality which is obscured by the way of the world controlled by Satan and his agents. The way is narrow both before and after the gate which symbolizes our moment of re-birth. We must continually make effort, advancing our spiritual growth.

Why are the gates of the ideal city, “the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God” as revealed to John (Rev. 21:10), made of pearl? Yes, they are beautiful as is the rest of the city with its streets of gold. Yet, when taken in the context of Jesus’ teaching that for fallen mankind it is difficult to enter into the Kingdom of God, they become even more meaningful. The gates of pearl are the beautiful result of overcoming the aggravation of our fallen nature in order to enter the holy city. (See footnote 103.)

¹⁰⁹ Jesus presents two trees, as set out in Eden. Lucifer (Satan), symbolized by the serpent in the Garden of Eden, tempted Eve into evil. Adam and Eve, symbolized by the two trees in the Garden of Eden, did not become, respectively, the Tree of Life and The Tree of Knowledge of Good. Eve, by her sin against God, became the Tree of Knowledge of Evil. They died spiritually, as God had warned them, and the fruit they bore were sinful murderous children. Jesus teaches how to discern between those born of the lineage of the devil and those born again in his lineage of God. He says there will be a time of judgment. Judgement comes because people have freedom to

Concerning Self-Deception

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.’¹¹⁰

Hearers and Doers

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; ²⁵ and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; ²⁷ and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.” ²⁸ And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹ for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.¹¹¹

choose good or evil. Just as in the Garden of Eden people today are free to choose whether to love God first, or to seek after and love things Satan has to offer.

¹¹⁰ “In Luke 18:8 Jesus asked, “...when the son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?” On another occasion (Matt. 7:23) he said that he would declare to the devout Christians, “I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.” All this he said to warn the Christians of the Last Days against their possible offense, because he foresaw their disbelief.” (DP 119)

“For the saints with such good faith as to be able to perform miracles and signs in the name of the Lord, would it not be that they would follow and serve the Lord as well when he comes on the clouds in great glory? Why, then, did Jesus say that they would be rejected by the Lord in such a way? If saints of such devout faith should be rejected by the Lord, there will not be a single saint in the Last Days that can be saved. Consequently, this too will never be fulfilled if the Lord should come on the clouds.” (DP 504)

“Abraham's lineal descendants, who had been persecuted in Egypt while serving God's will in the Old Testament Age, were the "First Israel", while the Christians, who, branded as heretics by the First Israel, having taken over the providence of restoration while serving the resurrected Jesus, were the Second Israel. Meanwhile, we have already learned through previous statements that the Lord will be branded as a heretic, even by the Christians, the "Second Israel"; just as it is prophesied in Luke 17:25 that the Lord must first suffer many things even at his Second Advent, as in Noah's days. If so, God will have to abandon the Christians when they persecute the Lord of the Second Advent, just as He abandoned the Jewish people who refused Jesus (Matt. 7:23).” (DP 521)

“When we truly understand the fact that these are the phenomena that could happen in the very same manner in the Last Days, each and every one of us should contemplate the matter most seriously. Innumerable Christians of today are dashing on the way which they think will lead them to the Kingdom of Heaven. Nevertheless, this very road is apt to lead them into Hell.” (DP 535)

¹¹¹ The scribes, as do the scholars of today, taught by frequent citation to others. Jesus did not. He referenced the scriptures but taught from his heart. There was no other scholar who taught as he taught – with original love. Jesus is an original authority.

Matthew 8

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; ² and behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.”¹¹² ³ And he stretched out his hand and touched him,¹¹³ saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.¹¹⁴ ⁴ And Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to any one;¹¹⁵ but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to the people.”¹¹⁶

Jesus Heals a Centurion’s Servant

⁵ As he entered Caper’na-um, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him ⁶ and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress.” ⁷ And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” ⁸ But the centurion answered him, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” ¹⁰ When Jesus heard him, he marveled,¹¹⁷ and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I

¹¹² The leper makes no presumptions about being worthy to be healed. He asks conditionally, “if” Jesus is willing. In this way, he demonstrates a proper attitude toward Jesus – professing both his faith and his unworthiness. Humility is an essential element in an anatomy of any miracle. Arrogance is the chief characteristic inherited from our false father the devil who was arrogant enough to defy God. Humility is the beginning point of all understanding.

Whether the man’s condition was actual leprosy or something within the broader category of skin disease is uncertain but all such were considered unclean. The affliction was interpreted as being a curse from God. (Num. 12:10-12; Job 18:13)

¹¹³ By touching the leper, Jesus becomes ceremonially unclean even as he tells the unclean leper to “be clean.” Jesus was willing to depart from time-honored sacred tradition in order to give God’s love to a man tortured by Satan. In the context of a theocratic society establishment, this was a big risk to his reputation and status. However, cleanliness comes *from* the only-begotten Son of God born without sin. Things unclean do not attach to him; they are unable to affect him.

¹¹⁴ Without hesitation, Jesus healed the leper. In his willingness to heal, Jesus decisively proved that the Spirit of God was with him. He already had the authority and miraculous power to heal, which is a demonstration of the power to forgive sin. (Jesus explains this in the next chapter.)

Jesus had this power and was not required to do anything further to obtain it. Jesus did not obtain this authority in response to Satan’s killing him. In no way was his authority derived from anything the devil did. Jesus had all power and authority because of who he was – the Son of God. It did not depend on whether he was received or rejected by the Jews. His authority was not determined by them. Many Christians view the miracles as a result of Jesus’ sacrificial death but he did not need to die to get this authority. He had it from birth. The Father sent His Son to the world. This is the message Jesus taught repeatedly. He taught this clearly in the parable of the wicked tenants. (Mt. 21)

¹¹⁵ Jesus’ command for silence was most likely meant to last until he was proclaimed as the Messiah on a substantial foundation. It appears Jesus was making the foundation that John the Baptist should have made for him. For other times where Jesus requested silence concerning who he was see Mt. 9:30; 12:16; 16:20; and 17:9.

¹¹⁶ Jesus directed the cured man to follow the Mosaic law concerning lepers who had been cleansed (Lev. 14:1-9). In many respects, Jesus followed the law; his departures were not without purpose. He did not destroy his foundation in Old Testament law, but built on it in a way that allowed the people to approach God more closely. He was able to express the heart of God in a personal way, advancing beyond a relationship of rules and regulations. On this occasion when reported as Jesus directed, the law would confirm Jesus’ authority as a healer, and the priest would sanction this as “a proof to the people” in an official public way before God and all of the people. The priest would’ve been a great witness for Jesus’ first miraculous healing. What the cured man did is unknown but we did not hear from the priest.

¹¹⁷ When Jesus heard the analogy presented by the centurion, “he marveled.” The same Greek word (root for amazed) was used by Jesus to describe both his positive feeling toward the Gentile centurion and his negative feeling toward the Jews who rejected him at the synagogue in Nazareth.

(Mt. 8:10) When Jesus heard him, he marveled (thaumazō), and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.”

found such faith.¹¹⁸ ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,¹¹⁹ ¹² while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.”¹²⁰ ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; be it done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.¹²¹

Jesus Heals Many at Peter’s House

¹⁴ And when Jesus entered Peter’s house, he saw his mother-in-law¹²² lying sick with a fever; ¹⁵ he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and served him. ¹⁶ That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word,

(Mk. 6:6) And he marveled (thamazō) because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

Jesus was amazed by the faith of the Roman centurion who submitted to him, a Jewish rabbi, as Lord without the Israelite providential foundation. Jesus was similarly amazed by the lack of faith of those who rejected him even after they had been prepared by God to accept him as their Lord.

Jesus’ amazement means that he was surprised. This shows that people make choices as they exercise their free will. Those prepared may reject God’s Will; the unprepared may fulfill the Will. (See the Parable of the Two Sons, Mt. 21:28-32.)

In the Garden of Eden God had a plan but Adam and Eve chose wrongly and were expelled. Similarly, the “chosen people” although loved and guided by God, retained the integrity of acting on their own to either accept or reject the man of God. Dual prophecy is found in Isaiah and other places. Prophecy is not predestination; it is not prediction. The consequences of actions are foretold; the actions themselves are not pre-determined.

Jesus knew the Scriptures and worked mightily to gain the people’s trust and acceptance. He told them to believe in him whom God had sent:

Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” (John 6:29)
Jesus wept when the people did not believe in him.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” (Mt. 23:37)

Jesus told the centurion to go and it would be done “as you have believed.” Thus, we see that for all the good intentions, the miraculous action would take place only to the extent of the centurion’s belief. What really mattered, what really allowed the Spirit of God to work, was the reality in the man’s heart. Belief was central in all the miraculous works Jesus performed.

¹¹⁸ The two people in whom Jesus found great faith were not Jews. As he said here, he did not find such faith even among the people who had been prepared, guided, and loved by God to have faith.

The centurion’s words demonstrate a profound understanding of the Roman military system. All authority ultimately belonged to the emperor and was delegated. Therefore, since he was under the emperor’s authority, when he spoke, he spoke with the emperor’s authority. A foot soldier who disobeyed him would be defying the emperor, even Rome itself.

The centurion applied this understanding of himself and his position to Jesus. He saw that Jesus was under God’s authority. When Jesus spoke, he spoke with the authority of God. To defy Jesus was to defy God.

The centurion did not request that Jesus himself (the emperor) come to his house. If Jesus gave the word, a spirit at his command (a foot soldier) would go to do his bidding. Jesus marveled.

¹¹⁹ Seeing the faith of the centurion, Jesus predicts that many gentiles will come to the victorious Messiah. They will “sit at table” displacing the people who had reservations due to their Israelite ancestry. It sounds like a feast and contrasts with the fasting of the Pharisees and John the Baptist’s followers who challenged Jesus’ followers. (Mt. 9:14) They will hold onto and learn from those Jews who understand him. (Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2; Zech. 8:22-23)

(Isa. 2:3) and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

(Zech. 8:22-23) Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of the Lord. ²³ Thus says the Lord of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”

¹²⁰ This is what Jesus said would happen to those who had been chosen but did not become his followers.

¹²¹ Jesus, before his rejection, torture, and execution; already had God’s authority to heal. (See footnote 114.)

¹²² Peter was married. The celibacy tradition of priests in the Catholic Church came later.

and healed all who were sick. ¹⁷ This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.”¹²³

Would-Be Followers of Jesus

¹⁸ Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side.

¹⁹ And a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” ²⁰ And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.” ²¹ Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ²² But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.” ¹²⁴

Jesus Stills the Storm

²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ¹²⁵ ²⁵ And they went and woke him, saying, “Save, Lord; we are perishing.” ²⁶ And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O men of little faith?” Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. ²⁷ And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniacs

²⁸ And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. ²⁹ And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”¹²⁶ ³⁰ Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. ³¹ And the demons begged him, “If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine.” ³² And he said to them, “Go.” So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. ¹²⁷ ³³ The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴ And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood.¹²⁸

¹²³ In the Old Testament, there is dual prophecy concerning the arrival of the Messiah. His reception was not up to God but was to be determined by people whom God had prepared to receive him. Just as in Eden, Adam & Eve had a choice – whether to realize the Tree of Good or the Tree of Evil, so also did the Jews. They could receive or reject the Messiah. Isaiah 9, 11, and 60 prophesied the welcomed and victorious Messiah; Isaiah 53:4, referred to here, prophesied the rejection. As I have written previously, prophecy is neither pre-determination nor prediction. It is a foretelling of consequences that will follow the choices.

¹²⁴ Jesus told the man to follow him and come to life. The man’s ancestors, Adam and Eve, had died in the Garden of Eden. All of the people in the world have been born from dead descendants. Jesus brought life; life in relationship with Creator God; life beyond the materialistic smart animal that knows not the purpose, meaning, or value of life.

¹²⁵ Jesus’ deep sleep in the storm-tossed ship illustrates his words that he had no place to lay his head. He truly invested all of his energy in working to build the kingdom of God on earth.

¹²⁶ “If the hearts of parents in fallen families are saddened by the unhappiness of even one of their children, how much more would it be so with God, as the Heavenly Parent! In II Peter 3:9 we find, “The Lord...is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” Accordingly, Hell cannot remain forever in the ideal world, which is to be realized in accordance with the will of God. Even the forces of Satan testified to Jesus’ being the son of God (Matt. 8:29). When the Last Days come, even evil spirits will descend to earthly men of the same level, and by cooperating with them will take part in the fulfillment of God’s will. Finally, after a due period of time, the unified purpose of creation will be attained.” (DP 190-1)

¹²⁷ Even pigs would rather die than be dwelling places for Satan or demonic spirits. Even the unclean animals refused to tolerate evil spirits. We must reflect, re-examine our lives of faith, and realize in renewal that we are dwelling places of God.

¹²⁸ The concerns of this world took precedence over the amazing spiritual phenomena done by Jesus. The people feared he might ruin their businesses like what had happened to the swine owner. Their “conviction of things not Christians should take note of this to prepare for the Second Coming. (See Luke 18:8)

Matthew 9

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. ² And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” ³ And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” ⁴ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵ For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? ¹²⁹ ⁶ But that you may know that the Son of man ¹³⁰ has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, take up your bed and go home.” ⁷ And he rose and went home. ¹³¹ ⁸ When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, ¹³² and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men. ¹³³

The Call of Matthew

⁹ As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. ¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Only God and the Messiah can forgive sin. In this regard the Messiah, as a man who has embodied the Spirit of God, may be better positioned to forgive sin. As discussed earlier, God did not change His plan of Creation. It was mankind that turned from God and must turn back to the unchanging eternal God. If two are in a relationship, and one is absolute, eternal, and unchanging; the other must return to the position that he left in order to resume the full relationship. Jesus, unfallen Adam, petitions his Father to forgive fallen mankind.

Jesus does not say “I forgive”; he said “your sins are forgiven.” God does the forgiving.

¹³⁰ The “Son of man” refers to a human in the Old Testament. It is noteworthy that this was the primary name used by Christ during his earthly ministry (Matthew 16:13).

The “Son of Man” in Daniel 7:13-14 must be Jesus because he appears before God the Father to present to Him an everlasting kingdom. Jesus attempted to accomplish this but due to the disbelief of the people, promised to return and complete his mission.

Paul spoke of this future act by Jesus when he wrote: “Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.” (1 Corinthians 15:24)

¹³¹ Some had accused Jesus of blaspheming when he forgave the sins of the paralytic man. If Jesus had blasphemed, how could he then heal the man? As a blind man given sight told the Pharisees:

“We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” (John 9:31-33)

¹³² The crowds “were afraid.” Satanic elements in people fear the words and works of God as they fear God. This is a clear indication that we are unnecessarily conflicted beings. Before the fall, the sin, the separation from God; Adam & Eve walked and talked with Creator God without fear in the idyllic Garden of Eden.

¹³³ Jesus had the power to forgive sin and to heal people. He had this power because he was the Son of God; it did not depend on whether the people welcomed him or rejected him. He did not need to die to obtain this power.

Matthew’s account of this miracle is shorter than in Mark and Luke (Mark 2:2-12; Luke 5:17-26) where they report an entrance thru the roof which would demonstrate the great faith of the paralytic and those carrying him. This would give more context to the words: “Jesus saw their faith.” (Underlining added.) He was responding to the faith of the group, not just the paralyzed man.

¹³⁴ Jesus was forced to gather followers by witnessing to himself. This was a difficult situation for Jesus who was seen as having been born illegitimate. John the Baptist was the respected son of a priest whose mission was to bring the people to Jesus. However, despite what we Christians want to believe, there is little evidence that John

¹⁰ And as he sat at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples.¹³⁵ ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”¹³⁶ ¹² But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’¹³⁷ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”¹³⁸

The Question about Fasting

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”¹³⁹ ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?¹⁴⁰ The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from

the Baptist witnessed to anyone about Jesus. Maybe two of his followers followed Jesus. This is reported in John 1:35-37 but not in the synoptic gospels.

Having forgiven sin, Jesus now called a tax collector – a sinner and an associate of sinners – to follow him.

¹³⁵ Because of his birth, Jesus was an outcast. The “tax collectors and sinners” are lumped together and are comfortable with him.

¹³⁶ Eating with sinners concerned those who saw the risk of ceremonial defilement. As mentioned earlier, cleanliness came from Jesus to the people; not the other way. The Pharisees’ question is more like an accusation that Jesus is ritually unclean. They expected a messiah who would judge sinners and support the righteous. They did not understand Jesus who would transform sinners and call the self-righteous hypocrites.

¹³⁷ This quote is from Hosea 6:6: “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.” The apostates of Hosea’s day, though continuing the formal ritual of temple worship, had lost its center. Likewise, as applied to the Pharisees by Jesus, they too preserved the shell while losing the heart of the matter.

The rabbinic direction “go and learn” may be a bit sarcastic directed at those who prided themselves in their knowledge of, and conformity to, Scripture.

The prophet Hosea called on Israel to repent. John the Baptist, as well as Jesus, called on the people to repent because the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. The King had arrived bringing the love and knowledge of God beyond the past relationship involving burnt offerings.

¹³⁸ Jesus is teaching that he came for all people even though the Pharisees do not understand that they are also sinners. They were considering themselves righteous by comparing themselves to those whom they called sinners.

Those who mistakenly believe they are healthy do not think they need treatment. All people are descendants of Adam & Eve who were dominated and enslaved by Lucifer. All must be re-born into the lineage of God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 3:10-11) as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands, no one seeks for God.

(Jn. 8:7) And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”

(1 Jn. 1:8) If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Jesus is not calling the Pharisees righteous. In the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:20), he demanded righteousness surpassing that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law.

¹³⁹ “[T]he disciples of John” were not disciples of Jesus. They maintained their religious practices, identifying with the Pharisees. Thus, John was closer to the Pharisees than to Jesus. His disciples confronted Jesus directly with the traditional practices of John and the Pharisees. (See also Mk. 2:18 and Lk. 5:33.)

(Mk. 2) ¹⁸ Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”

(Lk. 5) ³³ And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.”

¹⁴⁰ “We have learned from our study of the Bible that the ignorance and disbelief of John the Baptist brought about the disbelief of the Jewish people, which finally compelled Jesus to take the way of crucifixion. Since the time of Jesus until the present, no one has been able to reveal this heavenly secret. This is because we have hitherto read the Bible from the standpoint that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet of all. We have learned from the story of John the Baptist that we must abandon the conservative attitude of faith which has caused us to be afraid to remove old traditional concepts. If it would be unjust to believe that John the Baptist had failed to accomplish his mission when he actually succeeded, it would also no doubt be wrong to believe that he fulfilled his mission, when on the contrary he had failed to do so. We must struggle to obtain the right way of faith, both in spirit and truth.” (DP 163)

them, and then they will fast.¹⁴¹ ¹⁶ And no one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. ¹⁷ Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; if it is, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”¹⁴²

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

¹⁸ While he was thus speaking to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” ¹⁹ And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples. ²⁰ And behold, a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage¹⁴³ for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment; ²¹ for she said to herself, “If I only touch his garment, I shall be made well.” ²² Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.”¹⁴⁴ And instantly the woman was made well. ²³ And when Jesus came to the ruler’s house, and saw the flute players, and the crowd making a tumult, ²⁴ he said, “Depart; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. ²⁵ But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.¹⁴⁵ ²⁶ And the report of this went through all that district.

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁷ And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, “Have mercy on us, Son of David.”¹⁴⁶ ²⁸ When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.” ²⁹ Then he touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it done to you.” ³⁰ And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, “See that no one knows it.”¹⁴⁷ ³¹ But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.

Jesus came as the bridegroom, unfallen Adam, who walked and talked with God. It was the happiest time ever in the world! Jesus sought the bride, Eve. He referred to himself as a bridegroom. (See also Jn. 3:29, Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9) Those invited to the wedding feast should not fast. They should feast with Jesus who brought life with God and an abundance of love and appreciation for all of God’s people and creation. The disciples of Jesus recognized Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah and they rejoiced with him. The disciples of John did not see Jesus as the Messiah. This shows clearly that John did not see Jesus as the Messiah. John and the Pharisees continued the sacred traditions of the chosen people to prepare themselves to receive the Messiah since, according to them, he had not yet come.

¹⁴¹ Jesus was only physically present on the earth for a short time. He was building the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth that will endure forever as prophesied in Isaiah, the ninth chapter. The second sentence in Matthew 9:15 does not need to be read as a prophecy of Jesus’ crucifixion. It is early in his ministry. After this, he said the harvest is ready and he sent out his disciples to witness. He would not have them suffer for him in vain. This statement is true whether he is received or rejected; he will pass (“apairo ’), or be taken away and all people will miss him.

¹⁴² Jesus was the new garment; the new wine. He could not be bound by the limits of the preparations. He had arrived. While Jewish scriptures taught about truth, Jesus was, and is, the truth. He would burst all parameters of time-honored holy guidance. He could not be contained by the rules and regulations that led the minds and hearts of the people to receive him. (Parents prepare for their first-born by reading books but the books cannot compare to what’s in their hearts when they meet their baby.) The new wine of grace could not be poured into the old wineskins of legality.

¹⁴³ She was unclean. (Lev. 15:25-33) As discussed previously, touching Jesus didn’t make him unclean; he made the unclean clean.

¹⁴⁴ Part of any miracle is the faith of the recipient. While it may not seem to be so for the person who was believed to be dead, her father professed his faith in Jesus on her behalf.

¹⁴⁵ Jesus’ authority extended even over death.

¹⁴⁶ By calling Jesus “Son of David”, the blind men are acknowledging him as the Messiah.

¹⁴⁷ Jesus warned them not to tell people of the healing. Jesus’ mission was to turn the hearts of the people to God. He would give them re-birth into the lineage of God. It seems, by this and several other incidents like it, he did not want to be known primarily as a miracle-worker which would be misleading. The real miracle happens in the heart.

Jesus Heals One Who Was Mute

³² As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him. ³³ And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.” ³⁴ But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.”¹⁴⁸

The Harvest Is Great, the Laborers Few

³⁵ And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom,¹⁴⁹ and healing every disease and every infirmity. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Jesus performed numerous healings in order that the people may believe in him. Those who refused to believe him eventually killed him. God wanted all to believe in His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

¹⁴⁹ Jesus always preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven on the earth. The model prayer he gave us features the same exhortation: “Pray then like this: Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.” (Mt. 6:9).

¹⁵⁰ Jesus asked his followers to pray for more followers. That is, to find more believers; more people who believed he was the Messiah. The laborers would be those who witnessed to the truth of God in Jesus Christ. The world had been prepared to receive the Christ. If Israel had proclaimed Christ, Rome could have spread his fame to the world.

Matthew 10

The Twelve Apostles

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity.¹⁵¹ ²The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zeb'edee, and John his brother; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

The Mission of the Twelve

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out, charging them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."¹⁵² ⁷ And preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'¹⁵³ ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay.¹⁵⁴ ⁹ Take no gold, nor silver, nor copper in your belts, ¹⁰ no bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff; for the laborer deserves his food. ¹¹ And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it, and stay with him until you depart.¹⁵⁵ ¹² As you enter the house, salute it. ¹³ And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.¹⁵⁶ ¹⁵ Truly, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomor'rah than for that town.¹⁵⁷

Coming Persecutions

¹⁶ "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves;¹⁵⁸ so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."¹⁵⁹ ¹⁷ Beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and flog you in their

¹⁵¹ "In order to horizontally restore through indemnity, in the generation of Jacob, the vertical conditions of indemnity ranging over 12 generations from Noah to Jacob, that had been delivered in Satan's hands, Jacob had to have 12 sons (Gen. 35:22). Therefore, Moses had 12 tribes (Ex. 24:4), and Jesus had 12 disciples (Matt. 10:1)." (DP 289)

¹⁵² As a Jew and the Son of David, Jesus came in fulfillment of his people's history as their King and Redeemer. His ultimate goal was worldwide "for God so loved the world." (Jn. 3:16) As Paul rightly understood, salvation was intended for the Jews first, then for the Gentile. (Rom. 1:16)

¹⁵³ Jesus always preached the kingdom of heaven was at hand. He tells his followers to preach the same. The content of their message was that the king had come to build God's kingdom on the earth. (Jesus preaches the gospel of the kingdom in Matthew 4:23; 6:10; 9:35; 24:14.)

¹⁵⁴ Jesus' direction was to give freely what had been freely given to them. The issue of profiteering still remains among ministers of the gospel today.

¹⁵⁵ The twelve were to learn that the worker is worth his keep, to shun luxury, to travel unencumbered, and to rely on God's providence thru the hospitality of those they met.

¹⁵⁶ Some scholars report that a pious Jew, on leaving Gentile territory, might shake the dust off his feet to remove himself from the pollution of those places and the judgment coming to them. For Jesus to tell the disciples to do this to fellow Jews would send the message that they should view those places as polluted and liable for judgement. Jesus is clearly teaching that he should be welcomed by the Jews. Had he been welcomed, he would not have been killed. Thus, his killing was not initiated by the will of God. Jesus did not send his disciples on a futile mission. He sent his disciples to testify that he was the Messiah and was building the kingdom. He warned that if the Jews did not believe in him they would face severe judgment.

¹⁵⁷ Sodom and Gomorrah faced catastrophic destruction and serve as the epitome of despicable corruption. The allusion to Sodom and Gomorrah, the most wicked of Old Testament cities (Gen. 19: 1-29) shows that to reject the message of Jesus is even more serious than the worst sins of the Old Testament era.

¹⁵⁸ The Good Shepherd is sending the sheep to wolves. If Jesus' execution were predestined, he would've been sending his followers to meaningless misery. Jesus did not subject his followers to suffering at the hands of Satan without reason. His reason was to expand the sovereignty of God in Satan's world. He had overcome Satan's direct

synagogues,¹⁶⁰ ¹⁸ and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles.¹⁶¹ ¹⁹ When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour;²⁰ for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹ Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death;²² and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.¹⁶² ²³ When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes.¹⁶³

²⁴ "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; ²⁵ it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Be-el'zebul, how much more will they malign those of his household."¹⁶⁴

temptations and was training his disciples to do likewise and teach others. He sent them to testify to the kingdom they were building. Sincere Christians still testify today.

¹⁵⁹ "Again, Jesus told his disciples to be "wise as serpents" (Matt. 10:16). By this he meant that, since the first human ancestors in the beginning fell by the temptation of the evil serpent, Jesus, in order to restore this through indemnity, had to come as a good serpent of wisdom, to tempt and lead the evil men into goodness. Therefore, his disciples also had to follow the wisdom of Jesus, who came as a good serpent, thus leading evil men into goodness." (DP 303)

¹⁶⁰ Jesus attended synagogue. His followers continued to attend synagogue on the Sabbath. This is confirmed repeatedly in all four gospels and the Book of Acts. Jewish Christians were slow to withdraw from Jewish worship. In the book of Acts, the witnessing scenario usually included a synagogue visit when the disciple came to town.

Although the reading of the Torah became the prominent feature of the synagogue, the synagogue represented much more than a house of prayer. It was also an institution for teaching, lodging, communal meals, public fasts, judicial proceedings, public floggings, eulogies, nuptial matches, and so on. Essentially, the synagogue represented an ancient community center. Synagogue floggings were inflicted on synagogue members, so we can see that Jesus' disciples remained synagogue members.

Paul recounted his synagogue floggings: "Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one." (2 Cor. 11:24)

¹⁶¹ As the witness would extend, at some time, beyond the Jews; so also would the persecution as unbelieving Jews reported Christians to governors and other Gentiles. Believers would be handed over to Gentile authorities. "Later on this happened to Paul and other Christians, who at first witnessed to their faith with relative impunity under the Roman laws granting exemptions from emperor worship to Jews, but fell victim to increasing Roman wrath as the Jews progressively denied any link between themselves and Christians." (EBC, p.249, D.A.Carson)

"Brother will deliver up brother . . ." Family division has the mark of Satan on it. Within the first family that Satan invaded, Cain killed Abel. Similarly, in restoration, the family will be divided as it returns to the sovereignty of God.

¹⁶² Satan and those under his influence hate Jesus who will destroy their false power. The disciples will be hated for representing Jesus. To hate them for representing Jesus, means that the haters would be emotionally involved regarding Jesus. This must mean the Jewish people, primarily, since others would not care that much about what a stranger was saying.

¹⁶³ "Because of such words, not only the disciples of Jesus, but also numerous Christians have since believed that the Lord might come in their lifetime, and always were haunted by a feeling of tension about their days being the Last Days. This is because they did not know the fundamental meaning of the Last Days." (DP 119)

"There are numerous other examples in which Jesus said things in such a way that they sounded illogical in order to encourage the saints to fulfill God's will as rapidly as possible. To draw examples, Jesus, in order to make his disciples believe that the Second Coming would be fulfilled right away, said, "...for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes." (Matt. 10:23). Again, when Jesus had told Peter of his approaching martyrdom, he asked Jesus what would become of the disciple John; then Jesus replied, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" (John 21:18-22)." (DP 515)

"Jesus said to those listening to him, "Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom." (Matt. 16:28). However, in order to know the truth of the matter, Christians must know the fundamental providence of God." (DP 517)

¹⁶⁴ It was such an insult to call Jesus the devil. This may have been a frequent epithet of the devil's mouthpieces. (See also Mt. 9:34; 12:22-32) Obviously, people opposed to Jesus were working with the devil.

Whom to Fear

²⁶ “So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops. ²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ^{165 29} Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s will. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; ^{166 33} but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Not Peace, but a Sword

³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ^{167 35} For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and a man’s foes will be those of his own household. ³⁷ He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ^{168 38} and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. ¹⁶⁹

Rewards

⁴⁰ “He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. ^{170 41} He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward, and he who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward.

¹⁶⁵ Jesus counseled his disciples not to fear those who persecuted them. Truth is truth and they should proclaim it. Rather, they should fear God if they lose sight of the truth, abandon their mission to witness, and forsake their relationship with Jesus.

¹⁶⁶ “The human fall signifies that through some act, man was cut off from having a give and take relationship with God, thus failing to unite into one body with Him. Instead, man entered into a give and take relationship with Satan, forming a reciprocal base with him. Jesus, having become one with God through the relationship of give and take, came to this world as His son. Therefore, if and when fallen man unites with Jesus in a perfect give and take relationship, he will be able to restore his original nature, thus entering again into a give and take relationship with God and becoming one with Him. Therefore, Jesus is called the “mediator” for fallen man, being the way, the truth and the life. He came to serve mankind with love and sacrifice, giving even his own life.” (DP 30)

¹⁶⁷ Many Jews thought the coming of the Messiah would bring them peace and prosperity. However, Jesus said that his coming would bring strife and division. He came to defeat Satan and restore the sovereignty of God on the earth. Christians know the truth of this – that it is a battle between believers and non-believers, a battle within families, and also a battle within themselves.

¹⁶⁸ “Jesus placed himself on the same level as God (John 14:9) and said that no one could enter the Kingdom of Heaven except through him (John 14:6). He even said that people should love him more than their parents, brothers, husband or wife and their children (Matt. 10:37, Luke 14:26).” (DP 155-6)

¹⁶⁹ This paradoxical logic means the satanic world must die. The principle of living for the sake of others is at work throughout all of creation. Thus, people live to love God with a love greater than anything else.

“All elements and tiny creatures follow the path of love; they move towards the cells that can come into direct contact with the love that creates oneness with God – that is, human beings. So love requires sacrifice. You need to invest yourself. Because of the tradition of investing all of one’s life and possessions, entities at a lower level seek to invest their entire selves in service to those at higher levels. Thus, Darwin’s theory of evolution is not true but the logic of absorption through love can explain this. When a tiny creature serves by being absorbed as an element used to create beings of a higher order, how much will their value increase?” (CSG 239)

¹⁷⁰ A man’s agent must be received as the man himself. This is the lesson of the centurion’s faith in Mt. chapter 8. See footnote 118.

This is an amazing verse! Sincere Christians represent Jesus. Consequently, Christians represent God.

⁴² And whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.”¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Special reward is promised for those working with Jesus. (See Mt. 5:12.)

Matthew 11

And when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

Messengers from John the Baptist

² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples¹⁷²
³ and said to him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?"¹⁷³ ⁴ And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.¹⁷⁴ ⁶ And blessed is he who takes no offense at me."¹⁷⁵

Jesus Praises John the Baptist

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in kings' houses. ⁹ Why

¹⁷² John and "his disciples" were not disciples of Jesus.

¹⁷³ "However, John the Baptist himself, as well as the Jewish people in general, did not know the fact that John was the second advent of Elijah (John 1:21). John's doubt of Jesus (Matt. 11:3), followed by the disbelief of the people, finally compelled Jesus to take the way of the cross." (DP 153)

"John the Baptist knew Jesus was the Messiah, and when John was on God's side, he testified to him. But when God no longer directly inspired him, and John returned to his normal state, his disbelief of Jesus became aggravated by his ignorance. John the Baptist, who did not realize that he was Elijah, regarded Jesus from the same standpoint as other people, especially after John's imprisonment. Accordingly, everything Jesus said or did seemed, from the merely human standpoint of John the Baptist, to be strange and incomprehensible. Moreover, John himself could not believe that Jesus, who had appeared before the coming of Elijah, was the Messiah. At last John sent his disciples to Jesus in an attempt to remove his doubt, by asking him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3)." (DP 159)

"The Jewish people were in the position of believing and following John the Baptist on the foundation of faith established by him (John 1:19, Luke 3:15). Therefore, they could terminate the Old Testament Age and start their new course of restoration into Canaan on the worldwide level. However, as already stated (cf. Part I, Ch. 4, Sec. II -- 153), John the Baptist, though he himself testified to Jesus as the Messiah, finally doubted him (Matt. 11:3). By denying that he had come as Elijah, he not only blocked the way for the Jewish people to go before Jesus, but caused them to betray Jesus." (DP 346-7)

¹⁷⁴ "When John the Baptist, who was failing to fulfill his mission and blessing from heaven, asked Jesus such a question, Jesus did not answer straightforwardly that he was the Messiah, which should have been plain enough. He answered in a roundabout way, saying: 'Go and tell John what you hear and see!'" (DP 160)

"Of course, John the Baptist was not ignorant of such miracles and wonders done by Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus gave such a lengthy explanation in order to let him know who he was by reminding John the Baptist of what he was doing.

We must understand that when Jesus said the poor had good news preached to them (Matt. 11:5), he was indicating his grief over the disbelief of the Jewish people, and especially that of John the Baptist. The chosen people of Israel, especially John, had been richly blessed with divine love and care. Nevertheless, they betrayed Jesus, and he was compelled to wander about the seacoast of Galilee through the region of Samaria to search among the poor for those who would listen to the Gospel. The ignorant fishermen, tax-collectors and harlots were such poor people. Actually, the disciples Jesus would have preferred were not people of this kind. Jesus, having come to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, was more in need of one person qualified to lead a thousand than one thousand following him blindly. Did he not, therefore, first preach the Gospel in the temple to the chief priests and scribes in search of those who were able and well prepared?" (DP 160)

¹⁷⁵ "However, as Jesus indicated in a parable, he had to call beggars roaming about on the street to the feast, because the invited had not come. Jesus, who himself had to go about bringing in those who were uninvited, at last uttered bitter words of judgment in deep lamentation, saying, "blessed is he who takes no offense at me." (Matt. 11:6). Jesus predicted John the Baptist's destiny by saying, indirectly, that one who took offense at him would not be blessed however great he might be.

On the contrary, it was John the Baptist who had offended Jesus. How did John the Baptist offend him? John failed to carry out his mission of serving and ministering to Jesus." (DP 160-1)

then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.'¹⁷⁶

¹¹ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.¹⁷⁷ ¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force.¹⁷⁸ ¹³ For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John,¹⁷⁹ ¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Eli'jah who is to come.¹⁸⁰ ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

¹⁷⁶ "Jesus, so questioned, answered indignantly, with an air of admonition (Matt. 11:4-10). John the Baptist was chosen by God while he was still in his mother's womb for the mission of serving Him throughout his life (Luke 1:76), and was trained in the wilderness, leading the bitter life of an ascetic, in order to prepare the way of the Lord. When Jesus started his public ministry, God first told John who Jesus was, then had him testify to Jesus' being the Son of God." (DP 159-60)

¹⁷⁷ "After the disciples of John the Baptist left him, Jesus said: 'Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' (Matt. 11:11) indicating that, from the standpoint of his ministry, John the Baptist had come originally as the greatest of all the prophets, but that he was failing to accomplish his mission.

All those in heaven had once been born of women and lived their earthly lives before they died. Therefore, it would have been natural for him who was the greatest of all those born of women to be the greatest also in heaven. Then, why was John the Baptist worse than he who was least in the Kingdom of heaven? Numerous prophets in the past had testified to the Messiah from a distance, looking forward to his coming in the future. But John the Baptist came with the mission of testifying to the Messiah directly. Since it was the mission of the prophets to testify to the Messiah, John the Baptist, who was to testify to the Messiah directly, was greater than any of the other prophets, who testified to him indirectly. However, seen from the point of ministering to the Messiah, he was the least one. This is because the least in the Kingdom of Heaven recognizes Jesus as the Messiah and serves him, while John the Baptist, who was called for the mission of serving him closely in person (Luke 1:76), did not prepare the way of Jesus and failed to serve him. Jesus went on to say, 'From John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it.' If John the Baptist, who was chosen in the womb and trained in so difficult an ascetic life in the wilderness, had only served Jesus as he should, he would no doubt have become his chief disciple. But since John failed to accomplish his mission of serving Jesus, Peter took the position of chief disciple." (DP 161-2)

¹⁷⁸ "God showed us, through Moses' course, the absoluteness of His predestined will. It is positive and absolute for God to fulfill the will He once predestined. Therefore, when Moses failed to fulfill his responsibility, God set up Joshua in his place and finally fulfilled the will he once predestined. In this way, if a person whom God has set up in the position of Abel should fail to accomplish his mission, the person who has been loyal in the position of Cain would replace him, succeeding the mission of Abel. Jesus meant this when he said, '...the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force.'" (Matt. 11:12)." (DP 340-1)

¹⁷⁹ "There are scholars who insist that Daniel 7:13 is the prophecy of what was going to happen at the Second Coming of the Lord. However, in the Old Testament Age, God was working His providence to fulfill the whole purpose of the providence of restoration with the coming of the Messiah, as we may clearly see from the words, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." (Matt. 11:13), and also "For Christ is the end of the law, that everyone who has faith may be justified." (Rom 10:4). Therefore, it was the situation that no one could ever imagine the second coming of the Messiah, who had once come, until Jesus himself later said that the Lord would come again. In consequence, none of the Jews of Jesus' day could ever think that the prophecy of Daniel 7:13 was concerned with the Second Coming of the Messiah. Therefore, the Jewish people of that time thought that this prophecy would be that which was going to happen at the first coming of the Lord. In this way, even at the time of Jesus' coming, there were many believers who had believed that the Lord would come on the clouds, from Biblical grounds. However, Jesus was actually born in the flesh on earth, and we are compelled by this knowledge to study the Bible from the viewpoint that the Lord may come again in a like manner." (DP 501-2)

¹⁸⁰ "It was foretold by the prophet Malachi that Elijah would come again (Mal. 4:5), and it was Jesus' testimony that John the Baptist was none other than the second advent of Elijah (Matt. 11:14, 17:13). However, John the Baptist himself, as well as the Jewish people in general, did not know the fact that John was the second advent of Elijah (John 1:21). John's doubt of Jesus (Matt. 11:3), followed by the disbelief of the people, finally compelled Jesus to take the way of the cross." (DP 153)

"However, there had been as yet no rumor of Elijah's coming as Malachi had prophesied, when Jesus appeared, claiming to be the Messiah; thus, great confusion was caused in Jerusalem. So, the disciples were faced with an argument against Jesus' being the Messiah (Matt. 17:10): if Jesus were he, then where was Elijah who was to come before him? (Mal. 4:5). The disciples, at a loss as to how to reply, asked Jesus directly; and he answered that John the Baptist was none other than Elijah himself, for whom they had waited (Matt. 11:14, 17:13)." (DP 154)

¹⁶“But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates, ¹⁷‘We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; ¹⁹the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”¹⁸¹

Woes to Unrepentant Cities

²⁰Then he began to upbraid the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹“Woe to you, Chora'zin! woe to you, Beth-sa'ida! for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³And you, Caper'na-um, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴But I tell you that it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.”

“Jesus' disciples, who believed him to be the Messiah, could believe without question Jesus' testimony that John the Baptist was Elijah. But how could the Jewish people accept it, when they did not know who Jesus was? Jesus himself, knowing that they would not easily believe his testimony, said, "If you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come." (Matt. 11:14). The Jewish people could not believe Jesus' testimony that John the Baptist was Elijah because it came after John himself clearly denied the fact (John 1:21).” (DP 154)

“Jesus said that John the Baptist was none other than Elijah, for whom the Jewish people had waited so long (Matt. 11:14), while on the contrary, John the Baptist himself had already denied the fact. Then, whose words were they to believe and follow? It depended upon which of the two appeared to be more believable to the people at that time.” (DP 155)

“[T]he chosen people of Israel, who were preparing the foundation for his coming, should have become one in harmony, centering on the temple, which was the image-entity of the Messiah. However, the Israelites repeatedly fell into faithlessness, thus creating the condition for Satan to invade Jesus, who was to come in the future. In order to prevent this condition, Elijah, the prophet, came and worked for the separation from Satan by destroying 850 false prophets, including Baal and Ashera (I Kings 18:19), and finally ascended into heaven (II Kings 2:11). However, since Elijah's mission was not entirely realized, he had to come again to accomplish the rest of his mission (Mal. 4:5). The prophet who came as Elijah to succeed and accomplish the mission of separating from Satan, which had been left unfulfilled by Elijah, and to make straight the way of the Messiah (John 1:23), was John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14, 17:10-13).” (DP 343-4)

“We propose a new viewpoint in the section in the Bible concerning John the Baptist. Malachi prophesied that Elijah, who had ascended into heaven, would come before the advent of the Messiah (Mal. 4:5). Consequently, the Jewish people of Jesus' day believed that the very person of Elijah who had once ascended into heaven, would come again, and they were looking forward to the day of his coming down from heaven, But, most unexpectedly, Jesus said that John the Baptist, the son of Zechariah (Luke 1:13), was Elijah (Matt. 11:14). Here, we came to know, according to the testimony of Jesus himself, that the second advent of Elijah was realized by the birth of John the Baptist, not by his coming down from heaven, as the Jewish people of that time had all expected. In like manner, although many Christians up to the present have believed that Jesus would come on the clouds, there are no grounds to deny the possibility of the Lord being born in the flesh on the earth at the Second Advent, just as the fulfillment of Elijah's second advent by the birth of John the Baptist has shown us. At this point, we need to consider, once again, the numerous Biblical records concerning the Second Advent from the viewpoint that the Lord might come on the earth by being born in the flesh.” (DP 500-1)

¹⁸¹ “Jesus was persecuted by Jewish leaders and had to gather fishermen to be his disciples. He became a friend to tax-collectors, harlots, and sinners, eating and drinking with them (Matt. 11:19).” (DP 155)

“John not only denied Jesus' testimony (John 1:21) from his ignorance of God's will (Matt. 11:19), but he also deviated from the direction of providence even after that. We can well imagine how sad Jesus must have been when he had to regard John the Baptist in that way, not to mention the sorrow of God, when He looked at His son who was placed in such a difficult situation.” (DP 158)

Jesus Thanks His Father

²⁵ At that time Jesus declared, “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes;¹⁸² ²⁶ yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

¹⁸² “By this, Jesus lamented over the spiritual ignorance of the leaders of Judaism at that time, and, at the same time, he thanked God for His pouring down grace, by revealing heavenly things to the believers of that time, who were innocent like babes, though not learned.” (DP 529-30)

Matthew 12

Plucking Grain on the Sabbath

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.^{183 2} But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath.”^{184 3} He said to them, “Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him:⁴ how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?^{185 5} Or have you not read in the law how on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless?^{186 6} I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.¹⁸⁷

⁷ And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless.^{188 8} For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath.”¹⁸⁹

The Man with a Withered Hand

⁹ And he went on from there, and entered their synagogue.^{190 10} And behold, there was a man with a withered hand. And they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?” so that they

¹⁸³ The disciples were likely on a walk within the distance permitted on the Sabbath (2,000 cubits, which is approximately one half mile) since they were not accused of exceeding a Sabbath day’s journey. The right to pluck grain informally by hand was established by Deuteronomy 23:25, though not necessarily on the Sabbath.

¹⁸⁴ It is not obvious that any Old Testament law was being broken since Sabbath laws were aimed primarily at regular work.

¹⁸⁵ There are exceptions to the rules and Jesus pointed out that the Scriptures themselves do not condemn King David for his action. Therefore, the rigidity of the Pharisees’ view is not in accord with Scripture. The Pharisees’ approach could not explain the incident of David. Jesus used the incident to question their view of the Sabbath and the law itself. However, the analogy holds true only if Jesus is at least as special as David.

¹⁸⁶ The Levitical priests “broke” the Sabbath weekly since the worship of God in the temple required them to do some work – changing the consecrated bread (Lev. 24:8) and offering the burnt offering (Num. 28:9-10).

Jesus had no desire to do away with the teachings of covenant law of the Israelites (Mt. 5:17-18). His disagreement with the Pharisees was over what they had added to the law given by God. He took exception to the traditions of the elders. The Sabbath was made by God for mankind (Mk. 2:27-28).

¹⁸⁷ The comparison is not with the service in the temple, or the priests, but with the temple itself. Jesus draws a parallel between his body and the temple (Mt. 26:61; Jn. 2:20-21). The chosen people had honored the temple as they awaited the Messiah. The temple building, where the Spirit of God was present, was a symbol of the coming Christ wherein the Spirit of God lived. Jesus was the substantial temple. The Spirit of God dwelt in Jesus. Thus, it was the Will of God that the chosen people, so trained, would honor Jesus.

See Luke 2:41-51 where Jesus, the young boy – image of God, unfallen Adam, substantial temple of God – went to the symbolic temple. He went as Adam should have gone to become the substantial temple. Jesus went without asking permission from his parents (descendants of the devil). Adam should’ve matured to become the temple of God without listening to Lucifer’s contrary direction.

Unfortunately, although the leaders at the temple were amazed by the boy, and doubtlessly would’ve given him scholarships to their best institutions; his mother scolded him publicly and took him home to obscurity.

¹⁸⁸ As the temple law shielded the priests, Jesus shielded his disciples. He quoted Hosea 6:6 as he had previously in Matthew 9:13. The law pointed to him; its purpose was to guide people to him. He was the fulfillment of the law (Mt. 5:17-48), although more than the law. The laws came alive in Jesus. Physiological facts can never complete the description of the living body. Sun Myung Moon: “The Bible is a textbook about the truth; Jesus is the truth.”

¹⁸⁹ “Let us then examine how Jesus appeared to the Jewish people, from their own standpoint. Jesus was a young man of little formal education. He had been born and raised in the poor and lowly home of a carpenter. This young man emerged unknown, calling himself the Lord of the Sabbath, and yet violated the Sabbath which the Jews strictly observed (Matt. 12:1-8).” (DP 155)

might accuse him.¹¹ He said to them, “What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹²Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath.”¹⁹¹ ¹³ Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, whole like the other.¹⁹² ¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how to destroy him.¹⁹³

God’s Chosen Servant

¹⁵ Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all, ¹⁶and ordered them not to make him known. ¹⁷ This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁸“Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; ²⁰ he will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick, till he brings justice to victory; ²¹and in his name will the Gentiles hope.”

Jesus and Beelzebul

²² Then a blind and dumb demoniac was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. ²³ And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?”¹⁹⁴ ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard it they said, “It is only by Be-el’zebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.”¹⁹⁵ ²⁵ Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand; ²⁶ and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I cast out demons by Be-el’zebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁸ But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods,

¹⁹⁰ Jesus continued Sabbath synagogue attendance; recorded in all gospels. (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 12:9; 13:54) His disciples did likewise. (Mt. 10:17; 23:34; Acts 9:20; chapter 13; 14:1; chapter 17; chapter 18; 19:8)

¹⁹¹ Jesus responds on a level that precludes a counter. If the Sabbath holy day didn’t allow good actions, it would be an evil day. (It’s impossible to argue with Jesus. Amen.)

¹⁹² Although there is no mention of the man’s faith, he did as Jesus directed. Thus, in stretching out his hand, the man united with Jesus and received Jesus’ healing energy.

¹⁹³ This is the first mention of a plot to kill Jesus. It does not appear to arise from disputes over the legality of Sabbath activities but, rather, over Jesus’ identity. He is apparently saying that he is greater than King David, greater than the temple, and “lord of the sabbath.” Sabbath disputes were not the cause of the plotting but the environment that allowed its justification and growth. It is to be noted, that the alleged violations of Sabbath law were not mentioned at Jesus’ trials. They were never as much an issue as Jesus’ claim to be the Sabbath’s Lord.

¹⁹⁴ The royal “Son of David” appellation indicates that the people were considering Jesus to be the long-awaited Messiah. Their leaders thought otherwise. Until Jesus, all authority and power was derived from the devil. Arrogance, displayed by the leadership is the central character trait inherited from Lucifer.

¹⁹⁵ “Christ will come again at the close of the New Testament Age as the center of the new providence to establish the new heaven and earth, and will give us new words for the building of the new age (Rev. 21:1-7). Therefore, he is apt to be rejected and persecuted by Christians at the time of the Second Advent just as Jesus was persecuted and derided at his coming by the Jews who said he was possessed by Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons (Matt. 12:24). Therefore, Jesus predicted that first the Lord must suffer many things and be rejected by the generation at the time of the Second Advent (Luke 17:25). Therefore, those who, in the transitional period of history, are tenaciously attached to the environment of the old age and comfortably entrenched in it will be judged along with the old age.” (DP 135)

“Because of the attitude which Jesus’ words and actions seemed to convey, the Jewish leaders derided him and accused him of being Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons (Matt. 12:24). From all this we can gather that Jesus was not accepted by the Jews of that time.” (DP 156)

unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.¹⁹⁶ ³⁰ He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.¹⁹⁷ ³¹ Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

A Tree and Its Fruit

³³ “Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.¹⁹⁸ ³⁴ You brood of vipers! how can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.¹⁹⁹ ³⁵ The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. ³⁶ I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; ³⁷ for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”²⁰⁰

The Sign of Jonah

³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” ³⁹ But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous²⁰¹ generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nin’evah will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.²⁰² ⁴² The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and

¹⁹⁶ Satan does not cast himself out. If he does, he is done. Therefore, Jesus’ power must be stronger than that of Satan. The desperation of the religious leaders is evident here. They must admit that Jesus either defeats Satan or causes Satan to defeat himself.

¹⁹⁷ No one can be neutral about Jesus. (See also Luke 11:23) Neutrality would amount to toleration of the satanic world. If one is not with Jesus, he is against him. It is a choice between God and Satan. There is only one God. God and Satan do not jointly occupy the same place at the same time. It is a common deception, induced by Satan, for people to think they are with God when they are living according to the desires of the devil. Neutral is lukewarm. (See Rev. 3:15-16) Jesus is not simply a good teacher of morality. He said he was the Son of God. He is either a man of truth, or an evil man who gave his life for a lie.

¹⁹⁸ This recalls the trees in the Garden of Eden. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Eve) bore evil fruit when taking Lucifer’s word instead of God’s word. The resultant fruit – Cain killed Abel. Jesus (The Tree of Life, unrealized by Adam) is accomplishing good works and the good fruit should prove the tree good. The “brood of vipers” terminology, in the next verse, also recalls Eden and the serpent in the Garden who deceived our ancestors.

¹⁹⁹ “Man fell, becoming Satan’s child, because he formed the four position foundation centered on Satan, thus becoming one body with him through their blood relationship. Therefore, Jesus said that fallen men are of their father the devil (John 8:44), and on many occasions called them the brood of vipers, that is, sons of Satan (Matt. 3:7, 12:34, 23:33). “ (DP 83)

All are evil; born from dead ancestors killed by Lucifer. Laws guide the people but Jesus’ love brings salvation. We are raised by truth but saved by love. Tasting the love of God, we never want to leave the relationship. This love is more powerful than anything in the world.

²⁰⁰ This is consistent with Jesus’ teaching that it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man, but what comes out because that comes from the heart.

²⁰¹ Old Testament prophets often used “adultery” to describe the spiritual apostasy of Israel (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, et al.). Jesus insists that the Israelite leaders are still adulterous in heart. (The Book of Revelation, 17th chapter, speaks of the great whore of Babylon who will disobey God at the Second Coming of Christ.) In the past, God had granted signs to strengthen their faith but Jesus denies them signs. He has already performed many miracles but does not perform on demand for them.

²⁰² Jesus compares himself and the Jews of his day to Jonah and Nineveh. Nineveh repented in response to Jonah’s preaching but, so far, the Jews have not repented on hearing Jesus’ words. Those who repented will judge the unrepentant Jews. The Jews knew very well their Old Testament history and Jesus reminded them of the lessons learned by their forefathers and hoped to refresh their faith in God.

condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.²⁰³

The Return of the Unclean Spirit

⁴³ “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest, but he finds none.²⁰⁴ ⁴⁴ Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then he goes and brings with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So shall it be also with this evil generation.”²⁰⁵

The True Kindred of Jesus

⁴⁶ While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.²⁰⁶ ⁴⁸ But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and

²⁰³ Jesus also offers a comparison to the time of Solomon as he recalls the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon’s kingdom (1 Kings 10). She, who bowed there before his God and gave him many gifts (spiritually acknowledging God and physically recognizing the presence of God in Solomon), will judge and condemn them for failing to do likewise to someone much greater (Jesus).

²⁰⁴ There is no life without water. Unclean evil spirits are parasites that sustain themselves by draining life from their host.

²⁰⁵ Believers, as well as non-believers, suffer continual attack in the sinful environment. The environment was prepared by the Creator to reverberate with His love emanating from His children. Jesus teaches that greater evil will come to the chosen people if they have the opportunity to discard the devil but do not fill themselves up with the Spirit of God which he brings. Jesus is determined to establish the kingdom of heaven on the earth where God is sovereign, not Satan. This is God’s Will to be accomplished by acceptance of Jesus. He taught this repeatedly, and clearly in the model prayer (Mt. 6:10).

²⁰⁶ His physical mother and brothers were outside. They were not with him. They wanted him to stop what he was doing (speaking about God), and come speak with them. As Jesus taught in Mt. 12:30, his mother and brothers were against him. This is heartbreaking. There are numerous incidents which clearly tell us that his mother and brothers worked against him.

In Luke 2, despite the temple teachers being amazed by Jesus, his mother scolded him in front of them. They could have raised him to be a major respected leader but she took him home to anonymity. He had to start from zero and build his own foundation instead of starting from the center of the chosen people’s faith.

This event is prefigured by Samuel’s mother Hannah who presented him to the temple to be raised by the priests because she felt God’s involvement in her pregnancy. Her baby boy was given the best opportunity for significant leadership and he grew up to become the prophet Samuel who anointed Saul the first king of Israel.

In Mt. 13:55, Mk. 6:3, and Lk. 4:22 the people marveled at Jesus’ words but thought of him as “the carpenter’s son” or “Joseph’s son” reminding themselves that he was not an extraordinary person.

In John 2 at the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus expressed his disappointment about his relationship with his mother. He said to her, “O woman, what have you to do with me?” His words were directed as if to a stranger, someone who did not know him.

Jesus did not hesitate to distinguish his mother Mary from those who did God’s will.

“As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!” ²⁸ But he said, “Blessed **rather** are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Lk. 11:27-28) (emphasis added)

Jesus did not say “Blessed also . . .” but instead he said “Blessed rather” (“menoun” = rather, on the contrary) meaning that unlike his mother, who had apparently lost the blessings given her at his conception and birth, those who did the Will of God would be blessed. Thus, Jesus teaches that his mother is no longer doing the Will of God.

The third chapter of Mark must be mentioned in the context of Jesus’ family working against him.

Mk. 3:21-22 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for people were saying, “He is beside himself.” ²² And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Be-el’zebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.”

Jesus’ mother and brothers were going “to seize him” because they thought Jesus was “beside himself”. They went to “lay hold of him” because they thought he was “out of his mind” (KJV). They wanted to “take charge of him” because “he must be mad” (Phillips). There are several ways to say that his family thought he was crazy. They obviously sided with Satan against him. They thought like the leaders who opposed him. Probably, they did not want Jesus killed but preferred to “seize him”, “lay hold of him”, or “take charge of him” in order to kidnap him

who are my brothers?”⁴⁹ And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers!”⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.”²⁰⁷

and confine him to house arrest. Maybe they would’ve had him committed to a secure mental institution. They are clearly on the side of those who would stop him one way or another.

Mk. 3:31-35 And his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside they sent to him and called him.³² And a crowd was sitting about him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you.”³³ And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?”³⁴ And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers!³⁵ Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

Jesus mother and brothers were “standing outside” and sent word to him to come out. They were not sitting and were not inside with him. Even though he had come home and was in a house nearby, they were not connected enough with what he was doing to be inside with him or, they did not want to be so close as to be considered followers. “Standing” means they were mobile, they did not intend to stay to listen to him. They had come to take him away with them, by force if necessary. He was a source of great embarrassment to them. They had friends and neighbors, and they felt they could not side with him while making apologies for his unusual and offensive ways. They sent him a message to come out because they could not forcibly take him from a place where he was surrounded by people who agreed with him and were committed to him as their leader. Jesus made it clear that his mother and brothers were not doing what God desired.

Finally, and also very sadly, the seventh chapter of John must be mentioned.

After this Jesus went about in Galilee; he would not go about in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him.² Now the Jews’ feast of Tabernacles was at hand.³ So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples may see the works you are doing.”⁴ For no man works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.”⁵ For even his brothers did not believe in him. (John 7:1-5)

Jesus’ brothers wanted him to be stopped. Jesus was avoiding Judea because he did not want the Jews to kill him. He wanted them to receive him as prophesied and as they had been prepared to do. He taught that it was God’s Will to believe in him. He prayed, even at the last hour in the Garden of Gethsemane, that there still be a way that they could receive him. His brothers stood with Satan and those who opposed Jesus. They encouraged him to go to the place where it was most dangerous for him. The gospel explains their conduct, by stating that they “did not believe in him.”

If you believed Jesus, you would do all you could to provide safety for him. A ninety-year-old mother encourages her seventy-year-old son to be careful crossing the street. Such is love. If Jesus’ brothers loved him, they would not exhort him to go where people wanted to kill him.

I believe Jesus should not have had brothers and sisters. Joseph was in the archangel position. God chose Mary and brought her out of relationship with Lucifer (Lucifer’s descendant) so that her commitment to God’s lineage would be absolute and total. It appears Mary returned to a relationship with archangel Joseph and gave birth to many other children.

In Mark 10:28-31,

Peter began to say to him, “Lo, we have left everything and followed you.”²⁹ Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.³¹ But many that are first will be last, and the last first.”

In this context the “first” are family – close to Jesus. They are losing their place as those who love Jesus because others draw closer to him. The family of Jesus was “standing outside” of the realm of the inner circle around Jesus (Mark 3).

These are many of the sad steps that Jesus walked. These steps led toward acceptance or rejection. There was dual prophecy in the Old Testament but the actions of people were neither predetermined nor predicted in one way or another. Just as in Eden, the people could decide their own fate.

²⁰⁷ Jesus denied the request of his physical family. He explained that his family, the family of God the Father, consisted of those who believed him. His family did not believe in him. “For even his brothers did not believe in him.” (John 7:1-5) He was rejected by his physical family. All people, including his parents and brothers and sisters, need to be re-born into his lineage, the lineage of God.

Matthew 13

The Parable of the Sower

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea.² And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat there; and the whole crowd stood on the beach.³ And he told them many things in parables,²⁰⁸ saying: “A sower went out to sow.²⁰⁹ ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them.⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they had not much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil,⁶ but when the sun rose they were scorched; and since they had no root they withered away.⁷ Other seeds fell upon thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.²¹⁰ ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear.”²¹¹

The Purpose of the Parables

¹⁰ Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?”¹¹ And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.²¹² ¹² For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.²¹³ ¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.¹⁴ With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says: ‘You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive.¹⁵ For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them.’²¹⁴

²⁰⁸ Parables are ambiguous, involving allegories, metaphors, similes, and stories. The narratives have more than one meaning so there are many interpretations of their meanings. Jesus often referenced facts observed in nature because nature is the first Bible, teaching us about God. Rising opposition to Jesus encouraged greater use of parables to teach the people about God.

²⁰⁹ The sower is Jesus or God but the focus of the parable is not on Him.

²¹⁰ The focus of the parable is on the soil; not the farmer, not the seed. God loves all. The same seed produces no crop, some crop, or a great crop according to the soil’s character. The soils of our hearts produce various yields.

²¹¹ This is a warning that the parable needs careful interpretation.

²¹² The disciples had accepted Jesus. Their heart was open to receive and understand all secrets by communication with Jesus. They are the “meek” who are blessed by Jesus in the third Beatitude; they shall “inherit the earth.” They shall inherit all that God created by way of their re-birth into the lineage of the true owner. Jesus taught them what was previously unknown. He was unlocking the secrets of God’s word and God’s world; and it was all good. Jesus was revealing the truth of God to those who believed in him. This recalls Amos 3:7, “Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.” Jesus’ followers were more blessed than all the prophets because they could meet Jesus, in the short time he was on the earth, and help his efforts to establish the kingdom of heaven on the earth.

²¹³ Believers will gain more understanding of the spiritual way as they pursue God’s goodness in all aspects of their lives. But, things will only get worse for those who don’t know God; they will be led farther astray because they follow Satan. There is no neutral ground. (See Chapter 12, footnote 197.)

²¹⁴ This prophecy (Isaiah 6:9-10) is timeless. The Jews often turned from God and He worked to bring them back. Isaiah had a vision. Isaiah was present with the Lord, heard his voice, and worked to prevent the disaster coming to the Israelites. In order to warn the Israelites, he uttered the earnest words: “Here am I! Send me.” Jesus similarly saw disaster coming to the Israelites if they rejected the Son of God. He worked to prevent this. Jesus asked the people to believe in him many times. One of those times is recorded in John 6:28-29. “Then they said to him, ‘What must we do, to be doing the works of God?’ ²⁹ Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’”

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷ Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.²¹⁵

The Parable of the Sower Explained

¹⁸ “Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When any one hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart; this is what was sown along the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the delight in riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³ As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”²¹⁶

The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat

²⁴ Another parable he put before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants of the householder came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then has it weeds?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’²¹⁷ The servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹ But he said, ‘No; lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”²¹⁸

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ Another parable he put before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”²¹⁹

The Parable of the Yeast

²¹⁵ Prophets and righteous men anticipated the Messiah to free them from the devil’s domination but they were not able to see Jesus or hear his liberating words. (See footnote 212.)

²¹⁶ God’s plan, recorded in Genesis, was all good. Those who keep His word prosper in the true and eternal sense. People were created with the freedom to choose; the ability to love. In Eden they chose wrongly and realized the Tree of Knowledge of Evil instead of the Tree of Knowledge of Good. There was no evil until people created it by not keeping that which was good. Good fruit comes from good soil – those who keep the word of God. “You will know them by their fruits.” (Mt. 7:16; 7:20)

²¹⁷ God sowed original seeds; Satan sowed enemy seeds. God, through Adam, brought His seed into the world. The seed (“sperma”) was semen that carries on the presence of God in both spiritual and physical realms and brings life to both male and female successors in the lineage of Creator God.

²¹⁸ Weeds are people whose lineage is rooted in the devil, the enemy of God. But, they are not killed. They receive the sun and rain like all the others; they are given time to repent and change. God loves all people but many cannot feel the love of God. In the Old Testament era, the chosen people could feel God’s love. They were trained and destined to feel God’s love deeply when they met one of their own whom they had eagerly awaited. If they saw God in each other, as their Scripture taught, they would see the fullness of God in the Christ. Jesus taught to remind and refresh them but they saw him as rooted in the devil. They even called Jesus Beelzebub. Satan worked to block God’s love and blind them of the reality.

²¹⁹ The tiny seed leads to the mature plant. Jesus is teaching that the invisible seed in his heart will expand to bring God’s sovereignty to the entire world. Becoming a “tree” brings to mind the Tree of Life that was the goal of a mature Adam in Eden, and was represented by Jesus.

³³ He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”²²⁰

The Use of Parables

³⁴ All this Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed he said nothing to them without a parable.

³⁵ This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.”²²¹

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷ He answered, “He who sows the good seed is the Son of man;²²² ³⁸ the field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom; the weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴² and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Three Parables

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”²²³

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”²²⁴

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad.”²²⁵ ⁴⁹ So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and

²²⁰ Leaven, yeast, is usually seen as evil. (See leaven of the Pharisees. Mt. 16; Mk. 8; Lk. 12). Until Jesus, love was adulterated by the devil. Love, whether good or evil, permeates everything. Jesus brought the pure love of God. The world is interconnected by love. Particles, molecules, atoms, plants, and animals all seek their counterparts. Attraction of complements is the motivation for this movement at all levels. Man and woman meet representing the whole of creation and everything in it. Love is the strongest force in the universe and is embodied in each entity whether symbolically in nature or substantially in mankind.

²²¹ This is a quotation from Psalm 78:2. The verse preceding that, Psalm 78:1, reads: “Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth!” Jesus wanted the people to listen to him.

²²² Jesus brought the good seed. Had he restored Eve and produced children of God with his seed (“sperma”), his semen, he would have remained on earth forever in his lineage in God’s kingdom. Lucifer sowed the evil seed and made everyone evil weeds destined for hell. Only by the grace of God can people engraft into the true lineage from the original seed. Christ promised to return to accomplish everything.

²²³ Buyer sells all and spends all. He gets rid of everything which he inherited from Satan. He feels great liberating joy and invests completely in the treasure he has found. Unless the man exchanges everything he has received from Satan, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. He cannot serve Satan in God’s kingdom.

²²⁴ Similarly, the buyer sells all and spends all; keeping nothing from Satan. The pearl is an interesting symbol for overcoming suffering. A pearl has become a metaphor for something rare, fine, admirable and valuable. However, a pearl is formed when the living shelled mollusk wraps an intruding irritation with layers of tissue. This may be best expressed in Rev. 21:21 where the gates into the ideal city coming down from heaven are made of pearl. “And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.” For fallen people to enter into the kingdom, they must overcome everything inherited from the devil that irritates God. Jesus spoke with the harshness of real love when he said they should throw away everything, even die and start over.

²²⁵ Harvest time, no time for anything to grow or change; judgment.

separate the evil from the righteous,⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

Treasures New and Old

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They said to him, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”²²⁶

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

⁵³ And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, ⁵⁴ and coming to his own country he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? ⁵⁵ Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ And are not all his sisters with us?”²²⁷ Where then did this man get all this?” ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him.²²⁸ But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.”²²⁹ ⁵⁸ And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

²²⁶ The math of this verse: scribe + training for kingdom of heaven = householder + new and old treasure. The scribe is like the householder. The scribe is learned and the householder has old treasure. The training for the kingdom of heaven is equivalent to the treasure. The householder values both new and old treasure. Therefore, the learned person should value both his historical education and his new training. Just like the householder who would not hesitate to gain new treasure, the learned person should be open to new training.

²²⁷ Jesus had several named brothers and unnamed sisters. (See also Mark 6:3.) God’s providence of restoration exists to facilitate the unwinding of sinful processes so mankind can return to a living relationship with the living God. God set up the opportunity to restore the fall of Adam and Eve. Thus, Mary (Eve’s position) loved and committed to Joseph (Lucifer’s position) but was guided by God to renounce that love and have a relationship with the priest Zechariah (Adam’s position) to give birth to Jesus. This was the process to reverse the fall and give birth to a sinless baby. It is unfortunate that Mary then returned to a relationship with the archangel, Joseph, to produce several children. This would explain their lack of support for Jesus which was demonstrated several times.

²²⁸ Why? They “took offense at him” even though “they were astonished” at his “wisdom” and “mighty works”? For a fuller explanation of this incident we look at **Luke 4:16-31**.

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; ¹⁷ and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

²⁰ And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²² And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; and they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ²³ And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself; what we have heard you did at Caper’na-um, do here also in your own country.’”²⁴ And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. ²⁵ But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Eli’jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; ²⁶ and Eli’jah was sent to none of them but only to Zar’ephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Eli’sha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na’aman the Syrian.” ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹ And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. ³⁰ But passing through the midst of them he went away.

Comments on Luke 4:16-42

Luke 4:15 Jesus “taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.”

4:16 Jesus’ custom was to attend synagogue on the Sabbath day.

4:17-20 He read from Isaiah Chapter 61, the Lord of Glory prophecy. It is very important to note that Jesus passed over Isaiah Chapter 53, the Lord of Suffering prophecy. The prophet Isaiah gave a dual prophecy – to

Matthew 14

The Death of John the Baptist

At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus;² and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist, he has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in

be determined by the chosen people’s acceptance or rejection of the Messiah. After the reading, with all eyes fixed on him, Jesus stated that the Lord of Glory prophecy was fulfilled by him.

4:21 “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” He taught that he came as the Lord of Glory.

Luke 4:22 “And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.” His announcement was well received by all accounts – Matthew, Mark, and Luke. (Mt. 13:53-58 – “they were astonished” at “this wisdom and these mighty works.”; Mk. 6:1-6 – they “were astonished” and questioned where he got “the wisdom” and “mighty works.”)

Matthew and Mark do not give any reason for the people in the Nazareth synagogue taking offense at Jesus. It seems out of place. They went from marveling at his words to being offended by him. Some pastors preach that the people rejected Jesus because he said Isaiah’s prophecy of the Lord of Glory was fulfilled in him, and they were not ready to accept that. However, that is not accurate. The people in the synagogue “were astonished” and “all spoke well of him” after this announcement. But, as Luke explains, Jesus continued speaking and went on to challenge their faith.

4:23 Jesus had done several miracles in Capernaum but declined to do them here in Nazareth. He wanted more from the chosen people than their response to seemingly magical acts. He wanted to see the faith of their fathers manifest in them.

“Man, who was created by the Word (Jn. 1:3), failed to accomplish the purpose of the Word due to the fall. God, who has been working His providence of restoration by setting up the external condition of the Word, in order to accomplish the purpose of the Word, must send Christ, who is the substance of the Word (Jn. 1:14) . . . and must work His providence of salvation, centering on the Word.” (DP 366)

4:24 Jesus said a prophet was not acceptable in his own country. Usually, the famous person is better received at home and in his neighborhood, than any other place. The people there know him and feel his success was due in part to his upbringing and their part in it. They helped him. He was one of them. They live vicariously thru him. Even nations identify with individuals, like at the Olympic Games.

However, a prophet is a different type of person. The prophet of God, like God for Whom he speaks, sees everyone in need of change. He is not necessarily a nice guy. Jesus, the Christ, said harsh things to people. For example, if he did your evaluation, he would say you should just die and start over. That is extreme! Christians understand the need for re-birth into God’s lineage through Jesus and the Holy Spirit but others would hear that as very strange and very offensive. The Jewish people had a long relationship with God and the prophets but it was not easy for them to change.

Jesus’ parents are named along with his brothers and sisters. His family did not honor him; consequently, his neighbors and society were blocked from honoring him.

(If Mary is seen in Eve’s position, overcoming the love of Joseph in Lucifer’s position in order to give birth to God’s child by a man in the Adam position; perhaps Jesus should not have had any siblings. We have discussed several incidents recorded in the Bible where Jesus’ brothers were clearly working against him. They were fathered by Joseph but it seems that they were of their father the devil, even though one of his brothers later followed him.) (John 8:44)

Mark’s list of those who did not honor Jesus is more thorough: “A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.” (Mk. 6:4) Mark’s addition brings in Zechariah’s family since Elizabeth and Mary were cousins, as well as his parents, brothers and sisters. John testified to Jesus when the Spirit testified to him but he denied being the Elijah for Jesus even though Jesus had said he was the Elijah figure. The Jews awaited Elijah to announce the arrival of the Messiah. Something must’ve gone wrong between the families to distance John from Jesus. John and Jesus, although relatives, were not close friends. John kept his own disciples. This means he did not become a disciple of Jesus, and his followers likewise were not followers of Jesus. John and his followers were against Jesus.

“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.” (Mt.12:30)

There is little, if any, evidence that John witnessed to Jesus.

Luke 4:25-27 Jesus pointed out their scriptural history of how the now-honored prophets Elijah and Elisha didn’t heal Israelites but healed people outside the nation of Israel. Their great prophets were unsuccessful in turning Israel back from apostasy. (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 5)

4:28 Then, they became very angry at Jesus for recalling those parts of their history. They felt insulted. They wanted to kill him. This part of Jesus’ confrontational talk, left out by Matthew, was the reason for their anger.

They “took offense” at Jesus because: i) he declined to work miracles for them, ii) he challenged their understanding of the Holy Scriptures, iii) he demanded to see their faith in God, and iv) he wanted them to repent for their ill treatment of the prophets.

²²⁹ “. . . en ho patris kai en autos ho oikia.” “in his hometown and in his own household.” Jesus’ family did not respect him, and that would make it difficult for the neighbors to respect him.

him.”²³⁰ ³ For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison, for the sake of Hero’di-as, his brother Philip’s wife; ⁴ because John said to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.”²³¹ ⁵ And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.²³² ⁶ But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Hero’di-as²³³ danced before the company, and pleased Herod, ⁷ so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. ⁸ Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.” ⁹ And the king was sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given; ¹⁰ he sent and had John beheaded in the prison, ¹¹ and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.²³⁴ ¹² And his disciples²³⁵ came and took the body and buried it; and they went and told Jesus.

Feeding the Five Thousand

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart.²³⁶ But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ As he went ashore he saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” ¹⁶ Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” ¹⁷ They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” ¹⁸ And he said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.²³⁷

²³⁰ This verse reports that Herod knew John and was aware that the people considered him a prophet but had not heard of Jesus. John had not told him about Jesus. Herod chose the most unusual conclusion that John, raised from the dead, was doing these things instead of saying that he had heard about Jesus. Obviously, John did not witness to him about Jesus. Further, Herod’s observation is also odd because John had not done any miracles while Jesus was known for doing them.

²³¹ John was not witnessing for Jesus’ sake. He concerned himself with the morality of politician Herod Antipas [referred to as “King Herod” by Mark (Mk. 6:10) and others but he was a “tetrarch” not a king]. John did this instead of witnessing to Jesus, the true King, who was sent by God to build His Kingdom on the earth.

²³² The Israelites believed John to be a prophet but he never brought them to Jesus. Historian Josephus writes of John’s influence: “Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise,)” ([Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, Chapter 5, 2](#)). John failed to use this “great influence” to bring the people to Jesus.

²³³ Herod married his niece Herodias; the daughter of one half-brother, the ex-wife of another half-brother. Instead of helping Jesus (unfallen Adam) find and restore a woman to the Eve position, John had disregarded Jesus and his death came at the hands of a fallen woman.

²³⁴ Some say John was the first martyr but that’s not true; he did not die for Jesus’ sake. Stephen was the first martyr; killed for witnessing to Jesus. Stephen was killed because Satan had killed Jesus in an attempt to keep the world to himself. Jesus always preached the gospel of the kingdom on earth. Stephen was elected to be in charge of building God’s kingdom on earth; that is, he was in charge of procuring the physical material (See Acts 6). He stood where Jesus had been standing – building the physical kingdom. Jesus explained this in the parable of the wicked tenants (Mt.21; Mk.12; Lk.20). John’s thought was removed from Jesus; consequently, his head was removed.

²³⁵ John’s disciples followed John. They did not follow Jesus because John did not follow Jesus.

²³⁶ When Jesus heard of John’s death, he attempted to withdraw to a solitary place (See also Mk. 6:31-32; Lk. 9:10).

²³⁷ There are many secular explanations of this miracle, such as the people sharing what they had brought, but none of them are found to originate in the text. If Jesus brought the people to the place where they opened up their hearts to God and shared with their neighbors instead of complaining about food or accommodations, this would be a far greater and lasting miracle than the temporary multiplication of meals. The heart is central and

Jesus Walks on the Water

²² Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out for fear. ²⁷ But immediately he spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."²³⁸

²⁸ And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water."²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; ³⁰ but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me."³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?"³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."²³⁹

Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret

³⁴ And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennes'aret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent round to all that region and brought to him all that were sick, ³⁶ and besought him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched it were made well.²⁴⁰

everything else is peripheral. If the hearts of the people had all turned to Jesus, they would not have demanded his execution. They would live in his kingdom instead of remaining in the loveless hell on earth.

²³⁸ Fear comes from the devil. The chief characteristics inherited from our father the devil are false pride and fear. Lucifer / Satan had the false pride to defy Creator God. Lucifer / Satan fears God, as he must, because he was created by God and knows the ultimate reality. Jesus banished fear from those who believe in him. To fear God is to respect God. He overcame even the fear of death as he taught that we have eternal life and resurrected.

²³⁹ The disciples believed Jesus was the Messiah. They expressed this faith when they witnessed what an extraordinary man he was.

²⁴⁰ Jesus was known for his miracles. The unclean touched Jesus. They became clean. Jesus, the only human who had not inherited the adulterated lineage of the devil, did not become unclean.

John had been imprisoned in the fortress of Machaerus. Decapitation, although sanctioned by Greeks and Romans, was forbidden by Jewish law.

“Herod’s first wife was the daughter of Aretas (cf. 2 Cor. 11:32), Arabian king of the Nabateans, whose land adjoined Perea on the south. To divorce her in favor of Herodias was politically explosive. Indeed, some years later border fighting broke out, and Antipas was defeated, but saved by Roman intervention.” (EBC 338)

Matthew 15

The Tradition of the Elders

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem²⁴¹ and said, ²“Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” ³ He

²⁴¹ It looks like the intelligentsia, who were not local, came from Jerusalem to confront the upstart Jesus. These or a similar group of leaders also came to John the Baptist. Unfortunately, John’s official report for them to take back to the Jerusalem establishment was that he was not the long-awaited Elijah figure to introduce the Messiah.

(John 1:19-22) Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.” ²¹ They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the

answered them, “And why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴ For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’²⁴² and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die.’²⁴³ ⁵ But you say, ‘If any one tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is given to God, he need not honor his father.’⁶ So, for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God.²⁴⁴ ⁷ You hypocrites!²⁴⁵ Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ⁸ ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁹ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’”²⁴⁶

Things That Defile

¹⁰ And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: ¹¹ not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”²⁴⁷ ¹² Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”²⁴⁸ ¹³ He answered, “Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.²⁴⁹ ¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵ But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” ¹⁶ And he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and so passes on? ¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft,

Prophet?” He answered, “No.” ²² Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

This made Jesus’ statement that John was the Elijah appear to be a wholly self-serving declaration of Jesus so he could be seen as the Messiah. This is what was reported and filed in the hearts and minds of the leaders of the Jewish people.

²⁴² This is from Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

²⁴³ From Ex. 21:7; Lev. 20:9. (Jesus knew the scriptures very well.)

²⁴⁴ Jesus compares the commandments of God with the tradition of the Pharisees and finds their teachings lacking. He points out that they put themselves and their tradition ahead of God and His commands. For example, a man could dedicate property to the temple and use such vows to keep property from other family members. (TGM, 410)

²⁴⁵ They made a show of honoring God with their lips but not their hearts.

²⁴⁶ A quotation from Isa. 29:13. The Pharisees appeared to honor God with their traditions but taught their doctrines instead of the Word of God. Thus, they failed to find God in Jesus who did not keep their traditions. The situation is summed up in Isa. 29:16:

You turn things upside down!
Shall the potter be regarded as the clay;
that the thing made should say of its maker,
“He did not make me”;
or the thing formed say of him who formed it,
“He has no understanding”?

²⁴⁷ “Then how could the food which man eats cause him to fall? The original sin of man has been inherited from the first man and the first woman. How could something edible be the source of that sin or the cause of transmitting that original sin to the children? That which is inherited is passed on through the blood lineage. What a man has eaten cannot be transmitted from one generation to the next.” (DP 66)

²⁴⁸ The Pharisees apparently understood the parable even though the disciples, at least Peter, questioned further.

²⁴⁹ All of the people in the world, including the Pharisees, are descendants of the devil. Jesus, born sinless, is the root of goodness. All others will be rooted up like the weeds in chapter 13. They will either be grafted into Jesus’ root of goodness which comes from God or, they will be destroyed. They must repent and change, coming into God’s lineage through Jesus.

false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”²⁵⁰

The Canaanite Woman’s Faith

²¹ And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon.” ²³ But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying after us.” ²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶ And he answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.”²⁵¹ And her daughter was healed instantly.

Jesus Cures Many People

²⁹ And Jesus went on from there and passed along the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain, and sat down there. ³⁰ And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the dumb, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, ³¹ so that the throng wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ The disciples were not ignorant of the lesson but, as most Jews at that time, held the Pharisees in high regard and wanted to clarify what Jesus had said that had offended them. The offense was not minor since it was perceived by the disciples, and presumably others, and the Pharisees were the leaders of the people.

Following God, and following the Scriptures, climaxed in following Jesus. Since the Pharisees were confronting Jesus based on their man-made traditions, and since they were the leaders who were more learned than the average person, Jesus was compelled to teach them the impropriety of their ways. Jesus’ followers must have flinched. Some of them, siding with the establishment in the theocratic society, may have left Jesus at that time.

Jesus used two images which were not new to the Jewish people: the plant of God and the guides of the blind. Israel saw itself as the plant of God throughout its history (Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah, etc.). The Jewish leaders, knowing the law, saw themselves as guides of the blind (Luke 6, Romans 2). Jesus turned these images against them.

Jesus does not reject all concerns about food. However, Mark 7:19 includes the parenthetical: (Thus he declared all foods clean.) The teachings of Jesus would become clear later as the early church debated the food laws. Jesus discounted the oral traditions, defended the law of God, and explained the heart behind some of the law’s formal requirements. As Paul explained in the wonderful, memorable 1 Cor. Chapter 13; they saw in a mirror obscurely instead of seeing the substantial incarnation of the living God face to face. Jesus is the first man without sin; the original Adam wherein the Spirit of God dwelt. He embodied, and he could explain, **original** human nature.

“Nature is the first Bible.” (SMM)

²⁵¹ Jesus, only two times, described someone’s faith as “great”: a centurion (Mt. 8), and a Canaanite woman (Mt.15). It is noteworthy that neither of them were Israelites. The woman was not of the covenant people but a descendant of their ancient enemies. Mark’s gospel identifies her as “a Greek, a Syrophoenician by birth.” (Mk. 7:26) However, she called Jesus “Son of David” showing some understanding that he may be the Jewish Messiah. She was crying out but Jesus didn’t answer. His disciples were annoyed and told him to send her away. When Jesus answered, he told her he came for the Israelites only. The Canaanite woman persisted, kneeling down and asking him to help her possessed daughter. Jesus concentrated on her non-Israeli unworthiness by comparing her to a dog. Overcoming any personal feelings she might have had, she acquiesced without argument while furthering the analogy. She agreed but said that even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the table. Jesus granted her request.

There are several lessons to learn from the woman’s encounter with Jesus. The woman did not pray for her own benefit, she sought help for her daughter. She came to Jesus, humbly and sincerely seeking his help. She realized she couldn’t do it on her own, with her own power. Despite the non-answer, the answer that she was unworthy, and the insulting comparison to a dog; she did not give up because her focus was not on herself personally. Jesus marveled at her enduring faith.

²⁵² Where were the many people who were miraculously healed by Jesus when he was on trial?

Feeding the Four Thousand

³² Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.” ³³ And the disciples said to him, “Where are we to get bread enough in the desert to feed so great a crowd?” ³⁴ And Jesus said to them, “How many loaves have you?” They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.” ³⁵ And commanding the crowd to sit down on the ground, ³⁶ he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ³⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied; and they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over. ³⁸ Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. ²⁵³ ³⁹ And sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Mag’adan.

²⁵³ The four thousand who were miraculously fed with the seven loaves and a few small fish were Gentiles. Jesus blessed the Gentiles with more than crumbs from Israeli tables.

Matthew 16

The Demand for a Sign

And the Pharisees and Sad'ducees came,²⁵⁴ and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.²⁵⁵ ² He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather; for the sky is red.' ³ And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.²⁵⁶ ⁴ An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and departed.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

⁵ When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. ⁶ Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sad'ducees." ⁷ And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." ⁸ But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? ⁹ Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹⁰ Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹¹ How is it that you fail to perceive that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sad'ducees." ¹² Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sad'ducees.²⁵⁷

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesare'a Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Eli'jah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."²⁵⁸ ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."²⁵⁹ ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁴ Pharisees and Sadducees were generally at odds with each other and would have only come together if there was a common threat. Jesus, apparently, presented such a serious threat to their rule over the people.

²⁵⁵ It is unclear whether they asked for a sign from God or asked that Jesus predict a sign in the heavens, like a star, storm, or thunder and lightning. Jesus had already given great signs. He worked many healings but they were looking for something external instead of appreciating the healing heart of God in Jesus.

²⁵⁶ Jesus' remarks remind me of a dream I had in August of 2005. At that time, Rev. Moon was sponsoring trips to the Holy Land for clergy. The following is the dream which I wrote down when I awoke.

"The religious man said to the spiritual leader (SMM) who had planned his trip to Israel: 'I went to the holy places. I prayed that God would give me a sign that I might know Him.' It did not seem that he had received any special sign.

The spiritual leader replied: 'You should have prayed that sunrise follow sunset. Then, in the morning, you would have had your answer.'"

²⁵⁷ Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. See Mt. Chapter 13, footnote 220.

²⁵⁸ The gospels of Mark and Luke: "Who do people say I am?" In Caesarea Philippi, Jesus took a survey and found out that men say he is a variety of people, or even "one of the prophets", but no one answered that they thought he was the Messiah. We could only wish that John the Baptist or one of the apostles had revealed it to the people.

²⁵⁹ "The sensibility of our spirit man is to be cultivated through its reciprocal relationship with our physical man during physical life on earth. Therefore, man should be perfected and experience God's perfect love on earth in order for his spirit man to experience God's perfect love in the invisible substantial world after his physical death. Thus, the character and qualities of the spirit man are formed during our earthly life. The aggravation of evil in the

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

²² And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you." ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men."²⁶¹

The Cross and Self-Denial

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."²⁶² ²⁶ For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?²⁶³ ²⁷ For the Son of man is to

spirit of a fallen man is due to his sinful conduct during his earthly life. Likewise, the betterment of a fallen spirit man comes about only through the redemption of his sin during his physical life on earth. This was the reason Jesus came to earth in the flesh to save sinful mankind. Thus, we must lead a good life on earth. Jesus gave the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter (Matt. 16:19), and said that whatever is bound on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 18:18), because the primary purpose of the providence of salvation must first be realized on the earth." (DP 62-3)

"Hebrews 11:39-40 says, "All these [saints of the Old Testament Age], though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised [permission to enter the Kingdom of Heaven] since God had foreseen something better [the Kingdom of Heaven] for us [earthly men], that apart from us [earthly men] they [spirit men] should not be made perfect [citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven]". This Biblical passage demonstrates the principle that, apart from the cooperation of earthly men, the spirit men of the spirit world cannot perfect themselves. Also, in Matthew 18:18, it is said, "Whatever you [earthly saints] bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.", clarifying that whatever is bound by spirit men shall not be loosed unless the earthly saints loose it. Thus spirit men can be resurrected only by descending to the earthly saints and cooperating with them. Therefore, as we read in Matthew 16:19, Jesus gave the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter, who represented the earthly saints, so that he might open the gate of Heaven here on earth." (DP 184)

²⁶⁰ "Jesus who came as the son of God and the Lord of Glory, originally should not have walked the path of tribulation (I Cor. 2:8). However, John the Baptist, who was born with the mission of preparing his way (John 1:23, Luke 1:76), failed to accomplish his mission. So Jesus, himself, had to suffer the tribulations which John the Baptist had to suffer in preparing the way for Jesus. Thus, Jesus, though being the Messiah, succeeded John the Baptist in starting the course of the providence of restoration. Therefore, he told his disciples not to make public the fact that he was the Messiah (Matt. 16:20)." (DP 348)

²⁶¹ "Satan is constantly accusing men before God, just as he did with Job (Job 1:9-11), in order to put them into hell. However, even Satan cannot perform this kind of evil action without having an object with whom to form a reciprocal base for give and take action. The objects of Satan are the evil spirits in the spirit world. The objects of these evil spirits are the spirit men of evil men on earth. The objects of the spirits of evil men on earth are their own physical bodies. Therefore, Satanic power, conveyed by evil spirits, results in the evil physical activities of earthly men. Therefore, we read in Luke 22:3 that Satan entered into Judas Iscariot. Again in Matthew 16:23, Jesus called Peter "Satan"." (DP 84-5)

"In the Bible we find many verses written as if Jesus' suffering through crucifixion were inevitable. One of the representative examples of this is that Jesus reproached Peter, who tried to dissuade him when he prophesied about his suffering on the cross, and said, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matt. 16:23). Otherwise, how could Jesus reproach Peter so bitterly? In fact, Jesus was then resolved to take the cross as the condition of indemnity to pay for the accomplishment of even the spiritual salvation of man when he found that he was unable to accomplish the providence of both spiritual and physical salvation (Luke 9:31). In that situation, Peter's dissuading him from taking the way of the cross was a hindrance to the providence of spiritual salvation through the cross; so, he reproached Peter." (DP 151)

²⁶² Saving your life would mean keeping the lifeblood of Satan; losing it would mean death to the self that was inherited from Satan and being re-born into life, love, and lineage of God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

²⁶³ "According to the principle of creation, we know that the world of creation is the substantial development of man's dual essentialities. Accordingly, man's spirit is the substantial encapsulation of the entire visible world. Therefore, a man having fulfilled the purpose of creation is the substantial encapsulation of the entire cosmos. This is the reason man is called a microcosm. Man has the value corresponding to that of the whole macrocosm, as it is said (Matt. 16:26), "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?" (DP 207)

come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done.²⁶⁴ Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”²⁶⁵

“That is how precious life is. We must understand the way to set indemnity conditions and revive our precious life.” (CSG 1159)

²⁶⁴ “God predetermines the will to be absolute; so, when a person chosen for the will fails to accomplish it, God must go on to fulfill it, even by setting up another person in place of the one who failed.

For example, when God's will to fulfill the purpose of creation centering on Adam failed, He sent Jesus as the second Adam, attempting to fulfill the will centering on him, because His predestination of the will was absolute. When this will was again a failure, due to the disbelief of the people (cf. Part I, Ch. 4, Sec. 1, 2 -- 141), Jesus promised the Lord would come and fulfill the will without fail (Matt. 16:27).” (DP 196)

“Jesus came as the True Father, the position which Adam had not fulfilled. This is why the Bible says that Jesus is the second Adam (I Cor. 15:45); that he is the "Everlasting Father" (Is. 9:6); and that God would send Elijah the prophet again and have him turn the hearts of the children (fallen men) to their father (Jesus), so that they might also become his children (Mal. 4:6). Again it is written that Jesus is to come again with his angels in the glory of his Father (Matt. 16:27).” (DP 216)

“Jesus clearly spoke about the Second Advent (Matt. 16:27). But he said that no one knew of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven (Matt. 24:36). Therefore, up to the present, it has been thought reckless even to try to know when, where and how the Lord would come.” (DP 497)

²⁶⁵ “Because of such words, not only the disciples of Jesus, but also numerous Christians have since believed that the Lord might come in their lifetime, and always were haunted by a feeling of tension about their days being the Last Days. This is because they did not know the fundamental meaning of the Last Days. By examining the present fulfillment of the three great blessings to man, which God set up as the purpose of His providence of restoration, we can prove that today is the Last Days.” (DP 119)

“In this way, Jesus spoke as if the Lord were coming very soon; this encouraged his disciples so much that even under the oppression of the Roman Empire and the persecution by Judaism, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Act 2:1-4), and then they could found the early Christian Church, all from the ardent hope for the Second Advent, which they thought was imminent. It was also to stimulate and encourage the saints who were under severe tribulations that he told them he would come on the clouds from heaven in the power and glory of God with the trumpet call of the archangel, and fulfill all things like a flash of lightning.” (DP 516)

“Jesus said to those listening to him, ‘Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom.’ (Matt. 16:28). However, in order to know the truth of the matter, Christians must know the fundamental providence of God.” (DP 517)

Matthew 17

The Transfiguration

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Eli'jah, talking with him.²⁶⁶ ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah."⁵ He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear."⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead."²⁶⁷ ¹⁰ And the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Eli'jah must come?"²⁶⁸ ¹¹ He replied, "Eli'jah does come, and he is to restore all things;²⁶⁹ ¹² but I tell you that Eli'jah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of man will suffer at their hands."¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ "On the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses, who had died nearly 1600 years before, and Elijah, who had died nearly 900 years before, appeared to Jesus (Matt. 17:3). These were actually the spirits of Moses and Elijah. Only man, who consists of both flesh and spirit, which enable him to dominate the visible and invisible worlds, can rule the two worlds." (DP 59)

"Then, what is the meaning of "rising from the tombs"? This is a record of spirit men of the Old Testament Age being resurrected and appearing on earth in spirit (cf. Part I, Ch. 5, Sec. II, 3 -- 181), just as the spirits of Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:3). Then what does "tomb" signify? The realm of form spirits, which was the dwelling of the Old Testament Age saints, was a darker place than Paradise, which was opened by Jesus. This form-spirit realm was called a "tomb". The spirit men of the Old Testament Age staying in this region of the spirit world appeared to the earthly saints." (DP 116-7)

"From the record that Elijah appeared, as a spirit, before Jesus and his disciples (Matt. 17:3), it is clear that Elijah is still in the spirit world. Meanwhile, Jesus called John the Baptist "Elijah". Jesus said this because Elijah descended to John the Baptist and cooperated with him to achieve the mission he left unaccomplished on earth, thus attaining the purpose of resurrection through second coming. So the physical body of John the Baptist substituted for that of Elijah, when seen from the standpoint of their mission." (DP 182-3)

²⁶⁷ Jesus concluded that he would need to go the way of the cross, due to the disbelief of the people, after discussing his mission with Moses and Elijah (the summation of the Old Testament – the law and the prophets). This was the major turning point in Jesus' ministry. He turned from the gospel of establishing the kingdom on the earth, to the way of suffering. He was determined unto death to save people from the control of Satan and bring them back to the sovereignty of God.

²⁶⁸ "However, there had been as yet no rumor of Elijah's coming as Malachi had prophesied, when Jesus appeared, claiming to be the Messiah; thus, great confusion was caused in Jerusalem. So, the disciples were faced with an argument against Jesus' being the Messiah (Matt. 17:10): if Jesus were he, then where was Elijah who was to come before him? (Mal. 4:5). The disciples, at a loss as to how to reply, asked Jesus directly; and he answered that John the Baptist was none other than Elijah himself, for whom they had waited (Matt. 11:14, 17:13). Jesus' disciples, who believed him to be the Messiah, could believe without question Jesus' testimony that John the Baptist was Elijah. But how could the Jewish people accept it, when they did not know who Jesus was? Jesus himself, knowing that they would not easily believe his testimony, said, "If you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come." (Matt. 11:14). The Jewish people could not believe Jesus' testimony that John the Baptist was Elijah because it came after John himself clearly denied the fact (John 1:21)." (DP 154)

²⁶⁹ "To save a sick man is to restore him to the status he had before the sickness occurred. To save a drowning man is to restore him to the state he was in before he began to drown. Likewise, to save a man fallen in sin means to restore him to the original sinless position which he enjoyed in the beginning. Therefore, God's "providence of salvation" is the "providence of restoration" (Acts 1:6, Matt. 17:11)." (DP 104)

²⁷⁰ "It was foretold by the prophet Malachi that Elijah would come again (Mal. 4:5), and it was Jesus' testimony that John the Baptist was none other than the second advent of Elijah (Matt. 11:14, 17:13). However, John the Baptist himself, as well as the Jewish people in general, did not know the fact that John was the second advent of Elijah

Jesus Cures a Boy with a Demon

¹⁴ And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and kneeling before him said,
¹⁵ “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. ¹⁶ And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.” ¹⁸ And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. ¹⁹ Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” ²⁰ He said to them, “Because of your little faith.” ²¹ For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”

Jesus Again Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²² As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, ²³ and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed.²⁷²

Jesus and the Temple Tax

²⁴ When they came to Caper'na-um, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, “Does not your teacher pay the tax?” ²⁵ He said, “Yes.”²⁷³ And when he came home, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?” ²⁶ And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free.”²⁷⁴ ²⁷ However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.”

(John 1:21). John's doubt of Jesus (Matt. 11:3), followed by the disbelief of the people, finally compelled Jesus to take the way of the cross.” (DP 153)

“The prophet who came as Elijah to succeed and accomplish the mission of separating from Satan, which had been left unfulfilled by Elijah, and to make straight the way of the Messiah (John 1:23), was John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14, 17:10-13).” (DP 344)

²⁷¹ The disciples had faith enough to try to remove the demon but not enough to accomplish the removal. Their faith was “little.” They needed a pure absolute faith for the Spirit of God to flow through them.

²⁷² The disciples of Jesus were shocked when he told them he would be arrested and executed. They understood Jesus better than anyone and knew that he was working to establish the kingdom of God on the earth. They knew he planned to live and accomplish all God intended. (See footnote 261 in Chapter 16.)

²⁷³ Peter said that Jesus pays the tax. This was not a Roman tax but a Jewish tax on all male Jews between the ages of twenty and fifty to support the temple and its services. (Ex. 30:13)

²⁷⁴ Just as royal sons are exempt from a civil tax, the Son of God should be exempt from the temple tax. However, so as not to offend, Jesus paid the tax albeit in a miraculous way. For believers, it is ironic that Jesus, the living temple of God, paid a tax to the outdated symbolic temple where the people continued to believe God was present. The temple priests, the leaders, and all of the people should have come to Jesus giving everything they had for the temple of God. It is very sadly ironic that Jesus paid the temple tax after he realized, in discussion with Moses and Elijah, that the prepared people rejected him – the temple of God – and he would give his life for them.

In paying the temple tax, Jesus must have been thinking of his disciples. He now knew that he would be put to death. He would not benefit from paying the tax but he left the tradition for them to remain within the guidance of the law while being saved by grace beyond the law. Perhaps he hoped they could survive the persecution and not be condemned to death in his footsteps.

Matthew 18

True Greatness

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”²⁷⁵ ² And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, ³ and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.²⁷⁶

Temptations to Sin

⁵ “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

⁷ “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the man by whom the temptation comes! ⁸ And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.²⁷⁷

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

¹⁰ “See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹² What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Reproving Another Who Sins

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ The disciples had been talking (Mark 9) and Jesus knew their thoughts (Luke 9) but Matthew has them ask a blunt question. They already knew who was less than the least in the kingdom of heaven because Jesus stated that about John the Baptist when John’s followers confronted Jesus with his doubts. (Mt. 11:11)

²⁷⁶ This is consistent with Mt. 5:3; the beginning point of Jesus’ plan of restoration is humility. Those who realize they are poor in spirit are humbly aware of the truth about their relationship with God. They do not exhibit the false pride inherited from Lucifer. Children are not concerned with social status and they play with all of God’s other children.

“The Bible says that you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless you are like a little child. What does this mean? Children only have their mother and father. When they eat, when they sleep, and at all times, they are with their mother and father. Even when they grow up and get married, they cannot forget about their father and mother. They can never forget these words.

God is our Father. God the Father is the vertical father and the True Father is the horizontal father.” (CSG 223)

²⁷⁷ These words are similar to the verses of Mt. 5:29-30. Jesus anticipates opposition on every level beginning within the bodies of believers. Since God is not sovereign, sovereignty must be taken back from the devil. A believer is precious to God. If one harms a newly born disciple, serious spiritual consequences follow which are described in physical terms to be better understood by the people who are spiritually dead.

²⁷⁸ “The aggravation of evil in the spirit of a fallen man is due to his sinful conduct during his earthly life. Likewise, the betterment of a fallen spirit man comes about only through the redemption of his sin during his physical life on earth. This was the reason Jesus came to earth in the flesh to save sinful mankind. Thus, we must lead a good life on earth. Jesus gave the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter (Matt. 16:19), and said that whatever is bound on

¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”²⁷⁹

Forgiveness

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.”²⁸⁰

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²³ “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents;²⁸¹ ²⁵ and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; ³³ and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his

earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 18:18), because the primary purpose of the providence of salvation must first be realized on the earth.” (DP 63)

“Also, in Matthew 18:18, it is said, “Whatever you [earthly saints] bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”, clarifying that whatever is bound by spirit men shall not be loosed unless the earthly saints loose it. Thus spirit men can be resurrected only by descending to the earthly saints and cooperating with them. Therefore, as we read in Matthew 16:19, Jesus gave the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter, who represented the earthly saints, so that he might open the gate of Heaven here on earth.” (DP 184)

²⁷⁹ This is the corollary of Mt. 5:23-24.

²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

God’s presence was promised for ten males (the minimum prerequisite for a synagogue) but also for even two or three gathered to study the Torah. (TGM 455) Jesus extends this opportunity to all Christians.

²⁸⁰ If Christianity were to be summed up in one word, that word would be “forgiveness.” Forgiveness does not vitiate the law or the disciplinary training required to truly follow Jesus. (The consensus in rabbinic discussion was forgiveness for a repeated sin three times but not the fourth.)

It allows us to realize that God is forgiving and, as urged by Jesus repeatedly, we should also be forgiving and come to see God in ourselves and others. This is emphasized in the “Lord’s prayer” (Mt. 6:12) “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”; where we can only ask forgiveness for our sins to the extent that we forgive those who offend us.

²⁸¹ This is a huge amount of money: 10,000 is the largest single number expressed in Greek; and the talent the largest unit of currency. Silver talents were worth 6,000 denarii. One denarius was a usual day’s wage for a laborer. Gold talents were worth 180,000 denarii. For consistency, using a parallel construction, silver is chosen in translation since the slave went to a fellow slave and demanded the denarii owed him. Thus, for comparison, the lord forgave the slave 60 million denarii (10,000 X 6,000); but the slave would not forgive a fellow slave 100 denarii. Jesus, using hyperbole that may be laughable to his audience, shows that what is held against one’s brother is inconsequential compared to the amount of debt Christ forgives by the grace of God. Delivering the slave to jail means that the slave, who refused the grace of God, remains under Satan’s dominion.

debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”²⁸²

²⁸² This parable efficiently sums up the essence of Christianity, forgiveness, in easily understood terms as explained in the previous footnote.

Matthew 19

Teaching about Divorce

Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan; ² and large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?”²⁸³ ⁴ He answered, “Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female,²⁸⁴ ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh.²⁸⁵ What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” ⁷ They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?”²⁸⁶ ⁸ He said to them, “For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.²⁸⁷ ⁹ And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery.”²⁸⁸

²⁸³ Like Jesus’ plan in the Beatitudes and his theme of re-creation, relations between people (discussed in the last chapter) lead to a discussion of marriage in the beginning of this chapter. Forgiveness, capped by the Sixth Beatitude of seeing God in others, is followed by holy marriage as Peacemakers in the Seventh Beatitude. However, in the Beatitudes, Jesus establishes the norms of his kingdom while here a theological dispute is the basis for the question and answer. What may or may not be allowed in different ages overlooks the fact that divorce is evidence of sin. It is separation from the plan of Creator God. The Pharisees’ attitude is wrong. They should be judged because they hold themselves out as leaders.

²⁸⁴ When questioned by the Pharisees, Jesus responds with a reference to creation. See the following passage from Galatians in support of the form of Jesus’ argument.

The Promise to Abraham

¹⁵ To give a human example, brethren: no one annuls even a man’s will, or adds to it, once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many; but, referring to one, “And to your offspring,” which is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance is by the law, it is no longer by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

The Purpose of the Law

¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made; (Gal. 3:15-19a)

Jesus referred to creation. It is not reasonable for the Pharisees to argue further from the law. If marriage is grounded in the way God created, it cannot be reduced or replaced by man’s rules. Jesus’ answer, although an obvious winner, does not preclude their next question.

²⁸⁵ Man and woman are destined to become one flesh (Gen. 2:24) with God (spiritually) and each other (physically) to carry on the progeny of the Creator. No man should divide them from God or each other.

²⁸⁶ In an age when divorce was rampant among the Pharisees, they were referring to Deut. 24, interpreting it to mean that a man could divorce for any reason.

“When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,” (Deut. 24:1)

Josephus, for example, was a Pharisee and was divorced. In his view, divorce was permitted.

Jesus was opening a new path. He was confronting the devil directly. Lucifer had seduced Eve into divorcing God and His earthly temple, Adam. The Pharisees, leaders of the descendants of the devil, were looking to see if Jesus would take a position opposed to Moses whom the people highly respected and honored.

²⁸⁷ Jesus was not drawn into condemning Moses but agreed with Moses’ direction for the people in that era. Jesus was explaining how it was in the beginning and how providential history has unfolded – returning to the fullness of relationship with Creator God, step by step.

²⁸⁸ Jesus gives one exception to the ban on divorce. The exception allows divorce for sexual sin – for doing what Eve did in the Garden of Eden. She was unchaste with Lucifer who seduced her away from God’s word and her betrothed, Adam. Jesus knew how much their action hurt God (Gen. 6:6) and resulted in the great and prolonged

¹⁰ The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.”²⁸⁹ ¹¹ But he said to them, “Not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. ¹² For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.²⁹⁰ He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.”²⁹¹

Jesus Blesses Little Children

¹³ Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people; ¹⁴ but Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”²⁹² ¹⁵ And he laid his hands on them and went away.

The Rich Young Man

¹⁶ And behold, one came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?” ¹⁷ And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸ He said to him, “Which?” And Jesus said, “You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁰ The young man said to him, “All these I have observed; what do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect,²⁹³ go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²² When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.²⁹⁴

suffering of God and all descendants. (No exception is granted in Mark and Luke’s telling of this encounter. See Mark chapter 10 and Luke chapter 16.)

Holy marriage is nothing less than the design of Creator God, unifying the polarity of His substantial image. Jesus’ response applies mutually to both husbands and wives blessed in the marriage covenant; even though the question asked by the Pharisees involves only wives.

²⁸⁹ The disciples, in their dismay, display their fallen nature and that of their society. They are so concerned about how marriage with only the one exception will be seen by the people, that they offer only an unworkable solution. Their proposal either ends the human race (no marriage, no children) or allows total sexual freedom (reproduction without holy marriage). They argue to retain the prerogative of sexual freedom granted by the devil. They don’t understand why Jesus is so strict about monogamous marriage in his kingdom.

²⁹⁰ On the path of restoration thru indemnity, which is willingness to suffer for the sake of God, some have foregone conjugal relations as an offering. They loved God first and foremost and sacrificed intimacy with a spouse. The premature union of Adam and Eve grieved God and gave birth to hell on earth. It is Jesus’ guidance to hold God’s sovereignty and kingdom first in your heart. “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Mt. 6:33)

Jesus’ reply to his disciples’ unreasonable remarks, if taken briefly and crudely, was that they could cut “it” off if they couldn’t control their sexual organ.

Neither Jesus nor the apostles held out celibacy to be a holier state than marriage. Nevertheless, [Eusebius](#) reported that Origen, one of the most influential figures in early Christian asceticism, followed [Matthew 19:12](#) literally – castrating himself.

The Book of Revelation foretells that the Returning Christ will take a bride (restored Eve) to complete the ideal of God, recorded in Genesis, which has never changed. This is the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).

²⁹¹ Not everybody is prepared to accept Jesus’ guidance. He is saying that if they are prepared to take the shortest road back to relationship with God, they should receive what he says. This is how it is in his kingdom on earth. It could also be seen as encouragement for witnessing, to the extent that his guidance is to tell everyone and those ready to understand it will receive it.

²⁹² Abortinists do the work of the devil. They kill the most innocent of all humans. They do not let the little children come to Jesus. They hinder them; they kill them. They discard their little bodies as trash.

²⁹³ Instead of “perfect”, “teleios” is better translated as “complete” or “mature.”

²⁹⁴ For a young man to be rich, in those days especially, he would need to be part of the “establishment.” The establishment’s purpose is to maintain its status quo. The young man reported to Jesus that he was keeping all the rules and loved his neighbor. Jesus then told him to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor. This

²³ And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”²⁹⁵ ²⁵ When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”²⁹⁶ ²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”²⁹⁷ ²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, “Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?”²⁹⁸ ²⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.”²⁹⁹ ³⁰ But many that are first will be last, and the last first.³⁰⁰

means he should separate himself from all things connected to the devil. Sadly, he could not deny the benefits received from the devil and follow Jesus.

²⁹⁵ There have been many comments on the meaning of “the eye of a needle.” This is not one of them. A low slit in a fortification wall such that a camel would need to be dragged through lying down was built in the middle ages, not at Jesus’ time. It appears Jesus meant a sewing needle. It is very difficult to give up what has been given to us by Satan. God’s grace allows us to do the impossible.

²⁹⁶ The rich were considered blessed. The disciples, apparently none of them rich, wondered who could embrace such a hard way. It’s not easy to give up what the devil provides. Jesus, who loves us, evaluates us such that he concludes we should simply die and start over. This is the essence of rebirth – getting out of Satan’s lineage and into God’s lineage.

²⁹⁷ The spirit is greater than the physical. The physical body takes direction from the spirit. Our earthly life is temporary and intended to be the environment wherein we grow our spirit which is eternal. What is impossible to be obtained by our effort can be possible by way of the grace of God given to us.

²⁹⁸ Peter seeks recognition for himself and the other apostles. He wants assurance that their sacrifice has been noted.

²⁹⁹ As expressed in the plan of the Beatitudes at Mt. 5:12, great is the reward for those who help Jesus in the brief moment that he is present in the physical body on the earth. He came to build the kingdom of God, returning God’s sovereignty on earth.

³⁰⁰ Those who have authority or possessions in this world, received by going along with Satan’s ways, are first now; but they may be the last to be free to find God. The young man could not give up his possessions to follow Jesus. He could not understand the parable of Jesus (Mt. 13:44) that the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure found in a field by a man who joyfully sells all that he has to buy that field. He had not yet experienced the overwhelming joy of finding Jesus.

Matthew 20

The Laborers in the Vineyard

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; ⁴ and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. ⁵ Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ⁶ And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ ⁸ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ ⁹ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’³⁰¹ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last.”³⁰²

A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

¹⁷ And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, ¹⁸ “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, ¹⁹ and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified,³⁰³ and he will be raised on the third day.”³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ “God created the angelic world (Gen. 1:26) and put Lucifer (signified by "Day Star, son of Dawn", Is. 14:12) in the position of archangel. Lucifer was in a position to monopolize God's love as the mediator between God and the angelic world, just as Abraham was the channel for God's blessing to the Israelites. However, God, after creating men as His children, loved them much more than He loved Lucifer, who had been created as His servant. In fact, Lucifer received the same amount of God's love as he had before the creation of man, but when he saw that God loved Adam and Eve more, he felt that God loved him less than before. This situation is similar to the biblical story of the laborers who had begun working early in the morning; seeing that those who were hired late and worked little received the same wage as they, they felt underpaid, although they received the promised amount (Matt. 20:1-15). Lucifer, who felt a decrease of love, tried to tempt Eve to submit to him in order that he might enjoy the same position in human society that he did in the angelic world. This was the motivation of the spiritual fall.” (DP 78)

The footnote above from Divine Principle is a revelation from God. For thousands of years, theologians and others have been pondering how evil could originate from good. God is all good. God shared His spirit with people to the full extent that He could love and be loved freely by them. He made the way for each of us to mature and give birth to children and share in such a vulnerable position that can rejoice in the excitement of love. Divine Principle explains the meaning and deep significance of this parable.

³⁰² Like the rich young man in the previous chapter, the “haves” and “have nots” will swap places. Those who are the entitled of this world must start over from nothing; experiencing re-birth into the sovereignty of God thru Jesus. Thus, we can understand that status in the kingdom (God’s world) is often inversely proportional to status in this world (Satan’s world).

³⁰³ Scourging was the beating given those condemned to death in the Roman judicial system. Crucifixion was a cruel form of punishment reserved for the worst crimes. Cicero called it cruel and disgusting. Josephus called it the worst of deaths.

³⁰⁴ Following the Transfiguration, where Jesus conferred with Moses and Elijah (representing the entire OT, the preparation of the “chosen people”), he understood that John the Baptist had failed and he would go the way of the cross. He then told this to the apostles. Building the kingdom on earth had been his gospel but due to the disbelief of the people, Jesus would give his life to spiritually save them, and us.

The Request of the Mother of James and John

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zeb'edee came up to him, with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹ And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."³⁰⁵ ²² But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." ²³ He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."³⁰⁶ ²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.³⁰⁷ ²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave;³⁰⁸ ²⁸ even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."³⁰⁹

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁹ And as they went out of Jericho,³¹⁰ a great crowd followed him. ³⁰ And behold, two blind men sitting by the roadside, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³¹ The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent; but they cried out the more, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"³¹¹ ³² And Jesus stopped and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³ They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." ³⁴ And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they received their sight and followed him.³¹²

³⁰⁵ Jesus was always preaching to establish the kingdom of God on the earth. James and John's mother believed in him to the extent that she sought VIP status for her sons. Nevertheless, her request concerning her sons' status seems quite inappropriate since Jesus had just mentioned his death to the apostles. She and they did not understand Jesus' message about his death. The people closest to Jesus were shocked at the change in plans – from building the kingdom to being arrested, convicted, and executed.

³⁰⁶ Positions in heaven are granted by God; Jesus is His presence on earth.

³⁰⁷ Naturally, they would be indignant.

³⁰⁸ Being a servant for God is better than being king of the world without Him. Jesus explains that leadership in the kingdom is sacrificial.

³⁰⁹ Jesus told his apostles the very sad reality caused by the disbelief of the people.

³¹⁰ Jericho, the home of Jesus' ancestor Rahab, was one day's journey (seventeen miles) from Jerusalem. The road to Jerusalem passed through Bethany.

³¹¹ Persistence in prayer expresses a heart that is truly engaged. Their use of the term "Son of David" indicates their faith in Jesus' messianic potential.

³¹² Jesus touched them. They "followed him", but where were they when he was on trial?

Matthew 21

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

And when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Beth'phage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If any one says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and he will send them immediately." ⁴ This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying, ⁵ "Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass."³¹³

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the ass and the colt, and put their garments on them, and he sat thereon. ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him shouted, "Hosanna³¹⁴ to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹ And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee."³¹⁵

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

¹² And Jesus entered the temple of God and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers³¹⁶ and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹³ He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer';³¹⁷ but you make it a den of robbers."³¹⁸

³¹³ The first part is from Is. 62:11; the second part from Zech. 9:9. The verse in Zechariah speaks of one donkey but Matthew seems to speak of two. The verse was understood by the Jews to refer to the Messiah.

³¹⁴ "Hosanna!" The Hebrew expression that was a cry for help became a call for blessing and an acclamation stressing the kingly role of Messiah. (EBC, 439)

Jesus was not perceived by the people as the Suffering Servant (Is. 53) but rather in his preaching and miracles as the glorious King Messiah (Is. 9, 11, 60). They, like the disciples, did not grasp the reality of his rejection, imminent conviction, and execution by their leaders.

Luke reports Jesus weeping over the city of Jerusalem as he approaches it.

And when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it, ⁴² saying, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. ⁴³ For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast up a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and dash you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you; because you did not know the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:41-44)

³¹⁵ Many pilgrims from Galilee and other places came to Jerusalem for the feast. Jerusalem was crowded during the festivals. It appears that Jesus stayed at Bethany throughout the week, probably at the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.

³¹⁶ Today the "money-changers" would be the establishment bankers. Jesus was waging war on Satan and those empowered by him. In Israelite society at that time, the religious and civic leaders were the same. If they weren't with Jesus, they were against him. Governments are archangelic, dominating families instead of serving them, like Lucifer in the Garden.

³¹⁷ Is. 56:7. Jesus often refers to Scripture. "The money-changers converted the standard Greek and Roman currency into temple currency, in which the half-shekel temple tax had to be paid, (cf. 17:24-27). (For some of the customs and regulations, cf. M Shekalim; LTJM, 1:367-74.) But letting these things go on at the temple site transformed a place of solemn worship into a market where the hum of trade mingled with the bleating and cooing of animals and birds. Moreover, especially on the great feasts, opportunities for extortion abounded. Jesus drove the lot out." (EBC 441)

³¹⁸ Jer. 7:11 warns against wickedness that dishonors the temple.

¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.³¹⁹ ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant; ¹⁶ and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast brought perfect praise?’”³²⁰

¹⁷ And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.³²¹

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

¹⁸ In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹ And seeing a fig tree³²² by the wayside he went to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once. ²⁰ When the disciples saw it they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?” ²¹ And Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and never doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will be done.

²² And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

²³ And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you a question; and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘From men,’ we are afraid of the multitude; for all hold that John was a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; and he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he repented and went.

³⁰ And he went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go.

³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.³²³ ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him.

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

³³ “Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. ³⁴ When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; ³⁵ and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

³¹⁹ Jesus heals them showing that “one greater than the temple is here” (Mt. 12:6). He no longer told those healed to not tell anyone.

³²⁰ Psalm 8:2

³²¹ Jesus apparently went back and forth to Bethany during the week.

³²² The town by the name of Bethphage means “house of figs.”

³²³ “Jesus declared that the tax-collectors and harlots would enter the Kingdom of Heaven ahead of the Jewish leaders. (Matt. 21:31).” (DP 155)

³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. ³⁷ Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' ³⁹ And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ^{324 40} When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹ They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" ^{325 43} Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it." ³²⁶

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ But when they tried to arrest him, they feared the multitudes, because they held him to be a prophet.

³²⁴ Jesus taught that God created the world and gave it to people (tenants). His departure indicates that the people were responsible for the creation. Satan, who sought to control the world instead of God, used the tenants to mistreat the prophets of God. Finally, they killed the son. Clearly, they should have repented and received the Son of God.

This parable gives new understanding to why Stephen was the first Christian killed by Satan's people. In Acts 6, the twelve apostles decided they should preach, and chose a fundraising team of seven. Stephen was the team leader to gather the physical material for building the kingdom of God on the earth. Satan, who thought he had kept the earth for himself by killing Jesus, hated Stephen who was in charge of building the earthly kingdom; and killed him.

³²⁵ Psalm 118:22-23.

³²⁶ "God showed us that His predestination concerning the fulfillment of the will, centering on a certain individual or nation of His elect, is not absolute, but relative. That is to say, though God may have set up a certain individual or a nation to fulfill the purpose of His providence of restoration, He would set up a new mission-bearer to succeed in the work, if the former should fail to carry out his portion of responsibility. Jesus had chosen John the Baptist as his main disciple, but when he failed to carry out his responsibility, Jesus chose Peter in his place. In another case, he chose Judas Iscariot as one of his 12 disciples, but when Judas failed to fulfill his responsibility, Jesus chose Matthias in his place (Acts 1:26). In a like manner, God chose the Jewish people to fulfill the purpose of His providence of restoration, but when they failed to carry out their responsibility, He shifted the mission to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46, Matt. 21:33-43)." (DP 370-1)

"The nation of God's elect consisted originally of the descendants of Abraham, who established the family-level foundation to receive the Messiah. Therefore, the central nation, having fulfilled God's providence in the providential age of restoration, was Israel, the chosen nation. Therefore, the history of the Israelite nation becomes the historical material of the providential history of restoration in this age." (DP 406)

"On another occasion (Matt. 21:33-43), Jesus clearly indicated, in his parable of the vineyard, that the Lord would not come again to the nation that would persecute and kill him, but take the Kingdom of God (the heritage) from them and give it to the nation producing the fruits of it (at the time of the Second Advent). In this parable, Jesus meant God, by the owner of the vineyard; God's heritage, by the vineyard; the chosen nation of Israel in charge of God's heritage, by the tenants; His prophets, by the servants; the Lord, by the owner's son; and a certain other nation which will be able to fulfill God's will in receiving and serving the Lord of the Second Advent, by another nation producing the fruits." (DP 517)

"As Jesus said in Matthew 21:33 in a parable, the Jewish people, by delivering Jesus to the cross, fell to the position of the tenants who killed the son of the vineyard owner. Which nation, then, shall be the one that will succeed to God's heritage, taken away from the Jewish people, and produce the fruits of it? The Bible teaches us that the nation is in the East." (DP 519)

Matthew 22

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son,³²⁷ ³and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.’ ⁵But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ⁷The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.’ ¹⁰And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.³²⁸

¹¹“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; ¹²and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.”³²⁹

The Question about Paying Taxes

³²⁷ “The king’s son is clearly the Messiah, not uncommonly represented as a bridegroom (Mt. 9:15; Mt. 22; Mt. 25; Mk. 2; Lk. 5; John 3:29; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 21; Rev. 19).” (EBC 456)

God planned for Adam and Eve to be blessed in holy marriage. They were to be fruitful, multiply, and have dominion (Gen. 1:28). God never changed the plan. Man and woman, made in the image of God, are intended to come together with God and bring the Spirit of God into the world of creation. Adam and Eve, despite being cautioned by God, died a spiritual death. They lost their connection to Creator God when they chose to love Lucifer and make him the god of their world. Sin and hell on earth followed.

“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” ([1 Corinthians 15:22](#))

As this parable tells, God sent his servants the prophets to invite people to the marriage feast.

God longed for the marriage of His Son – Adam, Jesus, the Returning Christ. God’s plan was and is to populate the earth with His children, born through his Son and Daughter. Jesus, with the heart of his Heavenly Father, looked to restore his bride in the position of Eve. If Jesus had been received, there would be no need for Christ to return in order to accomplish the same in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

“And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’” (Rev. 19:9).

Jesus was killed before he could perpetuate his lineage on earth. Satan used the leaders of the people, and the Roman authorities to kill Jesus. It was the greatest tragedy in human history. Jesus died to overcome our sin instead of living to teach us how to be free from sin. He gives spiritual victory freely to all believers who await his return to bring God’s sovereignty to earth.

³²⁸ “God may not reveal the message of the Second Advent to the Christians of today, who are blindly keeping the conventional attitude of faith, but rather to the laymen, to the heathens who are thought of as gentiles, or to men without any religious faith, but who are very conscientious. Those who accepted the Gospel of Jesus were not the leading class of Judaism, who called themselves God’s elect, but people of lower classes, and gentiles. Similarly, at the Second Advent, the laymen or the non-Christians may be the first to accept the Lord’s words, rather than the leading class of Christianity who consider themselves the “chosen people”. That is why Jesus in lamentation said that those who would enjoy the marriage feast which he would prepare may not be those invited, but those called in at random from the street (Matt. 22:8-10).” (DP 534)

³²⁹ All who read this believe they are chosen because they have been called. “Calling” is done by one; “chosen” is mutual. It includes the call and the response; the parties choose each other. Some scholars state that first-century Palestinian weddings provided appropriate attire for the guests. This is to be noted but regardless, the man was not prepared. His lack of response is indicative of guilt; he knew he was in the wrong. Jesus gently calls him “friend” (the invitation was broad, and he came) but reality is real. We have come to the messianic wedding banquet but are we prepared for the Returning Christ? If we get into the banquet, will we be able to believe, receive, and stay there with Christ?

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and took counsel how to entangle him in his talk. ¹⁶ And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Hero'di-ans,³³⁰ saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true, and teach the way of God truthfully, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"³³¹ ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the money for the tax." And they brought him a coin. ²⁰ And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" ²¹ They said, "Caesar's."³³² Then he said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." ²² When they heard it, they marveled; and they left him and went away.³³³

The Question about the Resurrection

²³ The same day Sad'ducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, ²⁴ saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother must marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.'³³⁴ ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ So too the second and third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ After them all, the woman died. ²⁸ In the resurrection, therefore, to which of the seven will she be wife? For they all had her."

²⁹ But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage,³³⁵ but are like angels in heaven. ³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living."³³⁶ ³³ And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

³³⁰ "Unlike most of the Jews, the Herodians openly supported the reigning family of Herod and its pro-Roman sympathies." (EBC, Carson, p.458)

³³¹ Theological and legal questions were intertwined for the theocratic first-century Jews. The structure of the question demands a "Yes" or "No" answer. Either answer would offend Romans or Jews.

³³² Jews were to honor emperors but were expected to avoid images. The emperor-controlled silver and gold coins at the imperial mint. The silver denarius of Tiberius included a portrait of his head and the other side bore an image of a woman personified as the goddess Roma. The Jews were required to use this coin to pay the Roman tax. Thus, the question presented to Jesus concerning the tax. Local Jewish coins were of lesser value (copper) and did not include the emperor's image. (TGM 524-5)

It is interesting that, given the images on the Roman coin, the world of satanic control seemed to have parental authority.

³³³ Jesus' answer was in accord with Jewish teaching that men should pay taxes since leaders owe their position to God (Prov. 8:15; Dan. 2:21, 37-38). Jesus' response is more than witty. His answer lays the foundation for the proper relationship of his people to government. The kingdom he would build, starting with the Jews, must give to whatever Caesar that which is due while keeping its obligations to God. The later persecution of Christians for refusal to worship the emperor is a matter of what was due God, not the emperor.

³³⁴ Their use of the respected "teacher" may be insincere but they ask Jesus a question concerning the Mosaic levirate law (Deut. 25:5-6). (If a man dies his younger brother is to marry the widow and raise children who would be heirs of the deceased brother.) The younger brother of the husband of Tamar (the woman of great faith in the lineage of Jesus) was hesitant because in marrying the widow, his children would be considered children of his deceased brother (Gen. 38:9). This displeased God who was working through that lineage; and he was killed (Gen. 38:10). Tamar risked her life to carry on the lineage that would produce Jesus (Gen. 38).

³³⁵ Christians await the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9). This is the first time God joins his Son and Daughter in holy marriage. All people will be invited to join Christ in eternal marriage. The parable of the wedding banquet in this chapter urges people to prepare. First, they must overcome the spiritual death inherited through the false lineage of the devil. They come alive by engrafting into the lineage of the living God. Then, they will be blessed by God to join in eternal marriage at the Returning Christ's marriage supper.

³³⁶ God's blessings do not stop when His people die physically. He addresses Moses hundreds of years after the patriarchs mentioned have died. He is the eternal God of the covenant. This is often stressed by the Jewish people

The Greatest Commandment

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.”³³⁷

The Question about David’s Son

⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, ⁴² saying, “What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” ⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, ⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet’?”

⁴⁵ If David thus calls him Lord, how is he his son?” ⁴⁶ And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did any one dare to ask him any more questions.³³⁸

whenever their patriarchs are referenced. God’s people live forever. Those who doubt this believe the lie of their father the devil.

³³⁷ Love God, love neighbor; do not kill him. They did not dispute this summary but violated the essence of the law by killing Jesus. Those who agreed with the execution of Jesus are as liable as those who nailed him to the cross. They failed to love God or love their neighbor. They were prepared to receive the Messiah. They were not predestined by God to kill His Son. Jesus taught them this clearly. He was not a liar. He spoke the truth of God but they accused him of lying like Satan.

³³⁸ Several verses from John, Chapter 8, record Jesus answering this question. He was the lineal son of David but he, unfallen Adam, was in the ideal design of God before the creation. “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8)

Jesus uses the self-identifying words of God in the gospel according to John.

God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I am has sent me to you.’” (Ex. 3:14)

John 8:33

They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will be made free’?”

John 8:37

I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me, because my word finds no place in you.

John 8:39-40

[Jesus and Abraham] They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God; this is not what Abraham did.

John 8:52-53

The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets; and you say, ‘If any one keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you claim to be?”

John 8:56-58 Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad.” The Jews then said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

Matthew 23

Jesus Denounces Scribes and Pharisees

Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; ³ so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. ⁴ They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. ⁵ They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶ and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷ and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men. ⁸ But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. ⁹ And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰ Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ. ¹¹ He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; ¹² whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

¹³“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in.³³⁹

¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

¹⁶“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If any one swears by the temple, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁷ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?³⁴⁰ ¹⁸ And you say, ‘If any one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁹ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰ So he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; ²¹ and he who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it; ²² and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

²³“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ²⁴ You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

²⁵“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! first cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

²⁷“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.

²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

²⁹“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰ saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹ Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up, then, the

³³⁹ The gates to the kingdom of heaven on earth were open. This is not talking about an unearthly kingdom because the Pharisees did not control that; they did not control God. They were following Satan, opposing the Will of God and Christ, shutting the gates. They were hypocrites because they were religious leaders who did not love God and Jesus. This is a very sad chapter full of woe – anguish, grief, sadness, despair, misery.

³⁴⁰ The substantial temple which is the body of Jesus wherein the Spirit of God dwells is greater than the symbolic temple honored by the Jewish people. The Spirit is greater than the laws that guided the people to come to the Spirit. (We are raised by truth but saved by love – the love of God from which we never want to part.)

measure of your fathers. ³³ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?³⁴¹ ³⁴ Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, ³⁵ that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechari'ah the son of Barachi'ah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.³⁴² ³⁶ Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation.³⁴³

The Lament over Jerusalem

³⁷ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!³⁴⁴ ³⁸ Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate.³⁴⁵ ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

³⁴¹ "In Matthew 3:7, John the Baptist reproached the faithless people, calling them a "brood of vipers" -- sons of Satan. Again, in Matthew 23:33 Jesus rebuked the Jews, saying, "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?"

From these Biblical references we can ascertain that there was an adulterous relationship between the angel and man, and this became the cause of the fall of man." (DP 73)

"We have previously mentioned that Lucifer, the fallen archangel, was called Satan. Man fell, becoming Satan's child, because he formed the four position foundation centered on Satan, thus becoming one body with him through their blood relationship. Therefore, Jesus said that fallen men are of their father the devil (John 8:44), and on many occasions called them the brood of vipers, that is, sons of Satan (Matt. 3:7, 12:34, 23:33). " (DP 83)

"In this manner, God intended to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, with His children of direct descent. However, as discussed in the "Fall of Man", all men, due to the first human ancestor's blood relationship with the archangel Lucifer, have become the children of the devil, inheriting Satan's blood lineage (Matt. 3:7, 23:33, John 8:44). " (DP 366)

³⁴² The Zechariah Jesus refers to was an Old Testament prophet who prophesied in the days of Haggai and who wrote the book of Zechariah. (Ezra 5:1) However, there are two Zechariahs.

The son of Jehoiada lived in the 9th century BC. The son of Barachaiiah lived in the 6th century BC. The first Zechariah was killed on temple grounds. Jesus says that the second Zechariah was killed between the sanctuary (holy of holies) and the altar. Scholars debate whether Jesus was mistaken or whether the second was coincidentally also killed or whether Jesus referred to another Zechariah.

The book written down by Zechariah was (along with Haggai and Malachi) one of the last books in the OT chronologically. As such, his murder would have been one of the last murders of Biblical figures. So, Abel and the second Zechariah make nice rhetorical 'bookends' that way as well.

³⁴³ "Jesus performed many miracles and signs in the hope that he might restore the people's belief. However, they condemned him as being possessed by Beelzebub when they saw the amazing works which Jesus did. Seeing the painful situation, Jesus said, "...even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." (John 10:38). On another occasion, he even cursed them in great indignation, prophesying that they would suffer (Matt. 23:13-36). Jesus himself, through his words and deeds, tried to make them believe in him, because it was God's will for them to do so. If the Jewish people believed that he was the Messiah, as both God and Jesus wanted, could they have crucified him?" (DP 145)

³⁴⁴ "Jesus grieved over the treachery of the Jewish people; and finding none to appeal to, he wept over the city of Jerusalem and even cursed the city to be destroyed so utterly that not one stone would be left upon another, not to mention the Israelites, the chosen people, whom God had led in love and care for 2000 years. Jesus clearly pointed out their ignorance, saying, '...you did not know the time of your visitation.' (Luke 19:44).

Jesus lamented over the disbelief and stubbornness of the people, saying: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! (Matt. 23:37)'

Jesus reproached them for their ignorance which kept them from believing in him even though they read the Scriptures, which testified to him, and he said in great sorrow:

'You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.' (John 5:39-40) (DP 144)

Again, he said sorrowfully, 'I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me', and he went on to say, 'If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me.' (John 5:43-46). (DP 144)

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understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.' (John 10:38). On another occasion, he even cursed them in great indignation, prophesying that they would suffer (Matt. 23:13-36). Jesus himself, through his words and deeds, tried to make them believe in him, because it was God's will for them to do so. If the Jewish people believed that he was the Messiah, as both God and Jesus wanted, could they have crucified him?

From the above, we can see that Jesus' crucifixion was the result of the ignorance and disbelief of the Jewish people and was not God's predestination to fulfill the whole purpose of Jesus' coming as the Messiah. I Corinthians 2:8 says, 'None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.' This should be sufficient proof." (DP 144-5)

"The second miracle was that, upon God's command, Moses put his hand into his bosom and it became leprous. But, upon God's second command, he again put his hand into his bosom and it was healed (Ex. 4:6-7). This miracle symbolically showed us that Jesus would come in the future as the second Adam and, with the Holy Spirit as the deity of the second Eve, would perform the work of redemption. When his hand was first put into his bosom and it became leprous, this meant that the archangel first put Eve into his bosom and men fell into a position incapable of salvation. Again the fact that when he put his hand into his bosom the second time it was healed represented that Jesus as the father spirit of mankind would come and restore the Holy Spirit as the mother spirit of mankind; then, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings (Matt. 23:37), he would restore the whole of mankind completely by gathering them into his bosom and giving them rebirth." (DP 304)

³⁴⁵ The house that was forsaken and desolate was the temple.

"And he said to them, 'How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?'" (Lk. 2:49)

"The 'Desire of all nations' had indeed come to His temple when the Man of Nazareth taught and healed in the sacred courts. In the presence of Christ, and in this only, did the second temple exceed the first in glory. But Israel had put from her the proffered Gift of heaven. With the humble Teacher who had that day passed out from its golden gate, the glory had forever departed from the temple. Already were the Saviour's words fulfilled: 'Your house is left unto you desolate.'" (Mt. 23:38) (TGC 25)

After the temple of Jesus' body was destroyed, the temple was destroyed. Jacob's twelve sons gathered twelve stones for an altar to praise God. Jesus gathered twelve disciples to honor and serve Jesus, as the Temple. When his disciples failed and the betrayal of Judas caused the destruction of Jesus, the Temple, through crucifixion, he was raised from death in three days. (Taken from DP 336.)

Matthew 24

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. ² But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”³⁴⁶

Signs of the End of the Age

³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?” ⁴ And Jesus answered them, “Take heed that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.³⁴⁷ ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places:³⁴⁸ ⁸ all this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs.

Persecutions Foretold

³⁴⁶ Herod the Great had used both Roman wealth and Jewish treasure for the construction of the temple. Massive blocks of white marble were brought from Rome for this purpose. The disciples had called the buildings to the attention of their Master. Jesus is the substantial temple of God. The future of the temple and the nation of Israel depended upon how they treated Jesus.

“The Bible symbolized Christ as a white stone (Rev. 2:17) and also states that the Rock was Christ (I Cor. 10:4).” (DP 313)

“However, the stone became Satan's possession by Moses' striking the rock, which was the root of the tablets of stone. The stone in Satan's hand now truly was the rock and the tablets of stone which Moses had lost. Therefore, the stone, after all, symbolized Jesus himself, who was under Satan's temptation. This becomes even more apparent when we read about a stone symbolizing Christ (Rev. 2:17) and that ‘the Rock was Christ’ (I Cor. 10:4). Therefore, Jesus' answer to Satan's first temptation signified that even if he were then at the point of starvation, the bread for the physical body was not a question; and he himself had to triumph from the position of receiving Satan's temptation and become the food of God's Word that could save the spiritual bodies of all mankind.” (DP 351-2)

Jesus restored the stone when Satan confronted him with the three temptations.

“And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. ⁴ But he answered, ‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” (Mt. 4:3-4)

“Titus would willingly have put an end to the fearful scene, and thus have spared Jerusalem the full measure of her doom. He was filled with horror as he saw the bodies of the dead lying in heaps in the valleys. Like one entranced, he looked from the crest of Olivet upon the magnificent temple and gave command that not one stone of it be touched. Before attempting to gain possession of this stronghold, he made an earnest appeal to the Jewish leaders not to force him to defile the sacred place with blood. If they would come forth and fight in any other place, no Roman should violate the sanctity of the temple. Josephus himself, in a most eloquent appeal, entreated them to surrender, to save themselves, their city, and their place of worship. But his words were answered with bitter curses. Darts were hurled at him, their last human mediator, as he stood pleading with them. The Jews had rejected the entreaties of the Son of God, and now expostulation and entreaty only made them more determined to resist to the last. In vain were the efforts of Titus to save the temple; One greater than he had declared that not one stone was to be left upon another.” (TGC 33-34)

³⁴⁷ The Returning Christ must be the one who knows and understands Jesus better than anyone else. He also must be able to explain: how God designed the world, how Satan came into being, the mysteries of the Bible, the spiritual world, God's providence, and the spirit of the age. He should complete Jesus' plan of restoration/recreation. The Christ will be known by his fruits; not by simply proclaiming himself or being proclaimed. The key is to be humble because God's plan is most likely different from your expectations. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.” (Isaiah 55:8)

³⁴⁸ “Mankind is now at the point of intersection where the two sovereignties of good and evil are confronting each other. These two sovereignties, which started at the same point, have headed in opposite directions ever since, and have borne their own worldwide fruits respectively. People of this age fall into internal insecurity, terror and chaos due to the shallowness of their ideals and ideologies. Externally, they are afraid, as they face the threat of conflicts and struggles with terrifying weapons. In the Last Days many devastating phenomena will occur. As the Bible says: For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (Matt. 24:7)” (DP 134)

⁹“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because wickedness is multiplied, most men’s love will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom³⁴⁹ will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations;³⁵⁰ and then the end will come.

The Desolating Sacrilege

¹⁵“So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains;³⁵¹ ¹⁷ let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house; ¹⁸ and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. ¹⁹ And alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²² And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. ²³ Then if any one says to you, ‘Lo, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ Lo, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ So, if they say to you, ‘Lo, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out; if they say, ‘Lo, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man. ²⁸ Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.³⁵²

³⁴⁹ Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom. Pastor Sean Moon, Sanctuary Church of Newfoundland, PA, repeatedly preaches that Jesus’ gospel was the good news of the kingdom of God on the earth; not crucifixion, death, and resurrection which became the gospel after Jesus’ rejection. There are fifty-three references to the kingdom found in Matthew alone. See “the gospel of the kingdom” in Mt. 4:23; 9:35; and 24:14.

Jesus sought to establish the kingdom of God on the earth. God is sovereign.

³⁵⁰ The kingdom was given to Israel but the nation did not receive their King Jesus. The kingdom is a nation giving testimony to other nations. “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it.” (Mt. 21:43)

³⁵¹ “Christians did not perish in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign. ‘When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies,’ said Jesus, ‘then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out.’ Luke 21:20, 21.

After the Romans under Cestius had surrounded the city, they unexpectedly abandoned the siege when everything seemed favorable for an immediate attack. The besieged, despairing of successful resistance, were on the point of surrender, when the Roman general withdrew his forces without the least apparent reason. But God’s merciful providence was directing events for the good of His own people. The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was offered for all who would, to obey the Savior’s warning.

“Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army; and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city. At this time the country also had been cleared of enemies who might have endeavored to intercept them. At the time of the siege, the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and thus the Christians throughout the land were able to make their escape unmolested. Without delay they fled to a place of safety--the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond Jordan.

With great difficulty the Romans succeeded in making their retreat. The Jews were almost without loss, and with their spoils returned in triumph to Jerusalem. Yet this apparent success brought them only evil. It inspired them with that spirit of stubborn resistance to the Romans which speedily brought unutterable woe upon the doomed city.

Terrible were the calamities that fell upon Jerusalem when the siege was resumed by Titus.” (TGC 31-32)

³⁵² “Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.’ (Luke 17:37) Thus Jesus answered the Pharisees who asked him about the place of the Second Advent. We recall that a bird of prey alighted on the pigeon not cut in two on Abraham’s altar (Gen. 15:11). This indicates that Satan is always looking for an opportunity to take anything that is not sanctified. Therefore, this last answer of Jesus signifies that, just as the evil spirits will be gathered where there is a body of death, the Lord who is the source of life, will come where there is life. This means that the Lord will appear among the devout saints.” (DP 507-8)

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken;³⁵³ ³⁰ then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory;³⁵⁴ ³¹ and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

³² “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.³⁵⁵ ³³ So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.³⁵⁶ ³⁴ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

The Necessity for Watchfulness

³⁶ “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.³⁵⁷ ³⁷ As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. ³⁸ For as in

³⁵³ “Many Christians believe literally what is written in the Bible, in which it is stated that in the Last Days the heavens will be kindled and dissolved and the elements will melt with fire (II Peter 3:12); that the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven (Matt. 24:29); and that with the archangel's call and with the sound of the trumpet of God, the dead in Christ will rise first, and those who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (I Thess. 4:16-17).” (DP 99-100)

“Jesus was ultimately crucified, thus accomplishing only spiritual salvation. He is to attain the purpose of the providence of salvation both in spirit and body after the Second Advent, fulfilling the restoration of the Kingdom of God on earth. Naturally, the day of the Lord's Second Advent would also be the Last Days. This is why Jesus said, that, ‘As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man.’ (Luke 17:26), and also that there would be many natural calamities at the time of the Second Advent (Matt. 24:29).” (DP 113)

³⁵⁴ “We read in the Bible (Luke 17:25) that Jesus, anticipating what was going to happen at the Lord's Second Coming, said, ‘But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation’. If the Lord should come again, as the Bible literally says, on clouds from heaven, in the glory of God, with the trumpet call of the archangel (Matt. 24:30-32), would there be any man who would not serve and exalt the Lord coming in such a manner, no matter how sinful a generation this may be? Therefore, if the Lord should come on the clouds, it could never happen that he would suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

Why, then, did Jesus say that the Lord would become so miserable at the time of the Second Advent? The Jewish people of Jesus' day were looking forward to the day when Elijah would come again from heaven before the Messiah. Consequently, Jesus, who was seemingly insignificant, suddenly appeared as the Messiah, like a thief, when the Jewish people had not yet heard of the news of Elijah's coming. Therefore, they despised Jesus and treated him badly. Jesus, who knew he was in a such a situation, anticipated that if, at the Second Advent, the Lord is born as a man and appears like a thief to the Christians, who, waiting for the Messiah, would be looking at the sky alone, just as the Jews did at the coming of Jesus, the Son of man would again be condemned as a heretic and suffer many trials. Therefore, Jesus said that the Lord would be rejected by that generation. Accordingly, we must know that this Biblical verse would only be fulfilled when Christ would come again in the flesh, and never if he should come on the clouds.” (DP 502-3)

³⁵⁵ “However, we must know that the coming of such chaos is the sign of the coming of the world of a new order, just as it was written, ‘...as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. (Matt. 24:32).’” (DP 525)

³⁵⁶ “By examining the present fulfillment of the three great blessings to man, which God set up as the purpose of His providence of restoration, we can prove that today is the Last Days. This is the reason Jesus said: ‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.’” (Matt. 24:32-33)” (DP 119-20)

³⁵⁷ “But he [Jesus] said that no one knew of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven (Matt. 24:36). Therefore, up to the present, it has been thought reckless even to try to know when, where and how the Lord would come.

By examining the words of Jesus, ‘Only the Father knows.’ (Matt 24:36), and the verse, ‘Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.’ (Amos 3:7), we can understand that God, who

those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,³⁹ and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man.⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left.⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left.⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.⁴³ But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into.⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.³⁵⁸

The Faithful or the Unfaithful Slave

⁴⁵ “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time?⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing.⁴⁷ Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.⁴⁸ But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’⁴⁹ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken,⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know,^{359 51} and will punish him, and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

knows of the day and hour, will surely let His prophets know all the secrets concerning the Second Advent of the Lord before actualizing it.” (DP 497)

³⁵⁸ The focus for Christians should not be one of trying to determine the moment of return. The focus should be on what Christians are doing in his absence. We should not be trying to guess the time of return so we can increase our faith at that time. If we think like that, we are losing to the devil who opposes Christ. We must always be ready, otherwise, how can we expect to have the hearts to recognize him and understand him.

“For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” (1 Thess. 5:2)

Since Christ will return in darkness we must keep our eyes sensitive to the light. We must continually cherish the light of his word which is truth. The return is not determined by us; it may not happen as we expect. Let us keep faith, then we are ready for the Returning Christ at any time God chooses. Please come, Lord.

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20)

³⁵⁹ The master is the Returning Christ. Servants of Christ at his Second Coming may be found as unprepared as was the vast majority of the religious establishment at his first coming.

Matthew 25

The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.³⁶⁰ ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed,³⁶¹ they all slumbered and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷ Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise replied, ‘Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go

³⁶⁰ Matthew uses the same Greek word for maidens (“parthenos”) that he uses in describing the virgin birth. (See footnote 7.) Because they have not given their love to Lucifer’s lineage, they are spiritual virgins who are awaiting the Second Coming.

The Messiah as bridegroom is found in many wonderful Bible passages, beginning in Genesis with the failure of Adam and Eve to become bridegroom and bride of God. Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, and Jesus himself refer to the Messiah as bridegroom. Adam and Eve will be married to complete the Will of God, as it was in the beginning. This did not happen when Jesus was rejected but will happen at the Second Coming (Rev. 19:9).

(Is. 54:5-6) “For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. ⁶ For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God.”

In the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the Returning Christ (God’s Spirit in the flesh) is the husband; his wife is the bride of God. All are able to participate in the holy marriage of almighty God as bridegrooms (restored from the inherited archangel position to the Christ position) and brides of Christ.

(Is. 62:4-5) “You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. ⁵ For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”

(Hosea 2:19-20) “And I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord.”

(John 3:29) He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full.

(Mt. 9:15) And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

(Mark 2:19-20) And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

(2 Cor. 11:2) I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband.

(Rev. 19:7) Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

(Rev. 19:9) And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.”

(CSG, 198-9) “The Book of Revelation says that in the Last Days, the Lord will come to the earth to meet his bride. Do you know what the feast of the Lamb is? This refers to the day of the feast when, for the first time in history, one bridegroom and one bride become husband and wife centering on God’s love.

Through the Fall, instead of becoming good parents, our first ancestors became evil parents. For this reason, the original focus of parents designed by God, which our ancestors should have attained without falling – the standard of the true and good parents – has not appeared or been realized.

The Bible says: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” (Rev. 22:13) Due to the Fall, God could not fulfill His purpose at the time of creation. He will complete it as in the Book of Revelation. Then, as what kind of person did Jesus come? Adam fell, so Jesus came as a perfected Adam who could be united with God’s love without falling. This is why First Corinthians 15:45 teaches that “The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, became a life-giving spirit.” The Bible designates Jesus as the second Adam. Since the family planned by God cannot be found if the God-given true positions of the son, husband and wife, and parents are not established, they must appear on earth.

There are many religions on earth, but among them, only Christianity has the concept of following God’s four basic requirements: to become God’s child, to become one body with God, to meet as bride and bridegroom in accordance with God’s will, and to form a new family. Since Jesus came with this thinking, Christianity, centering on Jesus, inevitably became a global religion.” (CSG, 198-199)

³⁶¹ The plot turns on the bridegroom’s delay. All of the maidens had prepared to some extent. They were expecting the Christ’s return, they were waiting, and all had some oil in their lamps. Due to the delay, some of them realized they had not prepared enough.

rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast;³⁶² and the door was shut.¹¹ Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’¹² But he replied, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.³⁶³

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴“For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; ¹⁵ to one he gave five talents,³⁶⁴ to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ ²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ ²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken

³⁶² Preparedness is the overriding theme concerning the Returning Christ. Will he find people prepared? Jesus asks the question.

“And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Lk. 18:7-8)

³⁶³ “But he [Jesus] said that no one knew of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven (Matt. 24:36). Therefore, up to the present, it has been thought reckless even to try to know when, where and how the Lord would come. By examining the words of Jesus, “Only the Father knows.” (Matt 24:36), and the verse, “Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7), we can understand that God, who knows of the day and hour, will surely let His prophets know all the secrets concerning the Second Advent of the Lord before actualizing it.” (DP 497)

“Therefore, Jesus said that the Lord would come like a thief (Rev. 3:3), while, on another occasion, he said that, for those in the light, the Lord would not come as a thief (I. Thess. 5:4). It was true that Jesus came as thief to the chief priests and scribes, who were in darkness, but, to the home of John the Baptist, which was in light, God revealed Jesus’ birth beforehand. At the time of his birth He revealed the fact to the wise men of the east, Simon, Anna, and the shepherds. Again, Jesus warned the people, telling them to watch at all times, praying that they might have the strength to escape all those things that would take place, because the day of the Second Advent would come upon them suddenly like a snare; so, it is evident that He will reveal it beforehand to the saints who are in the light, so that they may prepare for the coming day of the Lord.

From the examples appearing in the course of the providence of restoration, we can see that God always did things after having revealed the facts to His prophets beforehand; for example: the judgment in Noah’s time, His destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Messiah’s coming. Therefore, it is evident that, at the Second Coming of the Lord, God will speak to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see so that they may be enlightened by the saints about what would take place, as He promised that in the Last Days He would pour out His Spirit (Acts 2:17).” (DP 498)

³⁶⁴ The “talent”, in modern terms, is taken to mean God-given skill or ability. In NT times it was an economic unit of exchange. Estimates of its value vary widely because it could be of gold, silver, or copper.

away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. ³⁶⁵

The Judgment of the Nations

³¹ “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. ³⁶⁶ ³⁴ Then the King ³⁶⁷ will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? ³⁸ And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? ³⁹ And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’ ³⁶⁸ ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ³⁶⁹ ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.’ ³⁷⁰ ⁴⁶ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

³⁶⁵ However, given the above footnote, the parable is equally applicable to a person’s skills or abilities. People are accountable for the use of their gifts. Christians should witness to others. If you have received the most precious thing from God, you must share it with others. Otherwise, you may think you are loving God but you are not loving your neighbor. The more you have received, the more you must share. Treasure means truth from God. Shared with others, it will multiply; unshared, it will be taken away as the Christian loses faith.

³⁶⁶ The sheep (nations that follow the Lord) will be separated from the goats (nations who remain independent, not following the Lord).

³⁶⁷ This is a change from “Son of man” to “King”. It’s a natural change because the parable involves a kingdom.

³⁶⁸ If you love God, you will love your neighbor because you will feel the impulse to love as God loves. Consistent with the essential great commandments (Mt. 22:36-40), it is also consistent with the teaching in the Beatitudes that individuals of Godly character establish right relationships, are appreciative, understanding, and merciful to others, and ultimately see God in others.

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” (Mt. 5:23-24)

³⁶⁹ “In the Bible, evil spirit men are called “angels” of the devil (Matt. 25:41).” (DP 85)

“Third, let us study in what manner evil spirit men can be resurrected through their second coming. In Matthew 25:41, we read about the cursed, who are liable to the eternal fire prepared for the “devil and his angels”. The “angels” of the devil means the evil spirit men working under the control of the devil. The spiritual creatures commonly called “ghosts”, whose real nature has not been known, are none other than such evil spirit men. These evil spirits also gain the benefit of the age by descending on earthly men.

However, not all the works of evil spirit men result in their receiving the benefit of resurrection through second coming. Their works must first all result in establishing a condition of indemnity for God’s intention to eradicate the sins of earthly men by punishment, before the evil spirit men can obtain the benefit of resurrection through second coming.” (DP 185)

³⁷⁰ This constitutes a further explication of Matthew 22:37-40, and clearly explains why the “second is like it (the first commandment)”.

And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.” (Mt. 22)

Matthew 26

The Plot to Kill Jesus

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, ²“You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified.” ³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Ca’iaphas, ⁴ and took counsel together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. ⁵ But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be a tumult among the people.”

The Anointing at Bethany

⁶ Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷ a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head, as he sat at table. ⁸ But when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? ⁹ For this ointment might have been sold for a large sum, and given to the poor.”³⁷¹ ¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.”³⁷² ¹² In pouring this ointment on my body she has done it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”³⁷³

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

The first establishes relationship with God (faith) and the second extends that to our brothers and sisters (substantiating faith). Only then, on those foundations, can descendants of the enemy of God approach and understand God’s Son. In the pattern of the first fallen family: Abel established his faith in God (his offering was received) and should love his brother Cain (substantiating his faith). This did not happen. Genesis reports that Cain killed Abel.

Did the Jewish people accept Jesus’ love? After thousands of years of God’s providence to prepare them to love from their Cain-type position, did they love Abel (Jesus)?

³⁷¹ John’s gospel explains the event in more detail. He reports that Judas, the treasurer for the group, was the one who complained and also mentions that Judas was dishonest. This incident provides the apparent “last straw” that moved Judas to betray Jesus. The Gospel of John, as the parenthetical found there notes, is written after the betrayal and the gospel may not have included any good will for Judas.

“Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said, ⁵ ‘Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?’ ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it.” (Jn. 12:3-6)

³⁷² It was all-important to serve and attend Jesus during the brief period when he was on the earth building God’s kingdom on the earth. There would be no need for a Second Coming if the chosen people had done this. Jesus would have defeated God’s enemy and established God’s sovereignty on the earth. Such was the conclusion of his plan of re-creation detailed in the Beatitudes. See especially Mt. 5:11-12, explaining that those who suffer persecution for “my” [Jesus’] sake would not only be rewarded but their reward would be “great.”

³⁷³ “On one occasion, a woman, weeping, began to wet Jesus’ feet with her tears, wipe them with her hair, kiss them and anoint them with a flask of precious ointment (Luke 7:37-38). Such conduct would not be acceptable even in today’s society and how much more unacceptable it would have been within the strict ethics of Jewish society, in which they could stone an adulterous woman to death. Nevertheless, Jesus not only accepted it, but reproached his disciples, who had rebuked the woman; in fact, he also praised her (Luke 7:44-50, Matt. 26:7-13).

Moreover, Jesus placed himself on the same level as God (John 14:9) and said that no one could enter the Kingdom of Heaven except through him (John 14:6). He even said that people should love him more than their parents, brothers, husband or wife and their children (Matt. 10:37, Luke 14:26).

Because of the attitude which Jesus’ words and actions seemed to convey, the Jewish leaders derided him and accused him of being Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons (Matt. 12:24). From all this we can gather that Jesus was not accepted by the Jews of that time.” (DP 155-6)

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.³⁷⁴

The Passover with the Disciples

¹⁷ Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the passover?” ¹⁸ He said, “Go into the city to a certain one, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at your house with my disciples.’” ¹⁹ And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the passover.

²⁰ When it was evening, he sat at table with the twelve disciples; ²¹ and as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” ²² And they were very sorrowful, and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” ²³ He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me, will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”³⁷⁵ ²⁵ Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Is it I, Master?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

³⁷⁴ Judas’ precise motivation is unknown but assumed to be money. Surely his motives were mixed and included all manner of expectations that were disappointed by Jesus.

³⁷⁵ Christian theologians, scholars, and lay people puzzle over Judas’ betrayal. Many agree with the following quote that Judas’ action was both i) a predestined part of the salvific plan, and ii) damned him to hell forever.

“Instead divine sovereignty and human responsibility are both involved in Judas’s treason, the one effecting salvation and bringing redemption history to its fulfillment, the other answering the promptings of an evil heart. The one results in salvation from sin for Messiah’s people (1:21), the other in personal and eternal ruin (cf. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty*, pp.130-32).” (EBC 534)

This cannot be true. God and Satan do not work together. If it were true, evil would benefit God; while doing the Will of God would allow Satan to claim a person’s eternal soul. Light and darkness cannot occupy the same space together. God is good. He would not use Judas and damn him.

Adam & Eve received love from God but returned love to Lucifer. They followed his word instead of God’s. God had warned them in advance because of their immaturity but they became dead to Him. God worked His providence for thousands of years, making the way open for people to return home to His love manifest in Jesus. Finally, Jesus, the Son of God for whom a people were chosen and prepared; arrived.

Judas’ act was not in line with the Will of God who had guided providential history. It was an action that the enemy of God wanted. Satan wanted to kill the Messiah and keep the world for himself. (See Jesus’ teaching about this in the parable of the wicked tenants who schemed to kill the son; Matthew 21, Mark 12, Luke 20.) God wanted the people, who were chosen by Him, to receive and honor His Son. Satan wanted to kill him. Jesus preached the gospel of God’s Kingdom; God’s sovereignty. Satan wanted to keep his sovereignty as the god of this world.

“In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God.” (2 Cor. 4:4)

“Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve;” (Luke 22:3)

Jesus’ words concerning Judas in Matthew 26:24: “It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” are akin to the grief of God when Adam & Eve fell. The saddest verse in the Bible is found in Genesis 6:6: “And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.” The grief of God is echoed in these words of Jesus about Judas.

Many Christians believe, especially given the first part of the verse, that Jesus’ crucifixion was predestined. That is not true. Prophecy is not predestination. God Himself reveals that He can change His mind based on the actions of the people.

“Then the word of the Lord came to me: ⁶ O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? says the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷ If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸ and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it. ⁹ And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, ¹⁰ and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will repent of the good which I had intended to do to it.” (Jer. 18:5-10)

The Institution of the Lord's Supper

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you;²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.²⁹ I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Peter's Denial Foretold

³⁰ And when they had sung a hymn,³⁷⁶ they went out to the Mount of Olives.³¹ Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'³⁷⁷³² But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."³³ Peter declared to him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away."³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows,

There is dual prophecy concerning the coming Messiah in the OT: Isaiah 53, suffering servant if rejected; Isaiah 9, 11, and 60, Lord of glory if received. Jesus is going the way written in the event he should be rejected. It is noteworthy that the prophecy allows no middle ground, i.e., for the Messiah to be rejected and go live comfortably in another country. The Messiah would be serious unto death to do God's Will.

God blessed Adam & Eve but also warned them that they would die if they rejected Him. The people God created had the freedom to choose to love God. The people God prepared to receive His Son had the freedom to choose to love Jesus. God did not change His plan. God guided providential history for thousands of years to establish the foundation for Jesus to build His Kingdom. If God wanted Jesus killed, which any people could do without preparation, it would be cruel to allow human suffering for the thousands of years before Jesus.

Some say the lord of glory prophecies were meant for the Second Coming of Christ. However, Jesus taught that all was to be fulfilled in his lifetime: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John;¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.¹⁵ He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Mt. 11:13-15)

When Jesus realized the people would not accept him, he wept (Mt. 23:37; Lk. 13:24; Lk. 19:41-42) and prayed (Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22). He spoke privately to his disciples about the Second Coming that had become necessary to accomplish all of God's Will on earth.

Also, God would never allow Satan to determine the ransom, i.e., determine how much God should pay to him. Jesus gave his life freely, as he gives grace. God was not indebted to Satan. He did not comply with Satan's demands. He cast out Satan. Jesus was true to God. It was the chosen people who determined the fate of Jesus.

Jesus loved the people and even forgave those who killed him: "And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' And they cast lots to divide his garments." (Lk. 23:34) As Jesus reported to his Father, the people killing him did not realize that they were killing the only begotten son of their Father. Why did they need forgiveness? They needed forgiveness because they were unknowingly doing Satan's work. If they were doing the Will of God, they would not need to be forgiven. It is not a sin to do what God directs. It is a sin to oppose God's desire. Sin requires forgiveness.

When Jesus was on his way to the crucifixion, he remained concerned that people do God's will: "But Jesus turning to them said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'" (Lk. 23:28) He grieved deeply that God's Will, instead of being done as he taught, was being delayed until the Second Coming. The providence of God expected acceptance but Jesus did not abandon the people when they rejected him.

Further, Abraham, having failed to offer an acceptable sacrifice, came to the point of offering his son Isaac. But, the God of the people God chose did not desire human sacrifice.

Judas' action, the penultimate expression of the people's rejection, was the work of the devil; not of God.

³⁷⁶ "The hymn normally sung was the last part of the *Hallel* (Pss 114-18 or 115-18). It was sung antiphonally: Jesus as the leader would sing the lines, and his followers would respond with 'Hallelujah!' Parts of it must have been deeply moving to the disciples when after the Resurrection they remembered that Jesus sang words pledging that he would keep his vows (Ps 116:12-13), ultimately triumph despite rejection (Ps 118), and call all nations to praise Yahweh and his covenant love (Ps 117)." (Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words*, pp. 255-62) (EBC 539)

³⁷⁷ Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7. Zechariah is written after the return of the exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem. The people asked Zechariah when the Messiah would come but he turns the question on them. He asks if they are ready to become the kind of people to participate in God's Kingdom. The book ends with the hope and promise that God's Kingdom will only come when God's people are faithful. When Jesus came, did he find faith on earth?

Like Zechariah's concern in preparing the people for Jesus, Jesus asks the Christians on behalf of the Returning Christ: "I tell you, he will vindicate them (Christians who pray, "who cry to Him day and night") speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Lk. 18:8)

"On earth" because Jesus, Adam without the sin of the fall (Rom. 5; 1 Cor. 15), worked to establish God's sovereignty on the earth as God planned from the beginning. Jesus taught us to work and pray for the same (Mt. 6:10).

you will deny me three times.”³⁵ Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And so said all the disciples.³⁷⁸

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsem’ane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go yonder and pray.”³⁷ And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zeb’edee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.”³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”³⁷⁹⁴⁰ And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour?”⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”³⁸⁰⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done.”⁴³ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?”³⁸¹ Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.³⁸²⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him.”⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Hail, Master!” And he kissed him.⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Friend, why are you here?” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear.⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place,”³⁸³

³⁷⁸ The apostles, the people closest to Jesus who knew him best, did not imagine he would be crucified. Jesus preached the gospel of kingdom building; they believed him. He did not preach of his death and resurrection. They were shocked at his arrest and execution.

³⁷⁹ “If Jesus’ crucifixion had originally been God’s predestination, how could he have prayed even three times that the cup of death might pass from him? (Matt. 26:39). In fact, he thus prayed desperately because he knew too well that the history of affliction would be prolonged until the time of the Second Advent if the disbelief of the people should forbid the realization of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, which God had endeavored to establish.” (DP 145)

³⁸⁰ The battle between the physical and spiritual is constant, as Christians who were spiritually dead struggle to come back to life. (See also Mk. 14:38.) It is included in Paul’s letter to the Romans - “but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members.” (Rom. 7:23)

³⁸¹ Jesus’ words that they would face temptation that very night should have motivated them to pray desperately.

³⁸² “When Moses had struck the rock twice, God predicted that Moses would not be able to enter the land of Canaan (Num. 20:12). Moses then prayed to God to let him enter Canaan (Deut. 3:25), but he finally died with the promised land in his sight. After his death, he was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, but no man knows the place of his burial to this day (Deut. 34:6). This foreshadowed that later, Jesus also might die on the cross if the Jewish people fell into faithlessness. Though he might pray with ardor that God would let the cup of death pass from him, that he might fulfill the worldwide restoration into Canaan, he would finally die without realizing this will, and the whereabouts of his body would be unknown.” (DP 331)

³⁸³ Some have argued this means that Jesus calls for pacifism. However, Jesus tells Peter to put the sword “back in its place,” not throw it away. Also, in Luke chapter 22, Jesus encouraged his followers to be armed; presumably for self-defense. Christians must guard themselves because their bodies truly are the temples of God.

Most likely, given the heightened sensitivity to keep the peace during the feasts, some Roman soldiers came along with the temple police. John’s gospel reports their presence.

for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”³⁸⁴ ⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”³⁸⁵ Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.

Jesus before the High Priest

⁵⁷ Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Ca’iaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. ⁵⁸ But Peter followed him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. ⁵⁹ Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰ but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹ and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.’”³⁸⁶ ⁶² And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” ⁶³ But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes, and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” ⁶⁷ Then they spat in his face, and struck him; and some slapped him,³⁸⁷ ⁶⁸ saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”³⁸⁸

“So Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.” (John 18:3)

“So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him.” (John 18:12)

Because of the soldiers, Pilate may have heard of the plot and shared it with his wife. This could have caused the dream she reported in Mt. 27:19.

³⁸⁴ The rejection of the people cannot be reversed by force or magic. Procuring love by magical means could only result in a false love. Adam & Eve were not prevented from falling; the chosen people were not prevented from rejecting Jesus. The scriptures, as pointed out previously, had prophesied the potential outcomes for both – acceptance or rejection of the Messiah.

³⁸⁵ See previous footnote. Jesus worked, healed, pleaded, used scripture, wept, and prayed for acceptance. After his death and resurrection, Christians could only assume that it was the only outcome predestined by God.

³⁸⁶ Apparently, these two witnesses were among the Jews present when Jesus drove the money-changers out of the temple (John 2:19). Judaism was strict about the need for witnesses.

“On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses he that is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. ⁷The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from the midst of you.” (Deut. 17:6-7) Also see Deut. 19:15.

The requirement of two witnesses remained standard judicial procedure in early Christianity.

“This is the third time I am coming to you. Any charge must be sustained by the evidence of two or three witnesses.” (2 Cor. 13:1-2)

“Never admit any charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.” (1 Tim. 5:19)

Jesus also used the law in this regard to testify to himself.

“In your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true; ¹⁸I bear witness to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me.” (John 8:17-18)

How did the Father testify to Jesus? God testified to the Chosen People thru their Holy Scripture.

³⁸⁷ Either the Sanhedrin or their servants were spitting on Jesus and hitting him.

³⁸⁸ The Sanhedrin police derided him for his false messianic pretensions. Later, the Roman soldiers would mock him for pretending to be a king. The gospel of Luke confirms this story with the addition that Jesus was

Peter's Denial of Jesus

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a maid came up to him, and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." ⁷¹ And when he went out to the porch, another maid saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷² And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." ⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the cock crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

blindfolded. (Lk. 22:64) (See also, Mark 14:65 where they "cover his face.") This additional fact explains how Jesus could be questioned regarding who hit him.

Matthew 27

Jesus Brought before Pilate

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death;² and they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor.³⁸⁹

The Suicide of Judas

³ When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders,⁴ saying, “I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.”⁵ And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself.³⁹⁰ ⁶ But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.”³⁹¹ ⁷ So they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in.⁸ Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.⁹ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel,¹⁰ and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me.”

Pilate Questions Jesus

¹¹ Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.”¹² But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer.¹³ Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?”¹⁴ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor wondered greatly.

Barabbas or Jesus?

¹⁵ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted.¹⁶ And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barab’bas.¹⁷ So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Barab’bas or Jesus who is called Christ?”¹⁸ For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.¹⁹ Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream.”²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barab’bas and destroy Jesus.²¹ The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barab’bas.”²² Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”

³⁸⁹ Jewish and Roman authorities were involved in the trials of Jesus; one trial Jewish and one trial Roman. John blames the Romans more while the synoptic gospels blame the Jews. For the Jewish trial, the issue was blasphemy; for the Roman trial the issue was less about being a messiah and more about being a competitor of Caesar. Matthew blames both Jews and Romans.

³⁹⁰ Judas’ betrayal was the will of the devil; not the will of God. Consequently, Judas killed himself. Such is the destructive way of the devil. Jesus would’ve forgiven him as he forgave his executioners but Judas was used by, and controlled by, Satan who took him to hell.

³⁹¹ This shows clearly that Judas’ action was not anticipated by the tradition of the chosen people. The chief priests were willing to pay out the blood money for Jesus’ capture (certainly from the temple treasury) but were too pious to accept the return of the same for the temple treasury. (It’s not what goes into the treasury that defiles a chief priest . . .)

They all said, “Let him be crucified.”²³ And he said, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified.”³⁹²

Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified

²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.”²⁵ And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”³⁹³

²⁶ Then he released for them Barab’bas,³⁹⁴ and having scourged Jesus,³⁹⁵ delivered him to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him.²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him,²⁹ and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”³⁹⁶ ³⁰ And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head.³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

³² As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyre’ne, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross.³⁹⁷ ³³ And when they came to a place called Gol’gotha (which means the place of a skull),³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.³⁹⁸ ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots;³⁶ then they sat down and kept watch over him there.³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus the King of the Jews.”³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads⁴⁰ and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying,⁴² “He saved others; he cannot save

³⁹² Matthew is saying that the Jews as a whole wanted him executed.

³⁹³ Matthew has Pilate wash his hands of the execution of Jesus while the Jews call curses down upon themselves.

³⁹⁴ Barabbas’ name is interesting. “Bar Abba” means “son of the father.” He is mentioned in all four gospels. He was a rebel. (Since all authority at that time derived from the devil, including Rome, it could be said that he was taking the “Cain-type” way to freedom; Jesus was in the position of Abel. This construct may have allowed for the seemingly impossible – that is, for Barabbas to sacrifice himself instead of Jesus. Was this God’s last desperate attempt to keep Jesus alive on the earth?) The two crucified with Jesus must’ve been more than thieves to be crucified which was reserved for the most serious of crimes. They were, most likely, companions of Barabbas. (Josephus describes all revolutionaries as “bandits.”)

³⁹⁵ Among the Jews, scourging was limited to forty lashes (Deut. 25:3; see also 2 Cor. 11:24). Flogging by Roman soldiers could be especially brutal when compared to a synagogue flogging. The severity could reduce flesh to pulp, open up the body to the bones, and expose entrails. Roman flogging sometimes ended in death. It also was used to weaken prisoners before crucifixion. (EBC 571-2)

³⁹⁶ The soldiers had stripped him, put one of their red cloaks on him, crowned him with thorns, put a make-believe royal scepter in Jesus’ hand, and knelt before him in a mocking gesture as if he were a king. They scornfully pretended he was Caesar.

³⁹⁷ Christians often view Simon with sympathy and thankfulness. However, his was not a voluntary act; he had no choice. Roman soldiers forced him to carry the cross for Jesus. In Mt. 5:41, Jesus referred to the Roman practice of ordering civilians to carry the luggage of military personnel. Jesus’ disciples had abandoned him; a stranger carried the cross.

³⁹⁸ Jesus refused the alcoholic drink that would dull his senses. The soldiers may have made it extra bitter as a prank but this could still be consumed to dull the excruciating pain.

himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, la'ma sabach-tha'ni?" that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"³⁹⁹ ⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "This man is calling Eli'jah." ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Eli'jah will come to save him." ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split;⁴⁰⁰ ⁵² the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,⁴⁰¹ ⁵³ and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into

³⁹⁹ "Jesus has been interceding for us before God even in the spirit world after his resurrection (Rom. 8:34), just as he did on earth. If Jesus is God Himself, how could he intercede for us before Himself? Moreover, we see that Jesus also called upon "God" or "Father" for help, which is good evidence that he is not God Himself (Matt. 27:46, John 17:1). If Jesus was God Himself, how could God have been tempted by Satan, and finally crucified by the evil force? Furthermore, when we find that Jesus said on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" it becomes clear that Jesus is not God Himself." (DP 212)

"The first Adam rebelled against God, thus compelling his descendants to fall into the bosom of Satan. Jesus, who came as the second Adam, therefore had to serve and honor God from the position of being abandoned by Him, in order to be able to restore mankind from the bosom of Satan to that of God. Herein lies the complex reason that God has to forsake Jesus when he was crucified (Matt. 27:46). Seen from this angle, even a nation's criminal law is a method of setting up the condition of indemnity to maintain the nation's security and order by imposing punishment on the criminals." (DP 226)

"God showed us that the greater the mission of the person, the more bitter the trial facing him. Since Adam turned against God in faithlessness, Jesus, who came as the second Adam, in order to fulfill the purpose of the providence of restoration, had to restore through indemnity the position before the fall by showing good faith, from the position where he is abandoned by God in place of Adam. Therefore, Jesus had to go through Satan's temptations in the wilderness, and had to suffer on the cross, completely abandoned by God (Matt. 27:46)." (DP 371)

"Matthew and Mark record the last prayer of Jesus as: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Matt. 27:46) Certainly this is not the prayer of a Messiah who has victoriously fulfilled his mission. This is rather the heart-rending cry of the one who undertook the mission of greatest promise, but who now is dying like a criminal, deserted by all, even by God." (DP&A 66)

⁴⁰⁰ "The tabernacle consisted of the "holy place" and the "most holy place" (holy of holies). The latter was the place where only the chief priest entered once a year to offer sacrifices. In it was the ark, and it was supposed to be the place of God's presence. Thus, the most holy place symbolized the spirit of Jesus. The holy place was the place where they entered ordinarily, and this symbolized Jesus' body. Consequently, it can also be said that the most holy place symbolized the invisible substantial world, while the holy place symbolized the visible substantial world. When Jesus was crucified, the curtain between the holy place and the most holy place was torn in two, from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51), meaning that by the completion of the providence of spiritual salvation through Jesus' crucifixion, the way to communicate between the spirit man and the physical man, and between heaven and earth, opened up." (DP 314)

⁴⁰¹ "If we are to accept as literal all the prophecies contained in the Bible, we must be convinced of the possibility that, at the Second Advent of the Lord, the physical bodies of all the saints that were buried and decomposed will come back to their original state of life once more in the flesh (I Thess. 4:16, Matt. 27:52). Since this prophecy is from God, men of faith must accept it. However, this prophecy cannot satisfy the intellect of modern men; our faith has, after all, fallen into great chaos. Therefore, it is a matter of paramount importance to elucidate the true nature of this problem." (DP 165)

"On the other hand, Matthew 27:52 states that, upon the crucifixion of Jesus, the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. This does not mean that their physical bodies, which had already decomposed in the earth, were raised. This is merely a record of the fact that the spirit men of the Old Testament Age, who had stayed in the spirit world as form spirits, descended in order to enter the life-spirit stage by cooperating with the saints on earth, who were in a position to benefit by the ransom of the cross. If the saints of the Old Testament Age had literally been raised from the tombs, they would surely have given witness to Jesus as the Messiah. Then, would not the people have believed that Jesus, who was testified to by the saints

the holy city and appeared to many.^{402 54} When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

⁵⁵ There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; ⁵⁶ among whom were Mary Mag’dalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zeb’edee.

The Burial of Jesus

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathe’a, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.^{403 59} And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. ⁶¹ Mary Mag’dalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.⁴⁰⁴

The Guard at the Tomb

⁶² Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, “Sir, we remember how that imposter said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ ⁶⁴ Therefore order the sepulchre to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.”^{405 66} So they went and made the sepulchre secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

raised from the tombs, was the Messiah? Their activities would have been recorded in the Bible. But we have no such record in the Bible, other than the fact that they were raised from the tombs. From this, we may understand that these were spirit men who could be seen for a brief interval, only by those whose spiritual eyes were opened.

Compared to Paradise, which people could enter through the ransom by the cross of Jesus, the region where the spirit men of the Old Testament Age were staying was darker and full of misery; thus, it was called a "tomb." (DP 183)

⁴⁰² “This does not mean that their flesh literally rose from corruption. If the saints of the Old Testament Age living in the spirit world had literally risen and, coming out of the tombs, had gone into the city and appeared to many people, they would surely have testified to the Jewish people about Jesus, because they knew that Jesus was the Messiah. If this had happened, even though Jesus had already been crucified, then no one could have failed to believe in Jesus. If the saints of the Old Testament Age had thus been raised from the tombs, again assuming their flesh, their deeds should have been recorded in the Bible. However, there are no such records in the Bible.” (DP 116)

⁴⁰³ Joseph of Arimathe’a, one of the few rich followers, was a remarkably courageous man. His name is recorded in all four gospels because he risked his wealth and status to stand with the condemned Jesus. Roman custom was to let the bodies of crucified criminals hang and rot in full view of the passing public. Jewish custom was to bury their own. Express permission by a royal magistrate was granted to friends and relatives of the deceased unless the crime was high treason. Pilate granted the request because he was not convinced Jesus was really guilty of high treason.

⁴⁰⁴ Roman law prohibited mourning for executed criminals. The women must have followed silently. The disciples feared for their lives and were nowhere to be found.

⁴⁰⁵ “Pilate refuses to use his troops to guard the tomb but tells the Jewish authorities that they have the temple police at their disposal; and he grants the leaders permission to use them. This explains why, after the Resurrection, the guards reported to the chief priests, not to Pilate (Mt. 28:11). Pilate’s answer in v. 65 must therefore be construed as cynical. He is saying, ‘You were afraid of this man when he was alive; now he is dead, and you are still afraid! By all means secure the tomb as tightly as possible, if you think that will help; but use your own police.’” (EBC 586) (See also footnote 409.)

Matthew 28

The Resurrection of Jesus

Now after the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Mag'dalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I have told you." ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Hail!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ⁴⁰⁶ ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."⁴⁰⁷

The Report of the Guard

¹¹ While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sum of money to the soldiers ¹³ and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.'⁴⁰⁸ ¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble."⁴⁰⁹ ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were directed; and this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

⁴⁰⁶ "As for the Second Advent of the Lord, some scholars believe that his Second Advent is when Jesus comes through the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:16-17), to live in our individual hearts (John 14:20). In that case, since Jesus would be present in the heart of any faithful believer from the time of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to the present, we must believe that if this is really the Second Advent, then it has already taken place in the remote past, some 2000 years ago.

Some Christian denominations believe that Jesus will come again in a spiritual body. However, immediately after his resurrection from the tomb three days after his death, he visited his disciples, assuming the same appearance without a bit of difference from that of his lifetime (Matt. 28:9); and from that time until the present date, he has freely visited and taught, at any moment, any believer with a high spiritual standard. Therefore, we must think that this type of Second Advent also took place 2000 years ago. If this was the Second Advent, it would not be necessary for us now to look forward anew to the day of the Second Advent of the Lord as the historical day of our utmost desire.

From the fact that the disciples of Jesus were waiting for the day of the Second Coming even though they could meet him in spirit at any moment, we know that they did not envision the Second Advent which they were so eagerly looking forward to as his return in the spiritual body. Jesus said, 'Surely I am coming soon.' (Rev. 22:20) to the apostle John, whom he often met in spirit. John, who heard this, answered him saying, 'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!' Here, we find that Jesus, himself, well expressed that his coming in a spiritual body was not the Second Advent, and it is evident that the apostle John also did not regard his appearing in spirit as the Second Advent. Therefore, if the Second Advent is not Jesus' coming again in a spiritual body, it is an undeniable fact that Christ must come again in the flesh, just as in the first coming." (DP 509-510)

⁴⁰⁷ Galilee was the place of much of Jesus' ministry; Jerusalem the place of rejection. Meeting with his followers in the "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Mt. 4:15) fits the theme of post-resurrection outreach to the Gentiles which is the concluding directive of Matthew's gospel.

⁴⁰⁸ "Due to man's fall, even man's dead body was invaded by Satan. Jacob's body, already sanctified with the blessing, was embalmed for 40 days to set up the condition for his body to also be separated from Satan by the victory in the battle against him (Gen. 50:3). With Moses, who walked a course after this pattern, there also was a dispute concerning the location of his body after death (Jude 9). After the death of Jesus, there also were problems concerning his body (Matt. 28:12-13)." (DP 289)

⁴⁰⁹ The guards were certainly not Pilate's soldiers. Admitting that they fell asleep while on duty would be the equivalent to suicide. (See Acts 12 where Peter was freed from prison: "And when Herod had sought for him and could not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death.")

They reported to "the chief priests." The temple police could more easily be bribed and manufacture a workable excuse, especially when the Jewish authorities were involved.

The Commissioning of the Disciples

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted.⁴¹⁰ ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.⁴¹¹ ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,⁴¹² baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”⁴¹³

⁴¹⁰ This runs counter to the saying “seeing is believing.” It appears there were more doubters than Thomas. Perhaps Jesus came in spiritual presence and some were not spiritually open. He came thru closed doors, etc.

⁴¹¹ A popular Christian song’s lyrics repeat the phrase “There is power in the name of Jesus.” There is no room for fear when a Christian is one in heart with Jesus. He overcame all temptations, trials, and tribulations to defeat the enemy of God on our behalf.

⁴¹² God created and loved the world. He guided divine providence through the “chosen people” so they could be the foundation for His Son to reach and influence the whole world. The world and everything in it came from God and will be returned to God.

⁴¹³ “At the time of Moses, God worked His ‘providence for the start’ by having him establish the foundation for the tabernacle. However the resurrected Jesus worked the ‘providence for the start’ by gathering his disciples, scattered in Galilee, and giving them the power to perform miracles and signs, since he himself was the spiritual substantial body of the tablets of stone, tabernacle, and the ark (Matt. 28:16-20).” (DP 361)