

RULING AND REIGNING IN THE KINGDOM

The Unfaithful Christian

Luke 19:11-27

The parable of the pounds gives us an account of our Lord's dealings with His children according to their faithfulness during the period of His absence. In verse 22, the King James Version speaks of the wicked servant; however, the word *wicked* is very misleading because the majority of commentators have seized upon that word and made the servant to be a lost person. Such is not the case. This servant in the parable of the talents and kindred servants in other similar parables are comparable to the five foolish virgins who typify unprepared and unfaithful Christians. They are the ones who will forfeit their place in the coming kingdom of our Lord, though they themselves will be saved, "yet so as by fire" (I Cor. 3:15).

Now let us consider briefly this parable of the pounds. Christ was just leaving the home of Zacchaeus where in response to the criticism of His enemies He gave utterance to His mission: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The Lord connects His mission directly with His return to heaven and the commissioning of His servants to carry on His work. The disciples had a mistaken idea that the kingdom of God was to immediately appear; so this parable is spoken to correct the error in their thinking and to give a very clear picture of the task for Christians to perform during this dispensation. He describes Himself as a Nobleman who is to go away into a far country, receive a kingdom and then return. The kingdom was not established while Christ was here on earth, neither has it been established since His return to heaven; but when the time comes for the establishment of the kingdom, Christ will receive it from God the Father and will then return to the earth for its establishment.

The Nobleman of the parable is described as having called His ten servants to Him and delivered unto them the ten pounds with the command, "Occupy till I come." A pound is a unit of monetary value, worth about \$2.68 today. One must have appreciation for the significance of numbers in Scripture to understand the teaching of our Lord. Ten is the number of ordinal perfection; whereas, seven is the number of completion or perfection pertaining to spiritual things. Ten symbolizes completion as pertaining to earthly things. The significance of the ten servants is that He called ALL His servants to Him and delivered unto them all His business with the command to keep busy with His business until He returned. Now do not forget that His business was to seek and to save that which is lost.

This is a picture of the present dispensation. Christ is in heaven to receive a kingdom, and until He returns, all Christians are to be busy. The primary work of Christians is reaching the lost for the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 15 we learn that He is to return after He receives the kingdom. The first thing He does when He returns is to call all His servants before Him to give an account of their stewardship. *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences”* (II Cor. 5:10 , 11). All of this takes place at the judgment seat of Christ which occurs when we are caught up in the air to meet the Lord. This is where judgment begins, at the house of God (I Pet. 4:17). This is the Lord judging His own people (Heb. 10: 30, 31). No one appears before the judgment seat of Christ except Christians. God does not mix His judgments but deals with each class separately; therefore one should realize that all three servants are called to account here or else they would not appear at this same time. The first servant who reports that his pound has gained ten pounds is rewarded by being given authority or rulership over ten cities during the millennial reign of Christ. (Ruling and reigning is one of the rewards for faithful Christians.)

The second servant reports that his pound has gained five pounds. He is rewarded by being given authority and rulership over five cities.

The third servant reports that he has done nothing but keep his pound hidden in order to preserve it intact for the Lord. In effect he says: “I am saved and I know I cannot be lost; therefore I did not deem it very important to worry myself about trying to do something during Your absence.” But the Lord calls him a bad servant. He is not a bad man, but as a servant of Jesus Christ he would not do what he was supposed to do.

How like so many Christians of today: saved, and know they cannot be lost but frankly admit that all they want is to get to heaven by the skin of their teeth—no rewards, no honor, no recognition from the Lord Himself. Such a statement can be attributed only to their ignorance of God’s plans and purposes for Christians during the millennium.

This third servant is as truly a servant of Christ as the other two, but he has no reward or position of trust and honor during the millennium; and Jesus says to take the pound away from him and give it to the servant who has gained ten pounds.

Now note verse 27. Those who do not receive Christ as Saviour and who will not acknowledge Him to be the King of kings (that is, those who are lost and brought before Him) are slain. This is the second death—separated from the Lord forever. Beloved Christians quit boasting of the fact that you are a one-pound or a one-talent Christian, remembering that such, if found unfaithful, will be in the group who will shed tears that will not be wiped away until the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ. Get busy witnessing for the Lord and win some of the rewards which our Lord Himself has so graciously proffered.

He Began to Smite His Fellow Servants

In Matthew 25:1 our Lord says, "The kingdom of heaven shall be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." The distinguishing characteristic here is that they went forth to meet the Bridegroom; that is, they had the definite attitude of anticipation in waiting for the second coming of Christ.

In I Thessalonians 1:9 and 10 we read: "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Again we find the true church waiting for His Son from heaven. Our Lord placed a premium on watching and waiting for His return.

In Matthew 24:45-51 the Lord says, "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Here the faithful servant is one whom the Lord Jesus Christ has made ruler over His household to give them meat in due season, and the blessedness of this servant is dependent upon his being busy doing so when the Lord returns. In this dispensation the household of our Lord is the church, and the faithful servant who is to feed them is the minister or pastor. Our Lord requires His servant or steward to be faithful, and as a reward for his faithfulness in feeding the flock of God, He promises to make him ruler over all His goods. This is comparable to the faithful servants in the parable of the talents, where we find them made rulers over certain cities. This place of honor and rulership will find its fulfillment in the millennial reign of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The evil servant of verse 48 is so regarded because of his attitude toward the second coming of Christ. You will notice that he does not deny the second coming of Christ. What he does do is deny its *imminency*. We dare not put the millennium between us and the second coming of Christ. We dare not put the tribulation between us and the second coming of Christ. We dare not put the world evangelization of Matthew 24:14 between us and the second coming of Christ. For one to interpose a single act or event before it takes place, is to adopt the attitude of the evil servant and say, "My Lord delayeth His coming."

I want to call your attention to the resultant action of the unfaithful servant who adopts the attitude of a delay in the second coming of the Lord. In verse 49 we read that the evil servant begins to smite his fellow servants. To me, one of the most tragic experiences of a faithful servant of the Lord is to have to suffer the abuse of his fellow ministers because of his faithfulness to the doctrine of the coming again of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To this day I cannot understand how a person can say he is a Christian, that he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, that he loves Him and wants to honor and glorify Him, and at the same time turns right around and says he gets sick and tired of hearing about this same Lord coming back again. I have noticed in my ministry, brief and limited though it may be, that a preacher can be an adulterer, a thief, a partaker of the things of the world, a teller of questionable stories, and be dishonest in regard to his debts, yet few if any other ministers will say anything about it. But let a man of God be faithful to the command of our Lord and cry out, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him," and then watch the other servants of the Lord begin to criticize and bemean. The unfaithful servant who says, "My Lord delayeth His coming," smites in various ways the faithful servant who says, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh."

1. By intimating that he is mentally incapacitated and by saying there are certain degrees of mentality to which the doctrine of prophecy appeal, and that the intelligentsia are not swept off their feet by future promises of the Lord.
2. By innuendoes and insinuations and oftentimes outright falsehoods; and prevailing upon other churches not to consider him for pastor or for any other ministry.
3. By saying he is eccentric, unbalanced, and riding a "hobby horse" of prophecy.
4. By refusing to have any fellowship with him and discouraging other ministers from so doing.
5. By saying he doesn't teach the Bible, if he is evangelistic; or by saying he is not evangelistic, if he is a Bible teacher.
6. By accusing him of having departed from the historic faith of the fathers, when the fact of the matter is, it is the one who says, "My Lord delayeth His coming" who departs from the historic faith.
7. By combining with other unfaithful servants to boycott the entire ministry of the faithful servant.

One of the most common questions in the course of my conferences is: “Why do so many apparent orthodox, evangelical ministers object to and fight the doctrine of the soon coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?” The answer is this. The program of denominational, religious conventions, associations, etc., magnifies and glorifies the efforts of man; whereas, the ministry of the faithful servant (and I mean faithful in the sense of the second coming of Christ) magnifies and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ.

Satan hates the doctrine of the second coming of Christ because when Christ returns, Satan’s ministry comes to a close. I believe that if every servant of God were faithful to the proclamation of the soon coming of Christ, the denominational and corporate programs of Christendom would fail, and each church would return to its Christ-given ministry of doing what the Lord wanted it to do without looking to any other church to support it or help it in its endeavors.

You will notice also in the 49th verse that after the evil servant begins to smite his fellow servants, he also begins to eat and drink with the drunkards; that is, he begins to consort with worldlings and he maintains no line of separation between himself and that which defiles.

May I call attention to the warning issued by our Lord, that in a day of which that servant is not aware, the Lord shall come and cut him asunder and recompense unto him commensurate chastisement. I do not believe for one moment that verse 51 refers to an unsaved individual, but rather has to do, as it states in verses 45 through 51, with that servant of the Lord who has proved himself unfaithful by denying the imminent return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Ten Virgins

The parable of the ten virgins is right in the heart of the Olivet discourse (Matt. 24 and 25). The editor submits here some of his notes accumulated during the past few months of study in this parable.

The introductory word *then* gives the time element, and it is well to devote special consideration to this. Careful study of these two chapters shows a break in the continuity at Matt. 24:32. That section is introduced with the expression, “Now learn a parable of the fig tree ...” There is no break then in the chronology until we come to Matt. 25:3 1. This entire portion is of the same time. It begins with this fig tree parable; and attention is called to the fact that since this is a parable, the fig tree of necessity is a type. Whenever the fig tree is used as a type, it is of Israel as a nation. In Luke 13:6-9, the Lord had sought fruit from it for three years, but because of its barrenness He commanded it to be cut down. The husbandman asked that it be let alone so it might be cultivated and given a further chance to bear fruit; and we know from the history of Israel that the Lord did not set Israel aside as a nation until 70 AD In Matt. 24:32,33 He tells us that when the fig tree buds and puts forth its

leaves, summer is nigh. It is a historical fact that the fig tree budded on May 14, 1948, when Israel became a nation again. The time of the fulfillment of the prophecies of Matt. 24 and 25 are set by our Lord soon after Israel becomes a nation. No man knows the day nor the hour, but our Lord said it would be comparable to the days of Noah when the righteous were taken away to safety and the unrighteous were left to judgment. He said that as it was in the days of Lot, so would it be when the Son of man comes. In those days also, the righteous were taken away to safety and the wicked were left for judgment. Then too, He said in those days He would send forth His servants to give His household meat in due season and that some would do so, but others would say, "My Lord delayeth His coming." It is THEN the Lord said that the kingdom of heaven would be likened unto ten virgins. Now note the time element: Soon after Israel becomes a nation, when the righteous shall be taken away to safety and the wicked left for judgment, faithful servants will be preaching the second coming of Christ and kindred truths, but unfaithful servants will be saying that many other things must take place before the Lord returns. THEN, AT THAT TIME, the kingdom of heaven is compared to the ten virgins of Matt. 25. The continuity of this time element is not broken until Matt. 25:3 1 where the Greek text says, "BUT when the Son of man shall come in His glory ..." This shows conclusively that Matt. 24:32 to Matt. 25:30 has to do with the rapture, and Matt. 25:3 1ff has to do with the revelation—Christ's return to earth in glory.

Now let us look at the parable of the ten virgins in the light of the fact that it has to do with the rapture of the saints. The number *ten* is significant in itself because it is one of the numbers of perfection of the divine order. It expresses completeness of the order under discussion, showing that nothing is lacking. Think for a moment of Noah. The tenth generation marks the completion of God's dealings with man from Adam to the flood. The Ten Commandments give expression to the completion of God's relation to Israel, showing there is no more or no less, but all is complete in these commandments. The model prayer which our Lord gave His disciples consists of ten petitions, showing that is all, no more, no less. The tithe, or tenth, of the increase shows that man's complete responsibility in material things is expressed in the tenth, no more, no less. Any more given would come under the heading of gifts and offerings. Ten gerahs (half a shekel) is the price of redemption. The ten plagues symbolized God's complete dealings with Egypt. The ten kingdoms of the antichrist set forth the completeness of his dominion. The ten pounds and ten servants of Luke 19 give expression to all the Lord's servants receiving all of His goods and being responsible during His absence for all of His business.

The ten virgins, therefore, must be recognized as symbolizing the completeness of all believers who come forth to meet the Lord at the time of the rapture. The word *virgin* means undefiled (Rev. 14:4; II Cor. 11:2), and cannot be used to typify unregenerate sinners, either Jew or Gentile. The word *virgin* is never used to represent the unsaved. It is always used in connection with a particular New Testament group who are in a particular relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. The word *virgin* can never be used for Israel because she is the adulterous wife of God.

The whole book of Hosea. sets forth this truth in no uncertain terms. These ten virgins symbolize a group highly esteemed by the Bridegroom. They have been called to the wedding, they were all appropriately attired, and they all had their lamps burning. In Matt. 25:8, *gone out* is literally *going out*, which shows that the lamps had been burning and there had been oil in them. The ten virgins ALL went forth to meet the Bridegroom. They were all waiting for Him. They all slumbered and slept and they were all awakened. Verse 6 intimates very clearly that they all went out, or up, to meet the Lord (the rapture). The place of meeting is in the air (I Thess. 4:13-18). The only difference between the five prudent and the five foolish is that the wise ones carried a vessel of oil in addition to their lamps. The foolish, though they had oil in their lamps, they did not have the extra vessel of oil. The lamp which Christians carry is the Word of God (Psa. 119:105; II Pet. 1:19). Every Christian, that is, every individual born from above has the Holy Spirit indwelling him; but the simple indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not sufficient for one to live a life of honor and glory in faithful obedience to the Lord. Christians must needs be filled again and again by the Spirit of the Lord for special service, witness and enlightenment in the Word of God. (See Acts 4:3 1, which shows that the disciples were filled again and again.) Further studies in the Acts will reveal that the Spirit came into all believers at Pentecost, but they needed to be filled again and again for service. Christians cannot live on past spiritual experiences. The children of Israel needed to gather manna every day. In order to satisfy their thirst, not only did the Rock have to be smitten but it also had to be spoken to. And then there came days when they themselves had to dig with their staves to get water to quench their thirst. So the Christian today has need of many infillings and empowerings by the Holy Spirit even though he is indwelt by Him.

The difference, therefore, between the wise and the foolish virgins is simply that the wise continued to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. They made special provisions for additional infillings and empowerings of the Holy Spirit, while the foolish were content to be saved and indwelt by the Spirit, having no desire for further or deeper experiences that they might be used to bring honor and glory to the Lord. This fullness of the Spirit cannot be imparted from one Christian to another, neither can this fullness be obtained at the moment of the rapture. Regeneration can take place instantaneously, but many things are involved in being filled with the Holy Spirit after one has been saved.

The climax and the consummation of the parable is a much neglected truth; namely, that participation in the marriage of the Lamb, an invitation to the wedding feast, and sharing in the reign of our Lord's coming Kingdom are dependent entirely upon the life one lives after he is saved. Salvation is absolutely essential to being in the Kingdom, but it is by no means sufficient.

In verse 12 the Lord says, "I know you not." This must be considered as a relative statement because the Lord knows all things. This expression simply means, as regards this particular relationship, or in so far as having a part in the marriage and wedding feast is concerned — He does not know them.

Some believe that the ten virgins symbolize the nation of Israel during the Tribulation and that when the Lord returns some will be believers and some will not. The Scripture teaches, however, that all unbelievers will be exterminated during the Tribulation and that all who remain will be saved, but not until the Lord returns in glory (Zech. 13:8,9). No where do we find Israel typified as going forth to meet the Bridegroom. The relationship of Christ to Israel is as their King (Matt. 2:2; 27:37). Jesus can come as the Bridegroom only for His bride; and according to the Scripture, the bride is made up of a minority group called out of the mass who are saved between Pentecost and the rapture.

Be instructed by this parable and heed the admonition of verse 13, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

I purpose, D.V., to give a word-by-word meditation upon this parable. Whereas I hope to say a great deal, please remember there will be much more unsaid. The parable begins with the word "then," which establishes the time, and we must get this time fixed in our mind at the very beginning or we may err grievously in the interpretation.

"**THEN . . .**" There are two outstanding time breaks in Matthew 24 and 25. The first one is introduced by the word "**now**" (Matt. 24:32). This one introduces the parable of the fig tree which pertains to Israel as a nation, the budding fig tree signifying Israel becoming a nation once again. This took place May 14, 1948. There is no break in time until we come to Matt. 25:31. The King James Version leaves out the Greek word translated "but," thereby destroying the effect of the time break.

This verse is introduced in the Greek by the two words "**hotan de,**" which being translated mean "but when." This is called in grammar a disjunctive conjunction, the word "but" being disjunctive in that it announces a new time, separate and distinct from that which has preceded. The word "when" is a conjunction which joins the subject matter of that which follows with that which precedes, though separate and distinct in time.

A key expression to the understanding of the entire Olivet discourse is to be found in these two words "**hotan de.**" This manifests a time of transition marking a different time period entirely from that which it follows. The word **de** means **but...now...moreover...however** The word **hotan** means **when.**

Because of its importance I call attention to a few different translations. IVAN PANIN translates it "but when"; THE EMPHATIC DIAGLOTT: now when"; YOUNG'S LITERAL TRANSLATION: "and whenever"; ROTHERHAM'S EMPHASIZED BIBLE: "but whensoever"; DARBY: "but when"; the AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION: "but when"; R.C.H. LENSKI: "when however"; FARRAR FENTON: "but when"; JOHN R. BROADUS: "but when." Dr. David L. Cooper says that this **hotan de** is a disjunctive conjunction which throws this over against another time by way of contrast.

In language the average layman can understand this means that Matt. 24:32 to 25:30 has to do with one appearing of the Lord, whereas Matt. 25:31-46 refers to an entirely different time and appearing. So Matt. 24:32 to 25:30 has to do with Christ's appearance in the air when He calls His own to meet Him, and Matt. 25:31-46 speaks of the time when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to the earth. That means the first period mentioned above has to do with Christians and the church, and the second appearance has to do with His revelation unto the Gentiles and also the Jews.

Notice carefully that the word "then" refers to the time that the fig tree buds and while the leaves are still tender (Matt. 24:32); also to the days like unto those of Noah; also when some of His servants will be faithful and others unfaithful (Matt. 24:45-51); also to the time of the judgment seat of Christ (Matt. 25:14-30). The time designated by the word "then" has nothing whatever to do with the Jews or the Gentiles, only the Christians and the church.

"THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS..." This expression simply means the reign of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ OVER the earth for a thousand years. This is the millennium.

BE LIKENED UNTO..." This expression means "similar to" or "comparable to."

"TEN..." The word "ten" is the number of ordinal perfection —completeness as pertaining to the earth. It implies that nothing is wanting, that the number and order are perfect, that the whole cycle is complete; therefore, it means ALL — no more, no less. "Ten servants" means all of His servants; "ten pounds" signifies all of His money; "the ten commandments" signifies all of His commandments. You will note that with the completion of numbers up to ten you have a new beginning like 10's, 20's, 30's, hundred's, thousand's, million's, etc. If there is any one thing the number ten means it is perfect completeness.

"VIRGINS..." The word "virgin" in the Bible is used to signify unmarried, clean, chaste, pure, and cannot apply to the nation of Israel at all because Israel is the adulterous wife of God who is playing the harlot with many lovers. The whole book of Hosea is a story of Israel, the adulterous wife of God. Israel is never likened unto a virgin, neither to a bride. By implication, numbers of passages of Scripture reveal the church in the relation of a virgin bride to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Bridegroom. The word "virgin" is never used in the Scripture to signify unsaved people. The Holy Spirit uses words like unto dogs, swine, goats, and harlot, to characterize the lost.

These virgins are real virgins and not just pretenders. Jesus Himself calls them virgins and they represent only the righteous, the saved, the redeemed, true believers, those who hold to the true faith. They are the pure, undefiled followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and this parable is a parable concerning the virgin bride and

the Bridegroom — that is, concerning Jesus Christ and Christians.

The expression “ten virgins” simply means all of the Christians. What our Lord is saying is that at the time of His appearing for His church, all Christians will be likened unto ten virgins. If five were lost and five were saved, He would have said the kingdom of the heavens is likened unto five harlots and five virgins, or like unto five goats and five sheep, or like unto five measures of tares and five measures of wheat, or like unto five measures of leaven and five measures of flour. But the Holy Spirit never mixes nor confuses metaphors or symbols.

That part of these virgins are saved and part lost cannot be true, because the Lord does not gather the saved and lost before Him at the same time. There is no such thing in the Scripture as a general resurrection and a general judgment in which saved and lost are gathered together for simultaneous judgment. The judgment of the saved and that of the lost are separated by at least a thousand years.

That these virgins do not represent the nation of Israel should be easily understood when one realizes that at the time of our Lord’s return to the earth no Jews will be looking for the Lord, much less half of them. Again, at the time of the return of our Lord to the earth part of the Jews will not be saved and part lost, but all of the lost will have been destroyed in the persecution of the Tribulation and those remaining will constitute a remnant of election according to grace, ALL of which will be saved, not just half of them. This is the time that all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26). This is the time when a nation, shall be born in a day (Isa. 66:8). That these ten virgins typify all of the Christians, both dead and living, when the Lord appears in the air for His own, should be evident to all.

“TOOK THEIR LAMPS .. .” These lamps show the reality of their profession of faith. Each virgin had a lamp of her own. The lamp was a receptacle such as a hollow bowl or cup which held a wick and oil or pitch. ALL ten of the lamps had oil in them and they ALL burned for some time. The vessels which held the extra supply of oil were separate and distinct from the lamps.

The word “lamp” signifies manifestation, that is, holding forth the word of truth. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). The word of prophecy is “a light that shineth in a dark place” (II Pet. 1:19). All ten virgins had lamps, all ten virgins manifested their salvation, all ten virgins revealed their possession of the Word. See Matt. 5:15, 16 for the relationship between Christians and candles or lamps. Only Christians possess lamps.

“WENT FORTH .. .” This expression signifies separation from the world. No one but a Christian can take a position of separation from the world and manifest a desire to see Jesus. It was only Christians who “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven” (I Thess. 1:9). This expression “went forth” signifies the giving up of home, family, business, world, carnal

desires and ambitions and a going forth to labor for the Lord while waiting for His return. This is a true picture of the early Christians—an experience absolutely impossible for an unsaved person. See Matt. 16:24ff and 19:27ff.

“TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM .. .” This shows the expectation of all ten virgins of the return of the Bridegroom. This shows their belief in the blessed hope of a soon return and again is an experience possible only to a saved person. The virgins cannot be the Jews because they have not gone, are not going and will not go forth to meet the Bridegroom. Neither can it signify lost people, for the same reason. Whereas the early Christians had a living hope in the Lord’s imminent return, not all Christians today have separated themselves from the things of the world and gone forth to meet the Bridegroom. I find innumerable Christians today who know nothing of the coming of the Bridegroom for His bride nor of the marriage feast. Their knowledge has brought them to the cross and there they have stopped. So many who know the Jesus of the cross know nothing of His resurrection, much less His ascension into heaven and His return as a Bridegroom for His bride.

Notice this in regard to the virgins. All ten are described as virgins; all ten had lamps with oil, which was a manifestation of their being saved; all ten went forth in separation from the world, the flesh and the Devil; all ten went forth to meet the Bridegroom, eagerly looking for His return; all ten virgins symbolize born again, Bible believing, separated, premillennial, fundamental Christians.

“And five of them were WISE .” This word means “prudent” and is the same word that is used in Matt. 7:24. It carries with it the thought of knowing and understanding the ways of the Lord and conforming to His teaching, obeying His admonitions. This expression means that at the time appointed they had made all the necessary preparations according to His instructions. They had redeemed the time, they had not neglected their salvation, they had worked out their own salvation, they had added to their faith the necessary qualifications which guaranteed an abundant entrance. They recognized that whereas salvation was by grace, rewards were to be meted out on the basis of works.

“And five were FOOLISH .. .” The word translated foolish is *moros*, from which comes the English word “moron.” It means dull, stupid, not acute, slow. It does not mean dead. They were alive but slow of heart, as the disciples to whom the Lord spoke in Luke 24:25, when He called them “slow of heart.” These five foolish virgins symbolize Christians who are interested in many other things than the Word of the Lord. They were satisfied to be saved by the skin of their teeth. They had no interest in rewards and thought it was unbecoming to a Christian to serve the Lord for rewards. Let me say this in connection with rewards. Do not despise the rewards which the Lord has seen fit to offer to faithful, obedient Christians. If Christians would be honest with themselves they would be forced to acknowledge that half the Christians are symbolized by these five imprudent ones.

The foolish took their lamps and took **“NO OIL WITH THEM .. .”** Verse 4 speaks of the wise taking an extra vessel with extra oil and this is the oil which the foolish did not take. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit of God. All ten of the virgins had oil in their lamps, as is explained in vs. 8, where the literal translation is “Our lamps are going out.” All ten lamps had been burning from the time they went forth until the time to meet the Bridegroom.

It is an extra portion of the Holy Spirit of God which is symbolized by the extra vessel of oil. Elisha asked Elijah for a double portion of his Spirit. The Old Testament saints had the Holy Spirit to come UPON them from time to time to empower them for particular tasks. They knew nothing of the INDWELLING Holy Spirit. With the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost there was made possible a double portion of the Holy Spirit for every child of God. In John 20:22 the disciples received the Holy Spirit to INDWELL them. This was promised by our Lord in John 14:16, 17. According to John 7:37-39, the INDWELLING Spirit is the portion of everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. But on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out UPON them to empower them to go forth and witness (see Acts 1:8 and 2:1-21). In Eph. 5:18 we have the command for Christians IN whom the Holy Spirit dwells to be filled—to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to enable them to perform their duties as Christians.

Many Christians have the experience of the double portion of the Spirit of God. He INDWELLS them as a witness that they have been saved and because of obedience, faithfulness, prayerfulness, they also have the extra portion of the Holy Spirit for power. The foolish virgins typify Christians IN whom the Holy Spirit dwells but UPON whom He has not been poured out in great power. You will see in a few moments that the supplying of the extra portion of oil was something which the Christian was to do himself and not something that God was to do.

“While the BRIDEGROOM TARRIED.. .” Jesus Christ only is spoken of in the Scripture as the Bridegroom, and He is the Bridegroom of the church. So this cannot possibly refer to the Husband of Israel, who is not a bridegroom, neither is His wife a virgin. The word “tarried” could be a little misleading because in Heb. 10:37 we are told that “He that shall come will come, and will not tarry,” meaning that the time of His return is one of the appointed times of God and when it arrives He is returning, regardless of faithfulness or unfaithfulness of Christians. The fifth verse carries with it the idea of His not returning as soon as they had anticipated.

“THEY ALL SLUMBERED AND SLEPT .. .” That is, they all began to nod and soon fell asleep. There is no difference here between the wise and the imprudent. All of them ceased to look for His return for a while. That period of time in history is known as the Dark Ages. The Reformation was produced by a rediscovery of the truth of the Lord’s return and the doctrine of justification by faith. As you read this parable closely you will see the only point of differentiation is that the foolish did not have the extra portion of oil.

“And at MIDNIGHT there was a cry made .. .” Midnight is the time between the end of the second watch and the beginning of the third watch, the third watch being devoted to preparation for His return which will take place in the fourth watch.

The midnight **“CRY”** was “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.” In history about the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a renewed emphasis upon the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. So widespread was the zeal in the soon coming of Christ that I doubt not but that it **was** the midnight cry and that it rang out along between the years 1800 and 1825. This rediscovery of the doctrine of the soon return of the Lord also marked the inauguration of the greatest missionary activity since the days of the apostles. For a century or better, every great evangelist, every prominent missionary, every outstanding pastor was a man whose life and ministry were characterized by a belief in the imminent return of the Lord. From about 1800 until today we have been living in the light of and in the sound of the midnight cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.”

“GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM .. .” Since we know that the Bridegroom is coming but we know not what day, it behooves us to be ready every day. That is the meaning of the words, “Go ye out to meet Him.” How Satan delights to hinder this testimony, to keep people from looking for the Lord, because “he that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself.” Satan wants neither Christian nor church watching and waiting for the Lord.

“Then ALL those virgins AROSE.. .” I do not believe this can symbolize or point to anything other than the rapture, when the dead in Christ shall arise first and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together. This arising together is to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And it was after they all arose that the imprudent realized their lamps were going out and that they had need of some extra oil. It was then they realized that though they were saved they were not prepared to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

They were like those of I Cor. 3:15. They would suffer loss but they themselves would be saved. Not till then did the necessity of the extra portion of the Holy Spirit register on their consciousness; not till then did they become interested in good works; not till then did they desire rewards, and they cried out to the wise for some of their extra oil. This extra oil was something each individual had to supply for himself, which shows us again that salvation is not involved because salvation is a gift of God and no man can supply it for himself.

When the virgins arose they **“TRIMMED THEIR LAMPS .. .”** All of the virgins arose and all of the virgins trimmed their lamps; that is, they made preparation to render an account of the deeds done in the flesh. Such action would take place before the judgment seat of Christ. Oftentimes today I am asked if the world is getting better or worse. I reply, “Both.” The wicked are growing more so day by day but there are also those comparable to the wise virgins who are making diligent efforts to be

ready when the Lord returns.

“Give us of your oil, for our lamps are **GOING OUT...** “These lamps of the foolish have been burning since they took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom; that is, they have had the Holy Spirit in them since the day of their salvation, but as they approach the judgment seat of Christ they do not have the extra portion of oil which will guarantee works meriting rewards. They ask of their wise companions but they cannot comply, for this extra vessel of oil is of individual provision after one has received the indwelling Spirit.

I call your attention to the following list of names and works wherein the translation “are going out” is used: the **AMPLIFIED NEW TESTAMENT**, Panin’s **NUMERIC NEW TESTAMENT**, Moffett’s **NEW TRANSLATION**, Williams’ **PRIVATE TRANSLATION**, Young’s **LITERAL TRANSLATION**, Rotherham’s **EMPHASIZED BIBLE**, Goodspeed’s **AMERICAN TRANSLATION**, Einspruch’s **NEW TRANSLATION**, Farrar Fenton’s **HOLY BIBLE IN MODERN ENGLISH**, the **AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION**, 1901 Edition, Weymouth’s **NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN ENGLISH**.

“**The wise answered, saying, NOT SO, lest there be not enough for us and you . . .**” Works done by one person cannot be credited to another’s account. Each one must do his own work and earn his own reward. Just as a child will not be saved because the parent is a Christian, neither will an unfaithful Christian be rewarded if his companions or friends are faithful. Each Christian individually must appear before the judgment seat of Christ for his individual judgment and rewards.

“**Go ye rather to them that SELL and BUY for yourselves ..**” This reveals that the extra portion of oil is one that an individual Christian can secure for himself and it is not something that is given by the grace of God as are salvation and the indwelling Spirit. The provision to stand before the judgment seat of Christ expecting rewards is to be an individual effort on the part of each Christian. Those who make that provision are termed wise virgins. Those who do not are termed foolish virgins.

“**While THEY WENT to buy, the BRIDEGROOM CAME . . .**” The foolish virgins, realizing that further preparation is needed, attempt to make such provision; but ere their actions are completed the Bridegroom comes and those who are ready go in to the marriage. The judgment seat of Christ reveals the ones who are ready—that is, those who will constitute the bride of Christ—and they go in to the marriage of the Lamb as the bride of Christ. The foolish, not being prepared, are shut out of the wedding. They are comparable to the man without a wedding garment, described in Matt. 22:11-14.

“**And the door was SHUT ..**” Those who are not prepared when they appear at the judgment seat of Christ will have no further opportunity of preparation but are shut out from being a member of the bride of Christ, though they themselves are

saved, yet so as by fire.

The foolish virgins cry out, "**LORD, LORD, OPEN TO US ..**" The expression "Lord, Lord" reveals that they are saved because I Cor. 12:3 tells us that no one can say "Lord, Lord" except by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The same is true of those in Matt. 7:22 who do many wonderful works in the name of the Lord but they do not the works which the Lord commanded them, hence they are being shut out of the place of rewards. These are the ones who will shed many bitter tears, weep, moan and mourn because then it shall be dawning on them that they too could have been a member of the bride of Christ, earning a place of sovereignty in His coming kingdom. But instead of being a sovereign in His Kingdom, they will simply be one of many of the subjects. No amount of effort or endeavor can alter the fact that they are shut out from being a part of the bride of Christ.

"But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I KNOW YOU NOT .." This does not mean that He does not know their names, neither their works, but it means, relatively speaking, as far as the kingdom is concerned, "I do not know you"; as far as being a member of the bride of Christ is concerned, "I know you not"; as far as rewards, honors and glory are concerned, "I know you not." "I know you not" carries with it the idea that "I do not recognize nor approve of your record as a Christian." This has nothing to do with their salvation but solely with their rewards.

Paul was fearful that he might be disapproved and have no crown even though he was saved. See I Cor. 9:27. Esau forfeited his birthright, part of which was the right to rule and reign, though he did not forfeit his sonship. See Heb. 12:16, 17. It is one thing to be a subject in the coming kingdom of our Lord but it is an entirely different matter to be a sovereign, and only those wise virgins who have the extra portions of oil shall share in the reign of our coming Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus what Jesus is saying in this 12th verse is that as far as the millennial reign is concerned and as far as ruling and reigning in that kingdom is concerned, "I know you not."

There is no teaching quite so conducive to godless living on the part of Christians as the teaching that all Christians will rule and reign with Christ regardless of how they live. There is not one word of Scripture to warrant a disobedient, unfaithful Christian's believing that he will reign and rule with the Lord.

Bloomfield in his **COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT** translates this, "I do not recognize you as belonging to this group." Knox in his **NEW TRANSLATION** translates it, "I do not recognize you." A. B. Simpson says that "I know you not" simply means that they are not in the circle of His intimate, personal friendship. He does not exclude them from salvation but excludes them from the place of the bride and the innermost center of His communion and love. Consider Peter, James and John, being an inner circle of Christ's disciples, whereas the other nine are shut out from many places where the three enter. Olshausen says the words "I know you not"

cannot refer to eternal condemnation, for the foolish virgins are only excluded from the marriage of the Lamb and must be viewed as parallel with those described in I Cor. 3:15, whose building is destroyed but who are not deprived of eternal happiness. The foolish virgins possess the general condition for happiness, which is faith, but lack the requisite qualification for reigning in the kingdom of heaven, which is sanctification, which in turn proceeds from faith.

All Christians who are living today should be vigilant in watching and waiting for the Lord. He may come at any time and He will come at a time when He is least expected. It is possible to be watching for the coming of the Lord and still not be prepared for the moment when He comes. One watches for the Lord by being diligent in prayer, dwelling deeply in the Word, being obedient to His commands and following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

My thought concerning the parable of the ten virgins is that it is a parable to Christians, warning of the possibility of some Christians being unprepared to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, thereby forfeiting their rewards, but not their salvation.

“WATCH THEREFORE, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh . . .”

NO WEDDING GARMENT

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless” (Matt. 22:11, 12).

One of the hindrances to an understanding of the Parable of the Wedding Feast is to be found in the difficulty of translating the Greek into English. I will quote from several scholars and then see what is the conclusion of the matter.

1. In Vincent’s *WORD STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT* — Vol. I, page 120, we read: “Not having (me echon). It is hardly possible to convey the subtle sense of the negative particle (me) to the English reader. A different word for ‘not’ (ouk) is used in the preceding verse, expressing an ‘outward, objective’ fact which attracted the King’s notice. The man had ‘not’ (ouk) a wedding garment. When the King addresses the guest, he is thinking not so much of the outward token of disrespect, as of the guest’s mental attitude toward the proprieties of the occasion. It is as if he had said, ‘What were you thinking of, where was your respect for me and for my guests, when you allowed yourself to come hither “not” (me) having the proper garment, as you knew you ought to have?’ It implies, as Dr. Morrison observes, that the man was conscious of the omission when he entered,

and was intentionally guilty of the neglect. This distinction between the two negative particles rests on the law of the Greek language, according to which 'ou' and its compounds stand where something is to be denied as a matter of fact and 'me' and its compounds when something is to be denied as a matter of thought."

2. Goebel in THE PARABLES OF JESUS, page 360, says, "The point of the question is not, how he could have despised the King's festal garb and preferred his own, BUT how he could have come in without a wedding garment at all. And eiserchesthai does not mean a passive getting in, in which case the question of surprise must rather have been addressed to the servants who admitted him, but it is an active entering which the subjective negation me echon also shows. Therefore: 'Friend, how couldst thou enter here with the consciousness of not having a wedding garb?' — This silence is a confession that he has no excuse, because in fact nothing but criminal disrespect for the King led him to neglect providing himself with a suitable dress."
3. Morgan — PARABLES AND METAPHORS OF OUR LORD—page 133: "Matthew says, the King 'saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.' Then he said, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?' The little word 'not' appeared twice over, but is it not the same on those two occasions. The first word (ou) simply marks a fact; he had not it on. But when the King asked him the reason, Jesus used a slightly different word for not (me), which suggested not merely the fact that he lacked the wedding garment, but that he did so definitely, of his own thought, and will and intention. When the man came in not having a wedding garment, and the King talked to him, he said, It is not only a fact that you have not a wedding garment; you did not intend having one. Your 'not' is the 'not' of definite willing. You are determined not to have it on. Your presence in here is the supreme sign of your rebellion against the order set up, of which this marriage feast is the great symbol."
4. Robertson — WORD PICTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT —Vol. I, page 175; "'Not having a wedding garment...' There is a subtle distinction between 'me' and 'ou' like our subjective and objective notions Wunsche does report a parable by a rabbi of a king who set no time for his feast and the guests arrived, some properly dressed waiting at the door; others in their working clothes did not wait but went off to work and, when the summons suddenly came, they had no time to dress properly and were made to stand and watch while the others partook of the feast."

From the above quotations of acknowledged Bible scholars, one can see that several things are in evidence as regards the wedding garment.

1. It is possible for every guest to be able to supply himself with the necessary garment. Do not make the mistake of so many teachers of the Word by confusing the garment of the righteousness of God, which is every Christian's through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, with the garment which is made up of the righteousness of the saints and becomes each Christian's garment according to his own righteous acts and works.
2. In Rev. 19:7, 8 one sees that this garment is to be provided by the individual himself. The rebuke of the wedding guest who had no wedding garment was because of his own willful refusal to provide the wedding garment. To appreciate such a mental attitude one has only to take notice of the many Christians today who scoff at the idea that it makes any difference how a Christian lives. There is an utter and absolute disregard of righteous living and earning of rewards on the part of too many teachers and students of the Word.
3. The absence of the wedding garment does not prevent one from being in the rapture and in the area of the kingdom of the heavens, but it does prevent one from being a part of the wedding and forces one to view the wedding and reception from an area outside the light of the festive activities, which is described by our Lord as the darkness, the outer. This means a darkness just beyond the circle of the light of the feast and has no reference whatever to hell, which is not a place of darkness because of the lights of the fires.
4. The above truths should be a stern reminder to every Christian to busy himself with doing the work which the Lord has foreordained that he should do in order that he shall appear at the marriage of the Lamb with his wedding garment.

DISAPPROVED

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27).

When Paul speaks of himself as being a possible castaway, he has no reference whatever to the loss of eternal life; but in the light of the coming judgment seat of Christ, wherein rewards and crowns are given according to works, Paul does think of the possibility of his being instrumental in many people being saved and earning crowns, thereby gaining a place of sovereignty in the coming kingdom of our Lord, while he himself might be disapproved as far as rewards and crowns are concerned.

Paul never doubted his salvation for a minute and could say that nothing could separate him from the love of God which was in Christ. He could also say that he knew whom he had believed and was convinced beyond any shadow of a doubt that He could keep that and guard it against that day. But he was not sure about the prize which was a reward (Phil. 3:13, 14).

That it is possible to be saved and still not be a participant in the kingdom but only an observer, is set forth very clearly in the experience of Moses. That Moses was saved is evidenced by the fact that he appeared on the mount of transfiguration with Elijah and the Lord Jesus Christ, and Moses had a faithful service of forty years in leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. He was God's chosen herald. He was God's appointed deliverer. He directed the children of Israel in the exodus from Egypt and for forty years across the desert, but was not permitted to enter into the promised land (the promised land is typical of the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ).

God took Moses up into a high mountain and permitted him to look over into, to see and to observe but not to enter. When Moses begged the Lord to let him go in, the Lord said, "Speak to Me no more of this matter" (Deut. 3:25, 26).

I Cor. 3:12-15 brings out very clearly that one can be saved without any good works to his credit. Not only was Moses forbidden to enter the promised land but only two men out of over 600,000 saved men who left Egypt entered the promised land. They were Joshua and Caleb. All the children of Israel who perished in the wilderness were not lost. They were under the blood and had been baptized unto Moses, but God did not permit them to enter the promised land, which lesson teaches us that though we are saved and baptized, it does not necessarily follow that we will be sovereigns in the coming kingdom. Saved, yes. But not kings unless we have overcome.

In Heb. 12:16, 17 we read of Esau being disapproved for the inheritance, which was threefold: First, a double portion; second, to be a priest; third, to rule over the tribe. His disapproval was because of his lack of appreciation for future spiritual blessings. But that he continued as a child of his father with some minor blessing is manifested in Gen. 27:34-40.

Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, was also disapproved because of sin against his father, and he too forfeited his birthright but still retained his position as a child of Jacob, and never ceased to be numbered among the children of Israel. His double portion was given to Joseph, his priesthood to Levi and his judgeship to Judah. Because of the possibility of Christians being disapproved for a place in the coming kingdom, though they are the possessors of eternal life, the Spirit of the Lord has given us this admonition: II Cor. 5:10-ha: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. KNOWING THEREFORE THE TERROR OF THE LORD, WE PERSUADE MEN."

There can be a “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” from our Lord. There can also be crowns, which designate one as a sovereign; and there can be municipalities over which a Christian can rule and reign. But these things, possible for every Christian, are contingent upon obedience to our Lord’s commands.

SAVED BUT DISINHERITED

There seems to be in the minds of many Christians a hazy but general idea that after one has received the Lord as Saviour, it does not make any difference how he lives because all Christians are going to inherit the kingdom of heaven and share alike in Christ’s coming kingdom. Nothing could be further from the truth as set forth in the Word of God. For instance, suffering for Christ’s sake is a prerequisite to ruling and reigning with Him, but it is not a prerequisite to salvation (II Tim. 2:12); if a Christian lives an undisciplined personal life, he might be rejected for a place in Christ’s kingdom (I Cor. 9:27); if one’s carnal nature gains the ascendancy over the spiritual nature, one can miss the kingdom (Gal. 5:16-21; Eph. 5:3-7); failure to occupy until the Lord comes, or the misuse or failure to use the pounds or talents delivered to one may result in his having no place of service in the Lord’s kingdom (Luke 19:11-27; Matt. 25:14-30).

All Christians are called the “firstborn of God,” but not all Christians receive the inheritance that belongs to the firstborn. One having been born from above cannot become unborn and lose his salvation, but he can be disinherited and lose the place that would be bestowed upon him during the millennial reign of Christ. The inheritance of the firstborn is threefold: 1) The firstborn was to be the ruler of the tribe or family; 2) the firstborn was to be the priest of the tribal or family group; 3) the firstborn was to receive a double portion of the inheritance. If there were twelve sons in the family, the inheritance would be divided into thirteen portions and the firstborn would get two-thirteenths, and each of the other sons, one-thirteenth. There are two classic examples of this found in the Word of God for our enlightenment. In Gen. 49:3, we learn that Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn, lost his inheritance because of sin. The tribal rulership which Reuben lost was bestowed upon Judah. The priestly office which Reuben lost was given to Levi. The double inheritance which Reuben lost was bestowed upon Joseph whose two sons Ephraim and Manasseh were adopted by Jacob. Each received a full inheritance, and thereby Joseph received the double portion through his two sons.

Esau is another firstborn who forfeited his birthright through sin. Study carefully Heb. 12:14-17, with special attention to Esau’s being disinherited as the firstborn. He was to be the tribal ruler and priest, and receive two-thirds of the inheritance, with Jacob receiving one-third. But for one morsel of meat, for one moment of fleshly satisfaction, for one carnal indulgence, he forfeited the birthright, though he did not forfeit his son-ship. We note in Gen. 27:34-40, when Isaac blessed Jacob, and Esau realized that his birthright was gone, he began to cry, to beg and to plead with Isaac to repent, i.e., change his mind; but Isaac would not, could not, and

did not repent; so the inheritance, despised by Esau, became Jacob's. It is noted in Gen. 27:39, 40 that Esau received some minor blessings from Jacob, and though he remained a son, he was disinherited.

It is forever true that once having been saved, an individual can never under any condition be lost; but he can lose or forfeit his birthright and enter into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ without a single good work to his credit (I Cor. 3:15), having no rewards or a place of service in Christ's coming kingdom. For one thousand years the Lord God Almighty is going to make a difference between faithful and unfaithful Christians. That, beloved, is going to produce many tears which will not be wiped away until the close of the millennium (Rev. 21:3, 4).

But do not despair. There is hope and there is time. In I John 1:9, we read that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"; and as long as a Christian is alive he has opportunity to confess his sins, have them blotted out, and start over. But let us not be presumptuous. Let us remember that Moses, though saved and a servant of God for eighty years, was shut out of the promised land (typical of the millennial reign of Christ). God did take him to the top of Mt. Pisgah and let him look over into the promised land, even though he could not enter.

Now remember—salvation is by grace, but rewards are strictly on the basis of works, and the rewards for our works are to be revealed and made manifest during the thousand years in which Christ reigns here upon the earth.

Therefore, let us give heed, be diligent, be zealous, and abound in the work of the Lord, for we know not when He shall return.

THE TERROR OF THE LORD

There is a philosophy abroad in the land today which seeks to free Christians from any responsibility toward God in regard to their daily living. Instead of following the Word of God which holds Christians accountable for their deeds after they are saved, this teaching lulls them into a state of complacency by asserting that only good deeds will be brought into consideration at the judgment seat of Christ. Their argument proceeds somewhat after this fashion: The judgment seat of Christ has for its purpose the rewarding of saints, the expression of thanks on the behalf of God to all Christians and the bestowal of praise upon them for good deeds which every Christian, they say, has done. Their line of thinking is that the Greek word Bema, translated Judgment Seat, is always used as a place of reward and not of judgment. I call your attention now to every time this word bema occurs, in the New Testament and let you judge for yourself as to whether judgment is involved or not.

In Matt. 27:19 it is used in connection with Pilate when he is sitting in judgment on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is from this place that Pilate issues the decree that Jesus is to be crucified. Does that sound like rewards, praise and thanks?

In Acts 12:21 Herod is seated upon his judgment seat, a place from which judgment was executed as well as rewards issued. We find him smitten by God and eaten of worms. Does that sound like rewards, praise and thanks only?

In Acts 18:12 Gallio, seated upon his judgment seat, executes justice, but in the case of Paul refuses to pass sentence; however, verse 17 tells us of one being beaten before Gallio's judgment seat. Does this sound like rewards, praise and thanks only?

In Acts 25:6, 12 Paul is brought before the judgment seat of Festus and is committed to appear before Caesar for trial and sentencing. Neither is this rewards, praise and thanks, but rather judgment.

In Rom. 14:10 Christians are forbidden to stand in judgment on their brothers because all Christians must stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of themselves unto the Lord. In II Cor. 5:10, 1 la we have a specific statement: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..." Here one is to give an account for his deeds whether they are good or evil. Paul, realizing the terror of the Lord as Christians appear at the judgment seat and answer for their evil deeds, seeks to persuade men that they so labor that they may be accepted of the Lord.

Col. 3:24, 25 calls to our attention that those who please the Lord shall receive rewards, and those who have done wrong shall receive recompense commensurate with the wrong which has been done. The so-called reasoning which relieves one of any responsibility at the judgment seat of Christ is based on a mistranslation and a misinterpretation of I Cor. 4:1-5. Here, in dealing with the stewardship of Christians, it is required that one be found faithful. In concluding the fifth verse Paul says, "... then shall every man have praise of God." The mistranslation is in every man." It should be translated "each man," which refers to the steward of verse 2 who is found faithful. In I Cor. 3:15 we are told expressly and conclusively that a man may be saved and have no good works to his credit. Such a man will not receive rewards, will not be praised, will not be thanked but rather will suffer loss though he himself shall be saved. If every man regardless of his works is to be praised and thanked by the Lord consider for a moment what it does to these passages of Scripture.

In Matt. 22:11-14, it would have the King praising and thanking the disobedient one because he appeared at the marriage without the wedding garment; but he was not so treated. In Matt. 24:45-51, it would have the Lord thanking the unfaithful

servant for teaching that the Lord delayed His coming. It would have the Lord thanking the unfaithful servant for smiting his fellow servants and for eating and drinking with the drunken. It would have the Lord praising the unfaithful servant and giving him a place of rulership in the kingdom instead of setting him aside and putting him with the hypocrites. (A hypocrite, under law, was a constituted leader of the Jews who, instead of serving the Lord, served other interests. In the Christian era, a hypocrite is one who lives for the world, the flesh and the devil.) It would have the Lord, in Matt. 25:12, praising and thanking the foolish virgins for not bringing some extra oil along with the oil which they had in their lamps. It would have the Lord, in Matt. 25:26, thanking instead of condemning the wicked servant for not using the talent committed to him. In Luke 19:22-26, it would have the Lord thanking and praising His unfaithful servant for hiding the pound instead of using it.

The unscripturalness and folly of such reasoning are evident to any who read the above mentioned Scriptures.

“BY THE SKIN OF MY TEETH”

This is an expression we hear so often today when rewards for faithful service, and crowns to wear during the kingdom, are mentioned. Some say, “I am not interested in rewards or crowns— just so I get to heaven by the skin of my teeth will be good enough for me.”

The Holy Spirit has been pleased to give us a course of conduct or schedule of growth that will enable us to have an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord. In II Pet. 1:5-11, we read, *“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”*

Any discussion of rewards necessitates a re-emphasis of the fact that salvation is by grace and grace alone. One does not have to do anything to be saved; one does not have to do anything to stay saved, and one does not have to do anything to prove that he has been saved. Salvation, being by grace, is an inward work and only God knows what is within man.

But there is a definite place for faithfulness and loyalty in Christian living and service; and the result of a godly life is in rewards and crowns, positions of favor, and honor, and glory. These are to be revealed when the Lord establishes His kingdom.

There should be no trouble in distinguishing between salvation and rewards if this simple thought is kept in mind: salvation is by grace, and rewards are according to works.

The second epistle of Peter is addressed to the same group as his first epistle (II Pet. 3:1)—Jews who have obtained like precious faith with the apostles. This faith is *obtained* rather than *attained*. This means it is a free gift of God—not of works—all of grace, plus nothing. The exhortation is that grace and peace might be multiplied to them (1:2) and that they might become partakers of the divine nature (1:4). This is to be accomplished by a simple addition of certain attributes as one puts off the old man and puts on the new man. Beginning with verse 5, one is urged to give all diligence. The giving of diligence calls for earnest endeavor, faithful striving, and zealous yearning after the things of God.

To faith (which has been given to us) we are to add *virtue*. Ordinarily we think of moral purity and chastity when the word virtue is used, but the real meaning in this passage is manliness, moral courage, and determination to grow in grace and knowledge. This is wonderfully exemplified in the lives of Joseph and Daniel in their determination to live for the Lord. If one is to excel in the Christian experience, there must be a solemn and determined resolve to live for the Lord. This is virtue.

Now to virtue add *knowledge*. There are many who are very zealous and determined in their service for the Lord. They are very rigorous in their separation from the things that defile; but they may be likened to the Jews of whom Paul wrote in Rom. 10:2, “For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” There is always the question, “What is wrong with this and what is wrong with that?” They desire to do right but have not the knowledge. “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God”(John 7:17). Here we learn that obedience to the Word of God is the price one must pay for increase of knowledge. One must live up to the light he now has if he hopes to receive more knowledge in the things of God. The Word of God and the will of God cannot be known apart from obedience.

Now to knowledge add *temperance*. Again the common usage of the word is misleading. Ordinarily when temperance is mentioned we think of the use of intoxicating liquors. This is a very small aspect of the word. It really means self-government or self-control. The Apostle Paul speaks of this in his own personal experience: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (I Cor. 9:27). This is also exemplified in the experience of Esau and the bowl of pottage (Gen. 25:27-34). Temperance, or self-control, applies to every realm of our human experience—not only what we drink but also what we eat, our pleasures, our labors, our relationship to our fellowman, and even our worship.

To temperance we are to add *patience*. Possibly a better word in this connection would be *endurance*. In II Tim. 2:12, Paul says if we suffer we shall also reign with Christ. The word suffer means endurance and has the meaning of exercising patience; that is, if we endure patiently we shall reign with Christ. Many times when we, through knowledge of the will of God and the exercise of self-control, find ourselves living a life different to those around us, we become impatient with them because of their way of life. But we need to exercise patience. In my own personal experience, when I become impatient with fellow-Christians, the Lord has a way of causing me to look back over my own rough and rugged path, and it enables me to be a little more patient toward them.

To patience we are to add *godliness*. Strictly speaking, godliness is being godlike. The world has utilized two approaches in its vain attempt to become godlike. First, the negative approach. This consists entirely of. quitting this and quitting that; not doing this and not doing that. This is a different experience to putting off the old man. The second approach is positive: do this and do that; if one is saved he will do this and do that. This is also a different experience to putting on the new man. The Bible way of becoming godlike is entirely different. In II Cor. 3:18 Paul says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory, to glory, even as the Spirit of the Lord." We learn in this verse that one becomes godlike by gazing upon the face of the Lord. Since mortal man cannot look directly on the face of God, he must look at Him as in a mirror; that is, he will have a reflected view rather than a direct one. The mirror into which he looks and sees the face of the Lord is the Word of God. By gazing continually upon the face of the Lord we are changed into the same image. In the realm of human experience we have noticed men and their wives who have lived together for decades, and having spent so much time together they come to look alike. God's method for us to become godlike is that we spend much time gazing upon Him in His Word.

To godliness we are to add *brotherly kindness, or love*. As one grows in the knowledge of the Lord he learns to love other Christians. In fact, in I John 3:14, we are told that we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Here we have love of the brethren as an individual test of the genuineness of our Christian experience. Some are bitter and ugly toward other Christians because of a difference in belief or practice. Such should not be. As we grow we should add to brotherly love, *love*. This not only means that we love the brethren but our enemies as well. (See Matt. 5:43-48.)

Now if these things be in us and abound, we will be fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord.

Peter says that the Christian who does not have the above named attributes has three things wrong with him: 1) He is blind; that is, he cannot see the future blessings that are to be realized in the coming kingdom of our Lord. 2) He is

nearsighted; he cannot see very far even in this lifetime, and consequently, misses most of the blessings the Lord has for him here and now. 3) He has suffered loss of memory and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins; therefore, he misses the assurance of his salvation and cannot have the peace of God in his heart.

The way to make certain our calling and election is to give diligence in adding these attributes. If we do so we shall never stumble. The word *fall* in verse 10 really means *to stumble* as we walk along the Christian pathway.

Those Christians who have been faithful and diligent in the growth and in the knowledge of the Lord, will have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord—not just by the skin of the teeth— but an entrance with the acclaim, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant”—with the reward, “thou hast been faithful over a little, I will make you ruler over ten cities”—and with honor and glory: “enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

If God has blessings to offer to us in crowns and rewards, the ambition of our Christian life should be to earn them.

MISSING THE KINGDOM

Did you know it is possible for a person to be saved, have eternal life, and yet miss the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Recently we encountered one who tried to explain that after a person is saved it does not make any difference what he does, how he lives, or what sins he commits, that God will not call him into account because all his sins are under the blood. Holiness, obedience and faithfulness are words that have been expunged from his vocabulary and they have no part in his Christian experience.

It *does* make a difference how one lives. His part and place in the thousand year reign of Christ is dependent upon it. The judgment seat of Christ has been established in order to judge Christians for their good works and for their evil works. It is there that the terror of the Lord is going to be revealed against Christians who have sinned and have not confessed those sins (II Cor. 5:10, 11).

In Gal. 5:17-21, we have a partial description of the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. Before man becomes a Christian he is, in the terms of Scripture, a natural man. He has but one nature and that is a sinful nature. He sins because he cannot help it. Being a sinful creature he must of necessity sin. After man is born from above, he receives a new nature and becomes the possessor of a dual personality; that is, he still has the old natural man and he also has the new Spiritual man. Now the conflict begins. The flesh strives against the Spirit and the Spirit strives against the flesh. Paul gives a good description of this conflict in Rom. 7:15-25. One day the flesh is in the ascendancy and the next day the Spirit is uppermost; but the conflict is present. And the Word of God tells us that the conflict will continue until our

bodies have been redeemed (Rom. 8:22, 23). The old flesh has its appetites and one can minister to that appetite or one can starve the fleshly nature, thereby weakening it and rendering it ineffective. Our Spiritual nature has an appetite and it can be nurtured so that it will grow in grace and knowledge, or it can be starved and stifled and made powerless. No wonder the Apostle Paul cried out, "O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

In Gal. 5:19-21, we have a list of the works of the flesh which are possible experiences for Christians if they let the flesh gain the ascendancy. The Spirit of God tells us through Paul that all who indulge in these works of the flesh shall not inherit, or enter into, the kingdom of God. (The kingdom of God, or of heaven, or of our Lord, which a Christian inherits, is the millennial reign of Christ and is not eternal life.) Such individuals described in this passage are Christians. An unsaved person does not have this conflict.

Let us consider briefly these sins against which God warns Christians. There are seventeen in all and they are resolved into five classes. The first class are sins against the body: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness. The second group are the sins of worship: idolatry and witchcraft. The third group of sins are the differences between Christians in their worship: hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions and heresies. The fourth group are sins of selfishness: envyings and murders. The fifth group are sins of excessive pleasure: drunkenness, revellings, and such like.

Let us look at these briefly:

1. **Sins of the flesh.** It is well to keep in mind the fact that God never warns His people against sins unless they are capable of and liable to commit such sins. When He warns His children against the sins of adultery, fornication, uncleanness and lasciviousness, it is because they are possible. David, a man after God's own heart, was guilty of adultery and murder. There are ministers who have been guilty of these sins. There are leaders in church activities, Sunday School teachers, youth workers and such like who have been guilty of these sins. Is a Christian lost because of the failure here? David said, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." The Lord Jesus Christ says, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." What is the penalty for a Christian who commits these sins and does not confess and forsake them? He misses the kingdom.
2. **Sins of worship.** Idolatry is worshipping other gods rather than the one true and living God. Christians have long been guilty of idolatry. The Lord warns against covetousness which is idolatry. There are those who make an idol out of their family, that is, put their family ahead of God. Some do the same with their business; others with their pleasures. Many, many things become idols to Christians because God is relegated to the

background when the two come into conflict. The other sin of worship is witchcraft which simply is seeking by magic, necromancy, divination, or fortune telling, to gain knowledge which God has not revealed in His Word. Many pet superstitions of Christians come under the heading of witchcraft. God hates it; and in the days of the Law, on one occasion, He commanded the children of Israel to exterminate whole nations because they were given over to witchcraft. What happens when a Christian commits these sins of idolatry or witchcraft and does not confess and forsake them? He misses the kingdom.

3. **Sins in worship.** (a) Hatred means to dislike or feel an aversion to; (b) variance is deviation or discrepancy in belief and practice; (c) emulation is an endeavor to equal or excel; (d) wrath means violent anger or rage; (e) strife is contention for superiority; (f) sedition is resistance to the authority of God and His Word (in civil life this is called treason); (g) heresy is a promotion of a division because of doctrinal difference. What happens to a Christian who is guilty of these and does not confess and forsake them? He misses the kingdom.
4. **Sins of selfishness.** (a) Envy means a disregard for another's property or possessions; (b) murder is a disregard for another's life. According to the Scripture, if one hates another he is guilty of murder. What happens to the Christian who is guilty of these two sins and does not confess or forsake them? He misses the kingdom.
5. **Sins of pleasure.** (a) Drunkenness is the drinking of too much intoxicant; (b) revellings is wild, boisterous, unrestrained hilarity which marks many entertainments given by Christians; (c) and such like. This includes all kinds of worldly pleasures indulged in to an unrestrained excess. What happens to a Christian, given over to such, who does not confess and forsake them? He misses the kingdom.

Hear ye the Word of the Lord: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Saved? Yes. But all their works are burned and they have no place in His kingdom. After the thousand years they will enter into life everlasting; but for one thousand years God is going to make a difference between Christians who are faithful unto Him and those who are not.

A CASTAWAY—OR MISSING THE KINGDOM

In I Cor. 9:27, the Apostle Paul speaks of keeping his body under subjection lest that when he had preached to others, he himself should be a castaway. Many have erroneously interpreted this to mean that Paul was fearful of losing his salvation; however, a study of the context makes clear the thought that Paul was not afraid of losing his salvation but of being rejected as a ruler in the coming kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The preferred translation of the word *castaway* in the King James Version is “disapproved” or “rejected.” The same word is used in Heb. 12:17, where Esau is rejected as the firstborn. The latter part of I Cor. 9 and the first part of I Cor. 10 speaks of rewards that can be won or forfeited by Christians. In I Cor. 9:24 he likens the Christian life to a race that is run by athletes at the Olympic games. In the race, many ran but only one received first prize. Christians are engaged in a race in which all may win the prize. Paul speaks of men disciplining themselves in order to excel in running and thereby win first prize. This prize was a corruptible crown like a laurel wreath; but we as Christians are striving for a crown that is incorruptible. Therefore, Paul says, “When I run this race I do not run all over the race track, but I press straight toward the goal. Neither do I waste time shadow boxing, but I really keep my body in subjection.”

Paul was not fearful of losing his salvation because he said, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (II Tim. 1:12). He also wrote the eighth chapter of Romans, which is a classic on the security of the believer. No, he had no fear whatsoever of losing his salvation, but he was afraid of losing his reward.

All rewards are for faithfulness and all crowns for loyalty. All positions of trust and honor will extend through the millennium and will be meted out to Christians on the basis of their faithfulness. (See II Cor. 5:10; Luke 19:11-27; II Tim. 2:12.)

In I Cor. 10:1-15, the Apostle Paul draws an analogy between the children of Israel and the Christians of this dispensation. He tells us in the sixth and eleventh verses of this passage that the things which happened to the children of Israel, happened as types and that they are written particularly for our admonition.

Let us now consider the example of the children of Israel in this passage: *“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat of the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ”* (I Cor. 10:1-4).

This description leaves no doubt whatsoever concerning the relationship between the children of Israel and God. They were all under the blood; they were all baptized unto Moses; they were all delivered from Egypt (a type of sin and the world); they were peculiarly God’s own people and shared and enjoyed the blessings that

accrued unto them as such. But with many of them God was not pleased and He overthrew them in the wilderness. The fact of the matter is, only two of that particular generation, Joshua and Caleb, entered into the promised land. Some erroneously think that the promised land is a type of eternal life, but it is not. All those who were overthrown in the wilderness were saved. One does well to call to mind that Moses himself did not enter the promised land. God permitted him to view it (Deut. 34:1-4) but would not let him enter in. That was because of the sin Moses committed toward the end of his career. This reminds us that a man may be a faithful servant of the Lord for years, yet sin in his closing days and lose his rewards. (See Rev. 3:11.)

Faithfulness unto the end is part of the task of serving the Lord. We know Moses was saved because he appeared with Elijah and Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. He is also listed in the "Hall of Fame" in Heb. 11:23ff. What then is the significance of his being barred from the promised land? Just this: The promised land is a type of the millennial reign of Christ; and the truth we want to emphasize in this particular article is, though the children of Israel were saved and had eternal life, yet because of their unbelief in the Word of God pertaining to the promised land, all but two were barred from entering into that land to enjoy its blessings.

The teaching which the Apostle Paul was emphasizing in I Cor. 10, is that whereas a person may be saved and have life everlasting, it is still possible for him to miss the millennial reign of Christ because of disobedience, unfaithfulness, and sin; and when Paul says he keeps his body under subjection lest he be disapproved, he simply means that since he has been saved he is trying to live and serve in such a way that he will not be cast away as was Moses and the majority of the children of Israel. He wants to be approved and enter into the reign of Christ just as Joshua and Caleb entered into the promised land.

Too long Christians have been content to accept the grace of God for salvation and then, on the supposition that all Christians share alike in the coming kingdom of our Lord, give themselves over to live in the flesh. God says in His Word that He will make one a ruler over ten cities; another, a ruler over five cities; and there will be still others who will not rule over any city. In I Cor. 3:14, 15, He says, "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

One can see from this passage that a person can be saved and have no good works to his credit, but he shall suffer loss. In I Cor. 11:30, 31, we learn that if a person waits until he is judged at the judgment seat of Christ, he must undergo chastisement at the hand of the Lord. Matt. 16:27 teaches that every man is going to be rewarded according to his works. In Heb. 2:1-4 we see that every disobedience of a Christian is going to receive a just recompense of reward. In Matt. 3:11 we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ who baptized in the Holy Ghost, will also baptize those who have received the Holy Ghost, in fire, and their works will be manifest. This

passage teaches that fruit-bearing is the condition of blessing.

If the Apostle Paul had occasion to be disturbed over the fact that he might be disapproved as one of the kings in the coming kingdom, how much more should he be exercised over the fact that we can be saved and yet lose all our rewards and have no part in the coming kingdom.

What then can a Christian do? Just this: Go to that secret chamber of prayer, fall on his face before the Lord and claim the promise of I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2:14).

As the end of this dispensation closes we learn of a religious state of affairs coming into the forefront that grossly dishonors our Lord. Jude 11: **"Woe unto them for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."**

1. **Cain's bloodless sacrifice is the first one mentioned.** When God demanded a sacrifice of blood for the atonement of sin, Cain preferred to bring a bloodless offering of the fruit of the field. The earth was under the curse of God and that which Cain brought would likewise be under a curse. Though the Lord gave him ample opportunity to take back the bloodless offering and bring a blood sacrifice, he refused to do so. God still demands atonement by blood, and that demand was satisfied at Calvary by the death of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Today this is denied by man, and on every hand he is urged to do the best he can and hope for heaven.
2. **The second deviation from the plan and purpose of God was exemplified by the error of Balaam who was prepared to compromise the principles of God for wealth and worldly position.** He was a priest who placed a price upon his services and would attempt any sort of religious exercise if the pay was sufficient. Today both the church and the minister too often place a price on the services of the servants of the Lord. Many are willing to teach and preach if it means worldly success and social attainment. Many refuse the call of God today because in many instances the remuneration seems to be very little.

- 3. A third characteristic of default in Christian circles is called the gain-saying of Korah.** He was a priest who stood in the midst of the people of God and publicly opposed the truth. Today in the highest places of Christendom there are religious and denominational leaders bold enough to stand up and oppose the fundamental Truth of the Word of God. Instead of teaching and preaching the Word of God they are teaching and preaching the wisdom of man.

You will notice in the Scripture quoted—Rev. 2:14—that attention is called to the doctrine of Balaam rather than the error of Balaam. Few of the commentators have distinguished between the error of Balaam and the doctrine of Balaam. Therefore, the teaching pertaining to the doctrine of Balaam is practically nil. The doctrine of Balaam was that which he taught which was contrary to the Word of God. His error was willingness to prophesy either good or bad for money. To understand the doctrine of Balaam, which was that to which God objected in the church of Pergamos, it might be well for us to review briefly the background of Balaam's doctrine.

Balak, a king of Moab, was advised that the children of Israel would soon be coming through his country. He did not want them to do so because he thought they would despoil all of his land. He knew that he could not defeat them because of the power of Jehovah, their God. He also knew that defeat could come to the children of Israel only if he could separate Israel's God from them. He conceived the idea of employing Balaam to come and curse Israel, thereby incurring the anger of God so that the defeat of Israel would be comparatively easy.

Balaam (of whom we know practically nothing) was perfectly willing to hire out to Balak for his ungodly scheme. However, God warned Balaam not to accept the offer of Balak, neither attempt to curse the children of Israel. However, Balak's money was so great that he was persuaded to start the journey to the country of Balak with the intention of pronouncing a curse upon Israel. In the course of his journey an angel appeared, and after the unusual experience of being warned and then hurt by his ass, he offered to return home but the angel insisted that he go on to Balak.

When he arrived in Moab, Balak took him to a mountain where seven sacrifices were offered but Balaam could only speak words of blessing upon the children of Israel. Balaam was then taken to another mountain where another seven offerings were offered on altars and again, nothing but words of blessing came out of his mouth. Balak took him to a third mountain and once again seven other sacrifices were offered, but when Balaam opened his mouth nothing but beautiful prophecies concerning the children of Israel came forth. Balak was so angered that he hastened to get rid of Balaam, who returned to his home.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, as far as most students of the Word are concerned, this is the end of Balaam. But in Num. 25:1-3 we read: "And Israel

abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.”

Herein we learn of the children of Israel eating meat sacrificed to idols, bowing down and worshipping the gods of Moab, and committing fornication with the daughters of Moab. What happened? How could Israel sink so low? What was the occasion of her indulgence in these gross sins which so angered the Lord that twenty-four thousand of the children of Israel perished under the judgment of God?

In Num. 31:16 we have the answer: **“Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.”**

In the battle against the Midianites in which Israel took all of the women captive, God had Moses save all the women alive; but there were further orders for them to kill every woman that had been involved with any of the children of Israel. These women were to be put to death because it was the counsel of Balaam—that is, the doctrine, the teaching of Balaam to the children of Israel and the women of the Moabites—that caused the children of Israel to sin so wickedly.

Balaam, having failed to curse Israel, did succeed in seducing them by the wiles of his counsel to eat meat sacrificed to idols and commit fornication. After he had counseled the children of Israel to commit these sins, the women of Moab then lured the children of Israel into sin.

The children of Israel were the covenant people of God; the children of Israel were God’s chosen people; the children of Israel were called God’s firstborn son. No matter what the children of Israel did, their covenant relationship could not be broken. And the DOCTRINE OF BALAAM broadly stated is that, since Israel was God’s covenant people, that relationship could not be altered or changed; that is, no harm could come unto them for any sin in which they cared to indulge.

That is the doctrine in the church today so hated by our Lord—the doctrine of Balaam. As expressed in common terminology, the doctrine of Balaam is that, since salvation is by grace, and one, having become a Christian through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is eternally secure, then nothing that a Christian does can alter his relationship with the Lord.

The doctrine of Balaam is also expressed in these words—very artless and seemingly guileless but filled with tragic potential—that every Christian is going to rule and reign with the Lord, regardless of the kind of life the Christian lives.

There is no acceptance of the truth of God that some Christians will reign over ten cities and other Christians will reign over none—that some Christians will overcome and other Christians shall be overcome—that some Christians shall inherit the birthright and other Christians will forfeit their inheritance—that some Christians will enter into the joy of the Lord and other Christians will suffer weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:11).

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