

SCENARIO OF

The PHOTO-DRAMA of

CREATION

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PART III.

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The Divine Revelation, the Bible, is the  
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#### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM INTERPRETED

**D**ANIEL, a young Israelite taken captive to Babylon with others, later became God's Prophet. King Nebuchadnezzar had an impressive dream which on waking he could not recall. His "wise men" could not help him. Finally Daniel, guided by the Lord, told both the dream and its interpretation.—Daniel 2:1, 5, 26-30.

The dream and its interpretation interests and concerns us today as much or more than it did Nebuchadnezzar. In his dream the King saw a great Image; its head was gold, its breast and arms silver, its belly and sides brass, its legs iron, and its feet iron intermingled and smeared with clay. Then the King saw a Stone cut out of the mountain without hands and hurled at the feet of the Image. The Image fell, ground to powder, and the wind carried it away. Then the Stone grew until it filled the earth.—Daniel 2:31-35.

The Divine interpretation of this dream, given through Daniel, explains that the head of the Image was the Babylonian Kingdom, the breast and arms the succeeding Medo-Persian Empire, the belly and sides of brass the Grecian Empire, which followed, and the legs the succeeding Roman Empire. The feet represented the "Holy Roman Empire" and its successors; the iron of the feet the civil power, the clay intermingled and smeared over the iron pictured the ecclesiastical power of our day. Thus seen, we are living in the days of the ten toes, or divisions of the Image.

The Stone represents God's Kingdom, which the clay on the feet of the Image imitated. The Stone represents God's Elect Church, gathered out from Jews and Gentiles, and from every nation and denomination, to constitute Messiah's Kingdom. Shortly, this Kingdom will be established in power and great glory, and the kingdoms of this world will disappear as by magic. Messiah's Kingdom will then grow until it fills the whole earth, and brings all things under its control, every wilful sinner being cut off in the Second Death.



#### DANIEL'S DREAM—ANOTHER VIEW

**B**ETWEEN Zedekiah and Messiah, there has been a long period of time. During this period God gave a lease of government to the Gentile Kingdoms, represented in Nebuchadnezzar's Image. That lease of power to rule the world as best they could was to last for "seven times"—seven symbolic years, each day of which (lunar time) would represent a year. Thus "seven times" would mean seven times three hundred and sixty, that is, 2520 years. That period is apparently due to expire in 1915. In other words, very soon the Gentile lease of Earthly Dominion expires. Then the due time will come for Messiah's Kingdom to begin its reign. This seems to explain present social unrest.

The same facts presented to King Nebuchadnezzar, God showed under different symbols to the Prophet Daniel. Instead of a great Image, Daniel saw great Beasts. This means that the Gentile governments, so grand to worldly men, appear beastly from the Divine viewpoint. Surely we can agree to this as we look over the bloody pages of history; the world has been under beastly rule, even though the best it was able to provide for itself—and though much worse conditions could be imagined—for instance, Anarchy.

The first beast of Daniel's dream, a lion, represented Babylon; the second, a bear, Medo-Persia; the third, a leopard, Grecia—the four heads representing Alexander the Great's successors, four generals. The fourth beast represented the Roman Empire. Its ten horns corresponded to the ten toes of the Image. The horn that had eyes and was crowned, is believed by many to represent ecclesiastical power enthroned amid political power.

A judgment scene was shown to Daniel, in which all these governments were disapproved, and the dominion taken from them and given to One who appeared like unto The Son of Man. The Kingdom given Him was a perpetual one, that all should serve and obey Him; and all beastly governments were destroyed.—Daniel 7:13-27.



BELSHAZZAR'S LAST FEAST

**P**RIDE overbalanced Nebuchadnezzar's judgment, and, in the plain of Dura, he was led to erect a great image of himself as Earth's Ruler, to which all people were required to bow down in obedient reverence! If the people could regard him as a god, they would be the more sure to obey him. But among them were three Hebrews who refused to bow the knee. Their religious scruples were not respected. It was enough that they were defying Emperor Nebuchadnezzar. A great furnace was heated seven times, or as hot as possible, and into it the three servants of God were cast. The men who threw them in inhaled flame and died. Nebuchadnezzar and his lords, looking over toward the furnace, saw the three unhurt and with them One like unto the Son of God. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the God of the Hebrews and commanded all the people to worship Him. Although God's people today may be subjected to fiery trials, they will probably not be literally burned in a furnace. Nevertheless, God's power can keep their hearts in every trouble.

It was after this that Nebuchadnezzar became insane and beast-like lived upon herbage, seven years, after which his reason was restored and he gave glory to God.

Later on came Belshazzar's Feast, the handwriting on the wall and the fall of Babylon, when the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, represented in the image by the silver, and by the Bear in Daniel's vision, took possession of the dominions once ruled by Babylon. Cyrus' army turned aside the Euphrates, marched in through the river-bed and captured the city supposed to be impregnable.

Babylon is the symbolical name in Revelation for a great Ecclesiastical System. Its fall is described as accomplished through the drying up of the symbolical river Euphrates, that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared—a Royal Priesthood, of which Christ is the Head. The river represents people and wealth.—Revelation 17:15.



DANIEL INTERPRETING THE HANDWRITING

**D**ANIEL the Prophet ranked high with King Darius for his integrity. His associates hated him because he prevented graft. They knew of no way to get hold of Daniel except on account of his religion. They urged upon King Darius the influence that would accrue from announcing himself the only one to be worshiped. They urged that this would impress the people, make them more loyal to his government. They got a decree issued that anybody worshipping any other god than Darius should be thrown into a den of lions. Then they spied upon Daniel and convicted him.

It was a Medo-Persian law that royal decrees could never be ignored. Hence, although King Darius was very sorry to know of his most faithful officer being caught, he was unable to change the arrangement. His only hope was that Daniel's God might do something for his deliverance.

Daniel was cast into the den of lions, but in the morning was brought forth safe. Then those who had thus entrapped him, by the King's command were cast into the den of lions, the same as Daniel, and devoured.—Daniel 6:14-24.

At the end of the seventy years of the desolation of Jerusalem, God stirred up the heart of Cyrus, who then was on the throne, to issue a proclamation giving liberty to all Israelites to return to Palestine. He also gave money, and decreed that the vessels of the Lord's House, which had previously been taken, should be restored. Approximately fifty thousand Israelites returned—so few out of the many taken into captivity. The zealous, full of faith in the Abrahamic Promise, returned, rebuilt the city, and, in Ezra's time, the Temple. The others had become worldly-minded and interested in Babylon. Thus God separated the dross of Israel to prepare them for Messiah. Yet the "Israelites indeed" were few compared to the whole, when their day of visitation came.

The romantic story of Queen Esther, wife of King Ahasuerus, follows the period of King Cyrus' decree.



THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

**E**ZEKIEL'S vision of the valley of dry bones, which came together, were clothed with sinews, and then with skin, an exceeding great army, is supposed to represent the resurrection of the dead. But this conjecture seems to be erroneous. The Prophet declares that this picture represents the revival of Israel's Hopes. First the dry-bones of hope, then sinews of strength, and finally comeliness and completion. We read, "This is the whole House of Israel, which say, Our hope [of again becoming a nation] is dried; we are cut off from our parts."—Ezekiel 37:1-14.

The fulfillment of this prediction seems to be in progress now amongst the Jewish people. Only a short time ago they had no hope; then came Zionism, the dry bones of hope for amelioration from suffering, but without any faith in the Abrahamic promise. Later, we see the Jews growing in trust in the Abrahamic promise and coming together with strength, wealth and faith. The time is evidently not far distant when their national hope will be rehabilitated and they shall rejoice again as a people.—Isaiah 40:1, 2; Romans 11:25-33.

The Scriptures tell about the resurrection of the dead; that it will not be the body which dies that will be resurrected. The body returns to dust. In the morning of Messiah's Reign, God through Him will grant each of Adam's race "a body as it hath pleased Him." The saintly few will share in the First Resurrection, to glory, honor and immortality, the Divine nature, far above angels. Then will come God's blessing upon the world, to give them Restitution—earthly bodies. It is manifestly much easier for God to give as He purposes, a new body, than, as we once surmised, to gather each atom of dust from every quarter to restore it as the same body. Not a passage of Scripture mentions the resurrection of the body, but many passages mention the resurrection of the soul, which will be awakened and given a new body, earthly for the earthly class, Heavenly for the Heavenly class.—1 Cor. 15:37-42.



THE LOGOS MADE FLESH

**T**HE Jewish nation, failing to keep the Law Covenant of Sinai, failed to make good as the Seed of Abraham fit to bless the world. Then the due time came for God to provide Messiah—Redeemer and Deliverer for Israel and all peoples. He would become flesh, of Abraham's family, fulfil the Law Covenant terms, and then by self-sacrifice would become Abraham's Seed on the Spirit plane, able to succeed all who would come to the Father through Him.

In St. John's Gospel (1:1-5) Jesus in His pre-existent condition is described as the Word of God, or Logos, "The First-born of all Creation."—Colossians 1:15.

Ancient kings addressing their people sat behind a lattice, in front of which stood a representative who uttered the king's message to the people. Such representative was called the Logos—the king's word, or mouthpiece. The illustration is forceful, beautiful, when applied to God's Only Begotten Son, through whom God speaks to humanity—to the Church now, to the world shortly, through the Messianic Kingdom.

The literal translation of John 1:1 throws much light upon a subject hitherto dark. "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with *the* God, and the Logos was a God; the same was in the beginning with *the* God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not one thing made that was made. The Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father." Jesus tells us the same thing in other language, saying, "He was the beginning of the creation of God." (Rev. 3:14.) "He was the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega." (Rev. 21:6.) The thought is clear; Jehovah God directly created no other being than the Logos, and Him very great and in the likeness of Jehovah. How distinctly, yet briefly, all this is stated by St. John!

Next in the Divine Program was the annunciation to Mary, then, the greatest event of history, the birth of our Redeemer.



#### TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY

**O**NLY as we associate the Babe of Bethlehem with the Logos by and through whom all things were made, do we get our mental focus respecting Jesus. His life was not from Adam, through Joseph—a forfeited life. It was a transferred life. The Logos, who was rich in spirit privileges, glory and honor, “for our sakes became poor [The Man Christ Jesus] that we by His poverty might become rich”—that mankind might be redeemed from the curse—the Death Sentence and all it includes of sorrow, pain and alienation from God. “A body hast Thou prepared Me for the suffering of death!” The death of a spotless One was necessary as a Ransom-price for Adam and his race.—1 Timothy 2:6.

No wonder the angels rejoiced to announce to the shepherds the Logos made flesh—the Babe of Bethlehem. “Fear not! Behold, we bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people!” Few have analyzed the Message, few have seen how comprehensive its scope. It is for Jews and Gentiles—sinners all—“all people.” Only a few have yet had opportunity to get this great joy; but the Redeemer promises that He will yet be the True Light to lighten every man that cometh into the world.—John 1:9.

“For unto you [mankind] is born this day in the City of David a *Savior*, which is Christ the Lord.” Ah! the meaning of that word *Savior*! It means *Life-giver*! The right to live had been lost—all are dying. The Life-giver came to provide life everlasting for the dying race. Thank God for a Life-giver, a Great One, able to save unto the uttermost!—Hebrews 7:25.

The “Peace on Earth, good-will to men” prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, but it is nearing. The birth of the Babe was one step toward it; the death on the cross was another; the glorious resurrection and ascension of the Logos again to the Spirit plane were other steps. The selection of the Church as Messiah’s Bride is another, nearly completed. The Messianic Kingdom will complete the blessed prophecy.



#### JOHN THE FORERUNNER

**T**HE work of redemption began with Jesus’ consecration to death at 30 years of age, symbolized by His Baptism. There He who was made flesh for the purpose, gave Himself to be a Ransom-price for all, to be testified to all in due time. The humbling of the Logos to take human nature, the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem, and the years of development afterward, were incidental. Similarly, the work of John the Baptist was a preparation. His mission was the announcement of Jesus as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” He reproved sin and exhorted to righteousness as necessary to all who would receive Messiah and be received and blessed by Him as sharers in the Kingdom. He would establish.

John preached, “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! Repent ye!” Only the Israelites indeed, without guile, received Messiah, and became associates in His glorious work. John’s Baptism was the washing away of sins against the Jewish Law, and was intended only for Jews not wholly faithful.

John’s Baptism symbolized cleansing from defilement, and was preached to the Jews, and was applicable to them only. Gentiles were excluded. How could they repent and get back into covenant relationship when they had never been in relationship? The Jews, still under the covenant made with them at Sinai through its mediator, Moses, had relationship with God, for, as St. Paul says, they “were all baptized into Moses, in the sea and in the cloud.” Every Israelite in heart relationship with God through Moses, was transferred from Moses to Christ, and needed no additional baptism into Christ, because already accepted in Moses, the type of Christ.

When the Call began to go to the Gentiles, several at Ephesus believed and were baptized by John’s Baptism, as though they had been Jews. This was a mistake. At St. Paul’s word they were rebaptized into Christ’s death. Gentiles needed to be baptized directly into Christ’s death.—Acts 18:25; 19:3-5; Romans 6:3; 11:17-25.



NEARLY THIRTY—OFF FOR BAPTISM

**W**HEN Jesus presented Himself to John at Jordan to be baptized, it caused surprise. John declared, "I have more need to ask You to baptize me! You have no sin to wash away! Jesus did not explain the matter. He merely said, "Suffer it to be so now." He thus intimated that He was not following John's baptism to wash away sins, but that His baptism had another special meaning, which He did not disclose. St. Paul explains to us that Jesus' baptism symbolized His full consecration of His life to God as a sacrifice, even unto death.—Hebrews 10:5-9.

Jesus afterward indicated that His entire ministry was a fulfillment of the consecration made at thirty, when He was baptized. It symbolized His immersion into death—yielding His life to the service of God. At the close of His ministry, He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50.) The next day, on the cross, He cried, "It is finished!" His baptism into death, begun at Jordan, was there completed.

In this matter the followers of Jesus copy Him. They are baptized into His death, and thus into His Body, the Church. (Romans 6:3.) This baptism into The Christ company, or Body, will not be completed until the last member shall have passed into death. Then the baptism of Christ as a whole will be finished. Then beyond the veil, by the First Resurrection, the entire Body will receive glory, honor and immortality and be joint-heirs with Jesus in the Kingdom then established. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign."

As Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens [higher things] were opened to Him. Heavenly Truths became clearer. He could understand the "deep things of God," (1 Corinthians 2:10.) This enlightenment came by the receiving of the Holy Spirit. So His followers received a measure of the Spirit, begetting them as sons of God, joint-heirs with Christ. They also are illuminated.—Hebrews 10:32.



THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

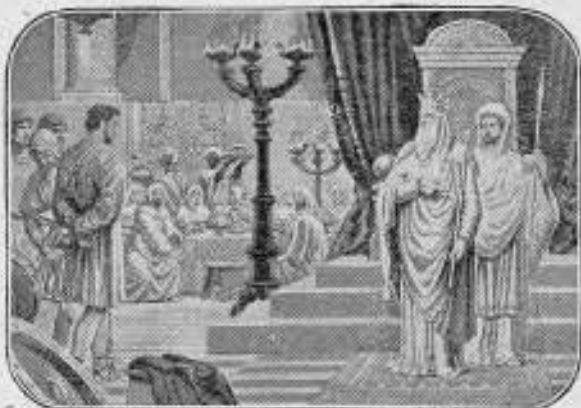
**F**OR more than sixteen centuries Israel had waited and prayed for the coming of Messiah's Kingdom to exalt them, and to bless the world. The announcement that the Kingdom was at hand was a good Message—or Gospel.

But not enough Jews were in condition of heart to be Israelites indeed, worthy to share with Jesus in the glorious service of His great, long-promised Kingdom. "He came unto His own [people], but His own received Him not"—they crucified Him. But to as many as received Him [few] He gave the liberty, or privilege, of becoming sons of God, of passing from the House of Servants, under Moses, to the House of Sons, under the Headship of Jesus. This was effected at Pentecost, by the begetting of the Holy Spirit.—John 1:11-13; Heb. 3:1-6.

Not enough worthy Jews being found, the Kingdom offer was withdrawn from them, and for nineteen centuries God has been completing the foreordained number from saintly Gentiles. Outward signs and the prophecies demonstrate that the Kingdom was not set up then, and did not begin to bless the world. Instead, all the unready of Israel were broken off from Divine favor for a time, while the Call to the Kingdom was sent to the Gentiles, to take out of them a people to complete the foreordained "Body of Christ." (Romans 11:1-7, 11, 12.) Holy, saintly characters from every nation have been gathering for nineteen centuries, until now the number is nearly complete and the Kingdom about to be established.

When, therefore, the election of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham shall be accomplished, this Gospel Age will end. Then will begin the Messianic Age, in which Christ and the Church shall reign in spirit power.—Revelation 5:10; 20:6.

Then the blindness of Israel will be removed, and the blessings of the New Dispensation will come to them, and through them to all the families of the Earth, as God promised. That the Church is the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, to bless Natural Israel and the world, is clearly shown in Galatians 3:16, 29.



MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON

**J**ESUS' parables chiefly relate to the Kingdom. Some of them show how the Jews failed to become heirs of the Kingdom, and how the Gentiles came in for a share. Others show the Kingdom class suffering violence during this Age as a part of their preparation for the Kingdom glories. "The Kingdom of Heaven [class] suffereth violence." The violent have dominated it by force for centuries.

The parable of the King's Son shows that the Jews had the first opportunity for joint-heirship with Messiah in His Kingdom. Then the Gentiles received the invitation. And these, not many wise or learned, have for eighteen centuries been prepared for Messiah's Kingdom. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"—1 Corinthians 6:2.

In the parable the "Wedding Garment" represents a faith relationship with God through Christ's merit. The one who discarded it was cast out of the Bridal Company. This prefigures the fate of all who reject the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ in atonement for their sins. They will be forced out of the light of Present Truth—into the "outer darkness" of the world. By and by they will realize their loss of the Kingdom with chagrin—weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Pearl of Great Price illustrates the Kingdom's priceless value—it is worth its cost—our all.

The Wheat-field parable of the Kingdom represents the Church during this Age. The wheat, almost choked out by tares of error, yet finally ripened and gathered into the Heavenly garner, will be the Sun of Righteousness to usher in the New Day of Messiah's Kingdom.—Matthew 13:43.

The parable of the Talents represents how each consecrated disciple of Jesus is a steward of his own talents, and that according to his faithfulness will be his share in the Kingdom. Faithfulness in using the few talents of the present will bring great opportunities for blessing the world in the next Age. "I will make thee ruler over many things."—Matthew 25:21.



RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

**T**HE Scribes, Pharisees and Doctors of the Law were the Elder Brother of the Prodigal Son parable. Publicans and sinners, careless of spiritual privileges, were the Prodigal, estranged from their Father's House. Jesus shows God's attitude toward the returning prodigal. For such He provides a "feast," a blessing which all may share, if they will. Those who received Jesus' Message included not many great, wise or noble, but chiefly penitent prodigals.

The parable of Dives and Lazarus illustrated the same lesson. The Jewish nation was Dives, the Rich man. His table, his spiritual food, the promises of God, was abundantly supplied; his raiment, fine linen, represented justification, effected through the typical Atonement-day sacrifices. His purple robe represented, symbolically, the fact that he was identified with God's Kingdom, purple being a symbol of royalty. Lazarus represented the hopelessness of the sinners and Gentiles, who hungered for a share in the promises to Abraham, but who got only "crumbs" until Israel's rejection.—Matthew 23:38.

The Poor man's sores represented a sin-sick condition; the dogs which licked them represented the sympathy of Gentile "dogs." This was illustrated in the Syrophenician woman whose daughter Jesus healed. She was not a Jewess, and therefore Jesus at first refused to aid her, saying, "It is not proper to take the children's bread and give it to dogs." But she pleaded: "Yes, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the children's table." Jesus gave her the crumb.

The Rich man, the Jewish nation, died to his great blessings. Nationally he fell asleep in Hades, and awaits reawakening. But personally the Jews passed into a great time of trouble, symbolically represented as fire, for eighteen centuries.

Lazarus also died to his condition of disfavor, and found himself in "Abraham's bosom"—a child of Abraham. Thus the Gentiles have become Abraham's Seed, and heirs of the Spiritual part of the Abrahamic Promise.—Galatians 3:29.



DIVES AND LAZARUS

**W**HEN Jesus found the mourners bewailing the death of Jairus' daughter, He put them forth, saying, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Then He awakened her. Man does not die the same as beast. Although death to man and beast is cessation of life, yet to man God has given precious promises of a future life by a resurrection. There are numerous assurances that mankind shall be restored from death to receive things promised. Therefore the Scriptures speak of man as not dying, but merely falling asleep. The unconscious sleepers are all promised an awakening in the Resurrection Morn. Jesus declared that all in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth—some to a life of eternal reward, for present faithfulness; others to a trial, or judgment, to determine their everlasting destiny.—John 5:28, 29. R.V.

Jesus awakened Lazarus, whose sisters were Martha and Mary, at whose home He frequently stopped at Bethany. When Lazarus was seriously sick, the sisters sent Jesus the message, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick." To their surprise he allowed Lazarus to die. Mentioning the matter to His disciples, He said, "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*," and later, "Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." Jesus said not a word about the dead going to Heaven, purgatory or hell, as was once believed. See John 3:13; 11:13, 14; Acts 2:29-35.

This word *sleep* has long been used as symbolical of death. "Abraham slept with his fathers," and his fathers were heathens. St. Paul refers to "those who sleep in Jesus," and tells us "We shall not all sleep," referring to those who remain alive until the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom, and the First Resurrection—at the beginning of His Reign.

These sleep neither in Heaven, purgatory nor a hell of torment. The Bible declares, "They that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake," some to shine as stars, and others to be in contempt and shame, until they have demonstrated their repentance and loyalty.—Daniel 12:2.



CAPERNAUM "CAST DOWN TO HELL"

**C**APERNAUM, the scene of the majority of Jesus' mighty works, is now marked merely by a ruin. In it we see fulfilled Jesus' prophecy, "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell"—to Hades—the tomb. Symbolically that city was lifted to heaven in privilege as being the Master's own city during His ministry. Its great privileges meant great responsibility, and hence Jesus told them that if the same mighty works done in their midst had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have repented. He said, "In the Day of Judgment, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you."

The Day of Judgment is undoubtedly the thousand-year Day of Christ's Reign, in which judgment, or trial, will be granted to the world, to separate "sheep" from "goats"—to determine those worthy and those unworthy of everlasting life. That glorious Epoch will be a blessed Day of privilege, light and grace, in which all the darkness of sin will vanish. It will be "more tolerable" for those who sinned without light than for those who enjoyed great privileges and opportunities.

Bible students are coming to see that the Day of Judgment has been greatly misunderstood. It has been thought of as a time of condemnation, instead of which it will be a period of testing, to see who, under trial, will be found worthy and who unworthy of everlasting life, which Jesus died to secure for all of Adam's race desiring it on God's terms.

The first Judgment Day was in Eden. Father Adam because of disobedience was sentenced to death. For six thousand years his race has been under that sentence. Jesus died to release all from that sentence, and to grant to all an opportunity of everlasting life. Only a faithful few, an Elect class, have yet been blessed. Their judgment, or trial, is in advance of the world, that they may be with Jesus judges of the world during the world's trial, or Judgment Day—the thousand years.—1 Corinthians 6:2; Acts 17:31.





SHEEP AND GOATS PARABLE

**T**HIS parable pictures the Kingdom conditions after the Church is glorified and the Kingdom established. It will begin fulfilment "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him." All nations, including those now asleep in death, will be on trial before Christ's Judgment Seat, to determine their willingness or unwillingness to come fully into harmony with God, and to receive the Divine blessing of life everlasting, or, contrariwise, to be destroyed in the Second Death.

Those developing the wayward, goat-like disposition will pass to Messiah's disfavor, represented by His left hand. At the close of the Millennium, the separation will have affected the entire human family, and have brought all into one of two classes. One class will be rewarded with "the gift of God, eternal life." The other class, unworthy, will get the punishment which God has provided, namely, destruction—*abolition*, cutting off from life. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Their destruction is symbolically represented by fire, and was illustrated by the fires in the Valley of Hinnom (mistranslated "Hell"), in which the garbage of Jerusalem was destroyed. The Valley of Hinnom (Greek, Gehenna) was once quite deep. Only dead carcasses were put into it, including those of very vicious criminals. It symbolized hopelessness—annihilation. Jesus used Jerusalem as a figure of the New Jerusalem. This valley—Gehenna—prefigured the Second Death, from which there will be no redemption—no recovery.

Gehenna was earlier called Tophet. When Israel became idolatrous, the image of Moloch was erected there and children were roasted alive in the arms of the image—sacrificially—devilishly. Good King Josiah defiled it for garbage purposes.

Our pious fathers provided worse idols for us—Creed-idols! To these we were taught to sacrifice millions of heathens, and non-elect infants. But their day is gone! Thank God! Safer views of God are ours, and a truer interpretation of the Bible.



PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

**N**OT only did Jesus and His disciples preach about the Kingdom, and teach about it in parables, but the mighty works which Jesus did were intended to foreshadow the still greater work to be accomplished by His Kingdom during His Millennial Reign.—Matt. 4:23; Isa. 35:5,6.

This is intimated by the words, "These things did Jesus and manifested forth His glory." In other words, the works of Jesus were foregleams of the work of His Glorious Kingdom. Many of His mighty works were done on the Sabbath for the same reason. As the six days in the week represent toil and travail, the result of sin, so the seventh day represents the Millennium, "the rest of the people of God," secured to all who accept it through the merit of Christ's sacrifice.

The turning of water into wine represented how the plain things of the present time, the simplicity of present Truth, will yet be transmuted by the Lord into the joys of the Kingdom, at the Marriage Feast in glory.

The cleansing of the lepers represented cleansing from the leprosy of sin. The one who returned to give glory to God represents the fact that only a "little flock" appreciate the favor of sins forgiven during this Age.

The healing of the sick represented the great fact that all diseases (mental, moral, physical) will be healed by Messiah, the "Good Physician," Royal Priest, typed by Melchizedec.

The opening of the blind eyes and of the deaf ears represented the greater fact that in due time the eyes and ears of understanding of all mankind will be opened, and God's glory will be appreciated. "All flesh shall see it together."—Isa. 40:5.

Our Lord's Transfiguration on the Mount was another illustration of the Kingdom. His disciples knew not whether it was a reality or a vision, until Jesus said, "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen from the dead." Later, St. Peter declared that what they saw in the holy mount represented Messiah's Kingdom.—2 Peter 1:16-18.



THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

**T**OWARD the close of Jesus' Ministry He came to Bethany, to the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary—the same Lazarus whom He had awakened from the sleep of death. Mary chose this opportunity to anoint the Master's feet with Precious Ointment, which He declared was an anointing for His burial.—Matthew 26:12.

The next day He sent for an ass and rode thereon into Jerusalem, after the manner of Israel's kings. When Jesus came in sight of Jerusalem, He wept over the city, exclaiming, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not! Now, I say unto you, Your house is left unto you desolate! Ye shall see Me no more until that day [of Messiah's glory] when ye shall say, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!'" (Matthew 23:37-39.) Meantime the Kingdom is not abandoned, merely delayed. Messiah's Bride will be only partly Jewish. "Israel hath not obtained" the coveted chief favor; but the Elect obtained it.

The multitude caught the spirit of the occasion, that Jesus was the promised King, and hailed Him as Messiah. They scattered clothing and palm-branches before Him, implying that the best of Earth was not too good for One so great. Meantime, they shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" the long-promised Messiah of David's line! "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah!"—Matthew 21:9.

The Pharisees, who did not believe, thought the procedure sacrilegious, and told Jesus to stop the shouting. Jesus replied that the Prophet Zechariah (9:9) said, "Shout," and therefore there must be a shout. "If they should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out." God had declared it; there must be a shout; the prophecy must be fulfilled.

Cleansing the Temple of money-changers and merchants followed our Lord's triumphal entry into the city.



EARTH'S FOUR UNIVERSAL EMPIRES

**T**HE Bible surely tells us that the way to the Kingdom is difficult and narrow, that the cost of being disciples of Jesus is self-denial and cross-bearing. Many wonder that the promises are thus restricted and not to all who strive to do right, without faith or self-sacrifice.

The parable of a camel creeping through a Needle's-eye illustrated how the rich must unload their wealth if they would prepare to share the Kingdom. The little gate in the larger one was called a "Needle's-eye."

Bible students now explain that difficulties are attached to the gaining of the Kingdom because God desires a very choice little company for that glorious position. He has made the trials so severe that only the saintly will avail themselves of the opportunity to gain the Kingdom.

The young ruler asked Jesus: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus referred him to the Law, which promised eternal life to any Jew who would keep it. The young man replied that he had done his best, but still was dying. Jesus loved him for his good endeavors, and pointed him to a new way to life everlasting, by self-sacrifice as His disciple. Additionally he might become a joint-heir with Jesus in glory, honor and immortality.—Mark 10:17-25; Romans 2:7; 8:17.

Two dear disciples asked to sit next Jesus on the Throne of His Kingdom. The Master replied, "Are you able [willing] to drink of My cup of self-denial, self-sacrifice, ignominy and shame? Are you able to be baptized into My death—to self-will, to cutting off from every earthly privilege, if such be God's providence for you?"—Matthew 20:22; Mark 10:35-38.

Those loving disciples answered that they were ready for anything, with the Master's help. He assured them and us that He will furnish trials and assistances, and that if faithful to the end, we shall have a crown of life. But the honors and glories of the Kingdom will not be determined by grace, but by Justice.—Matthew 20:12; Revelation 3:21; 2:10.



LEAVING THE PRETORIUM

**F**IVE days after Jesus rode on the ass, offering Himself as Israel's King, came the Passover, typical of the passing over of the Church of the First-born.

Jesus was the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. In order to do this, He must be the Passover Lamb. St. Paul says, "Christ our Passover is slain, therefore let us keep the feast." Jesus ate the typical Passover lamb with His disciples. Then He took unleavened bread, and fruit of the vine, as representing His own flesh and His own blood, and instituted an *antitypical* Passover Supper.

Jesus' followers were to do *this* in remembrance of His death as the antitypical Lamb. He said, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of The Son of Man, ye have no life in you." Of course, the outward performance would be nothing except as it would symbolize heart experiences. In their hearts, Jesus' followers must realize that His death is the Ransom-price for the sins of the whole world; that without it there would be no everlasting life. Such believers constitute the Church of the First-born, who pass into life in advance of the world—in the First Resurrection.—Revelation 20:6.

St. Paul shows a still deeper meaning to the Memorial Supper. All the followers of Jesus are represented in the One Loaf that is being broken, and as sharing in the One Cup of suffering, shame, ignominy and death. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17.) Only such will be members of His glorious "Body," the world's "Prophet like unto Moses."—Acts 3:19-23.

The disciples neglected to wash each other's feet or even the Master's. Jesus performed the service as a lesson in humility—not as a ceremonial. The spirit of the lesson is that we render each other any service possible, as "members" of Christ.—Acts 9:5; 1 Corinthians 12:27.

After the Supper, Jesus with the Eleven went to Gethsemane, where Judas betrayed Him to the officials with a kiss. Then followed the memorable closing scenes of our Lord's life.



THE NIGHT OF THE CRUCIFIXION

**E**ARLY the next morning Jesus was led to Pilate and charged with Treason against the Emperor in asserting Himself a King. His accusers were the foremost Jews. Pilate realized the malice of the charge, to secure the death of an inoffensive person. Learning that Jesus was from Galilee, he sought to rid himself of the responsibility by sending Him to King Herod. But Herod would have nothing to do with Jesus. He had heard of His miracles, and feared. After Herod's soldiers had mocked Jesus, He was returned to Pilate. His accusers insisted that if Pilate should let Him go, that would prove disloyalty to the Roman Emperor.

Pilate sought to release Jesus, and to satisfy the clamor, ordered Him to be scourged. But this did not satisfy the mob, which cried, "Crucify Him!" Finally, Pilate, placing Jesus prominently, exclaimed, "Ecce Homo!"—Behold the Man! You have no other Jew His equal! Would you crucify Him? The mob cried the more persistently, "Crucify Him!" Nothing is more heart-hardening than religious errors.

Jesus was not the mob's ideal of a king. Had He been coarse, vulgar, a boaster, He would have been more nearly their ideal of a person likely to lift their nation from under the Roman yoke, and to become conqueror, like Alexander the Great. The world looks with a measure of reverence upon Jesus, but still He is far from the human ideal. Neither are the footstep followers of Jesus the world's ideals. They with Jesus are counted peculiar. As St. John wrote, "As He is, so are we, in this world"—despised as respects human ideals.

Humanity fails to realize that God's purpose in Christ and His followers has been to prepare them by meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering and love for the glorious work of Messiah's Kingdom, to bless all mankind. Present experiences are necessary, the Bible declares, that this Royal Priesthood may be, later on, a sympathetic Priesthood in respect to mankind.—Hebrews 2:10; 3:1; 5:8-10; 12:11.



THE DYING THIEF'S HOPE

**P**LATE washed his hands in the sight of the people as expressing his innocence of Jesus' death; then he gave the necessary orders for the execution. The Roman Government expected him to be absolutely just in respect to Roman citizens; dealings with others were to be conciliatory.

Two thieves were crucified at the same time, one on either side of Jesus, over whose head was charged the crime for which He was crucified: "Jesus, the King of the Jews." Few deaths are so painful as crucifixion.—Matthew 27:37.

One thief made sport of Jesus, saying, If you are God's Son, the Messiah and King, prove it by coming down from the cross. If Jesus had saved His life, He could not have become the King and Savior of the world, because only by His death could the Death Sentence against Adam and his race be met. Jesus died willingly a sacrificial death.

The other thief defended Jesus, saying that He had done nothing amiss, whereas they were receiving a just penalty.

After this defense the penitent thief turned to Jesus, saying, Lord, if You are a King and ever come into Your Kingdom, remember this poor thief—do something for me! Jesus replied, Amen! i. e., So be it—as you ask! Although I seem to have not a friend in Heaven or Earth, yet I say unto you this dark day, You shall be with Me in Paradise. My Kingdom will be established. Under its influence Earth will become a Paradise. You shall be rewarded there.

The misplacement of the comma in our common English Version has thrown us all astray. Evidently Jesus did not go to Paradise that day, because Paradise is not yet established. Furthermore, three days after, when He arose from the dead, He said to Mary, "I have not yet ascended unto My Father." St. Peter tells us that He was dead and that His soul was raised from the dead on the third day. (Acts 2:31.) "All people" are to be blessed by Messiah's Kingdom, but penitence prepares for quicker blessings and fewer "stripes."



RESURRECTION PREFIGURED.—MATT. 12:40

**B**ECAUSE still natural men, the disciples could not comprehend spiritual things—until Pentecost. It was necessary, therefore, that Jesus' resurrection should be humanly demonstrated. Only believers could receive the Pentecostal illumination. They must believe, and know also that He is no longer a man, but again a spirit being.

The third day after Calvary the women who carried embalming spices found the sepulchre empty. Mary met Jesus, but knew Him not, for He appeared as a gardener. Jesus revealed Himself by His voice. He said, "I have not yet ascended to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." The news spread. St. Peter and St. John were amazed, and both ran to the sepulchre. They saw nothing but the vacant tomb and the folded clothes.

Later the same day, two of them journeyed to Emmaus. They were conversing eagerly when Jesus, in another form, unrecognized by them, joined them. He quietly explained to them the types and prophecies which foretold Jesus' death as man's Redeemer, saying, "Thus it behooved Messiah to suffer and to enter into His glory." Telling the experience afterward they said, "Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked with us by the way and opened unto us the Scriptures?" At their evening meal, He revealed Himself, and vanished.

The same evening many of them were gathered in the upper room discussing the remarkable events of the day, the doors being shut, yes, bolted, for fear of the Jews. Suddenly while the doors were still shut, Jesus appeared in their midst, still differently. This time He appeared like His former self. Even this affrighted them, though He told them that what they saw was flesh and blood, and proved it by eating. He was no longer the fleshly Jesus; in His resurrection He returned to the spirit condition. (1 Corinthians 15:44.) But He had power to materialize, as the holy angels (and Himself, before made flesh) had done.



ST. PETER PREACHING RESTITUTION

**O**N the following Sunday, Jesus again appeared—in the upper room—St. Thomas being present. He had rebuked his brethren for being too easily convinced that they had seen Jesus, and said that he would not believe unless he felt the print of the nails and the spear wound.

Jesus appeared again in a body like that of His humiliation, with the marks of the spear and the print of the nails. He urged Thomas to be convinced, but told of still greater blessings for those who without those proofs were able to fully believe.—John 20:26-29.

The Bible tells that Jesus is no longer flesh, but a spirit being, since His resurrection. As St. Paul declares, the Church must all be changed, because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." We must all be changed that we may be spirit beings—like Him, which surely means that He is no longer flesh. He was "put to death in flesh, and quickened in spirit," writes St. Peter.—1 Peter 3:18.

Jesus appeared to His followers three times on His resurrection day, and five times more during the succeeding thirty-nine days—briefly. This was a part of the great lesson that Jesus was no longer dead, and no longer flesh—that He is "highly exalted."—Philippians 2:9; John 6:62.

Saul of Tarsus caught a glimpse of the risen, glorified Jesus, unveiled by flesh, shining above the brightness of the sun at noonday, and the brief glimpse cost him his eyesight. If Jesus had thus appeared to His disciples during the forty days after His resurrection, they would have been alarmed, bewildered, unable to comprehend the matter. St. Paul refers to his glimpse of Jesus, saying, "He was seen of me as one born before the time." His words are explained to mean that all of God's people, the Church of the First-born, are to be born into spirit conditions by their resurrection. Thus changed they will see Messiah as He is, in His great glory. But Saul saw Him before the time.—1 John 3:2.



THE PENTECOSTAL REST

**P**ENTECOST, the fiftieth day, was the Jubilee day, as the fiftieth year was the Jubilee year. The fiftieth day followed a Sabbath Day cycle (7x7=49), as the Jubilee year followed a Sabbath Year cycle (7x7=49). As the antitype of the Jubilee Year will usher the world into the glorious rest in Messiah's Kingdom and in the New Covenant relationship with God, so the antitype of the Jubilee day ushered believers into a rest of faith at Pentecost. So St. Paul explains, "We who believe do enter into rest." All truly Christ's are enabled to keep a Sabbath rest of faith and trust all the time, not merely on the Seventh Day, or on the First Day. Every day to them is a rest by faith in Christ's sacrifice—a Sabbath to the soul—foreshadow of Heavenly Rest.

None could enter into this true Sabbath rest, until Jesus had opened the way. His death was necessary as man's Ransom-price. His resurrection was necessary to enable Him to apply that price on our behalf. He ascended on High, there to appear in the presence of God as the Advocate for His disciples. He imputes His merit to cover their imperfections, and to make their sacrifice acceptable to God, that they may suffer with Him and be glorified with Him. For the faithful there remaineth a rest, still more complete—to be attained in their resurrection "change."—Hebrews 4:3, 9, 11.

Under Jesus' direction, the Apostles, His followers, were not to begin their work until they received the Pentecostal blessing—the Holy Spirit—the evidence of their acceptance as sons of God. The only thing they did during that time before their own acceptance, was the choosing of a successor for Judas' place; but evidently God never recognized their choice. In His own due time God brought forth St. Paul to be the twelfth Apostle—one of the twelve foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. (Revelation 21:14.) The error of supposing Apostolic Succession in the Church's bishops was a costly one. It led to many grievous errors.



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