

The Fig Tree.



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“And in the morning, having come back into the city, **He became hungry**. And **having seen one Fig Tree along the road**, He came to it and **found nothing on it except only LEAVES**. And He says to it, “**Never let there be any more fruit from you, to the age.**” And the **Fig Tree withered immediately**. And having seen it, the disciples marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?” Matthew 21:18-20.

Introduction.

In this study we are going to go to the very beginning, in order for us to fully grasp all that is represented in the Fig Tree, so that we may FULLY understand what this incident was all about. Now, it is a commonly accepted among believers, which is also shared with the world, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, that they ate from the Apple Tree, hence the logo of the most valued company in the world, is an apple with a bite taken out of it. But this is NOT TRUE, the Tree from which Adam and Eve ate was in fact a Fig Tree, as Genesis states, “So when the **woman saw that the tree was good for food**, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, **she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate**. Then the **EYES of both of them were OPENED**, and **they KNEW that they were NAKED**; and **they sewed Fig LEAVES together** and made themselves coverings.” Genesis 3:6-7.

Now, we can almost imagine the first time Adam and Eve experienced this jarring sensation, in discovering they were stark naked. We would NOT think, their immediate thought would have been, to traverse the depth of the garden seeking out a suitable covering. Rather, their instinct like that of our own which remains to this very day, is to grab the closest object and to use that as a covering. And that is exactly what they did, they reached out and grabbed the leaves of the VERY SAME tree they ate from, and tried to cover their SHAME. More so, if they were to look for an appropriate covering,

there are many plants with lush and broad leaves that would have served their purpose far better than a fig leaf. However, the immediacy of the situation dictated their action, and became a portrayal for the significance of the Fig Tree. Our understanding of this groundwork is very important, because it will determine the elements which the Fig Tree represents, starting from the Garden of Eden leading to the End of the Age, which the Lord spoke about in the main text of our study.

Analogy of the Fig Tree.

As such, the first and foremost thing the Fig Tree represents is the day Adam and Eve were BORN to become FLESH. That is to say, this is the day Adam and Eve became SLAVES to the passion and desires of their flesh, which was now ruled by the spirit of the prince of the power of the air.

[Ephesians 2:1-3.] Which Paul hinted at saying, “For you have not **received a spirit of bondage again to fear**, but you have received the Spirit of divine adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” Romans 8:15. And again, “Now we have not **received the spirit of the world** but the Spirit from God.” 1 Corinthians 2:12. In these two statements, Paul was contrasting the experience of Adam and Eve, to that of our own, who have become spirits through the Lord Jesus Christ, by receiving the Spirit of God. Meaning, it is on account of the spirit of the world having entered into their flesh, that Adam and Eve were filled with fear and shame, and sought to cover and hide themselves. So a person living for the dictates of the flesh is in essence under the influence of sin, being the child of the world and under the dominion of the wicked one. Therefore, Paul says, “**The mind of the flesh is hostility toward God**; for it is not subject to the Law of God, for not even can it be.” Romans 8:7. Therefore, the Fig Tree represents the condition of the body, in the expression of the barrier that now came between God and mankind, that is Sinful-Flesh.

The next point the Fig Tree represents, which is in relation to the first is that of the KNOWLEDGE of EVIL. So, when Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, their eyes, that is to say their understanding, was opened to the knowledge of EVIL. What we need to bear in mind is that Adam and Eve ALREADY knew good, since everything God had made was GOOD. Meaning, there was NO EVIL in the world UNTIL that VERY moment, as Paul says, “Because of this, just as **Sin entered into the world through one man.**” Romans 5:12. Now, when Paul says, Sin entered the world, it is to LITERALLY say, EVIL entered into the world. Sin is the expression of the nature of the father of lies and murder, that is the devil. So just as he lied to Eve to deceive her, he crouched at the feet of Cain to kill his brother. [John 8:44.] And it is on the ACCOUNT that Sin having entered the world that the Law became a necessary aspect of life. As Paul says, “[**The Law**] **was added on account of transgressions**, until the Seed to whom promise has been made should have come.” Galatians 3:19. [1 Timothy 1:9.] And it is in this respect, Pastor Joseph Prince, teaches that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, is a picture of the Law. So the expectation to weigh between good and evil as it relates to the nature of fallen flesh became the reality of life. Therefore the second concept the Fig Tree represents is the Law.

The Third point the Fig Tree represents is the Nation of Israel, in whom the prior two points intersect. That is, from the day Adam fell, God had sought out a man through whom He may be represented in the world, in order to bring forth the promised Seed of the woman, through whom the nations of the world were meant to be blessed. [Galatians 3:8-9.] And Abraham was the chosen vessel of God, in respect to the faith he had, and God established an everlasting covenant with him, through the covenant of circumcision, saying, “**I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations**, for an everlasting covenant, **to be God to you and your descendants after you.**” and then God says, “This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me

and you and your descendants after you: **Every male child among you shall be circumcised;** and you shall be **circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins**, and it shall be a **sign of the covenant between Me and you.**” Genesis 17:7, & 10-11. In saying a covenant of circumcision, God was addressing the covering of the Fig Leaf, which came to effect when Adam and Eve disobeyed to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, as to become FLESH. As such circumcision became an ILLUSTRATION for putting aside the ENMITY that came between God and mankind. [Colossians 2:11-12.] And from that day forward Israel was portrayed as a nation that was drawn near to God from among all the nations, to be the FIRSTBORN of God. [Exodus 4:22, Ephesians 3:11-18.]

This was followed by the Covenant of the Law, which was established through Moses, when God called His firstborn out of Egypt, and gave them His Commandments at Mount Sinai, through which He established the ordinances for the purification of the FLESH, by sacrifice of blood, by dietary requirements, washings, clothings, and even in regards to marriages. [Leviticus 20:24-26, Hebrews 9:13.] The purpose of which was the separation of Israel from all the nations of the world, through the ordinances of the Law until the Seed to whom the promise was made has come. And NO OTHER nation has ever come under the Covenant of the Law, except Israel, as to be given the ordinances of God written on tablets of stone that they may know the will of God, being able to determine between Good and Evil, the clean and unclean, as instructed by Law. [Romans 2:17-20.] So in Israel we see the giving of the Covenant of Circumcision, which is in respect to the body, and the giving of the Covenant of the Law, which is in respect to the knowledge of Good and Evil, both of which are in reference to the Fig Tree of the Garden. As such Israel, the firstborn of God became to be represented by the Fig Tree, among a nation of Trees.

So, when we read the main text of our study, we have to take into consideration all that is represented by the Fig Tree, that is, the Flesh, the Law and the nation of Israel, as ones that were separated unto God, through the Covenant of the Circumcision and that of the Law. The purpose of which was intended to bring forth the One to whom the promise was given. As Paul says of Israel, “Israelites, **whose is the divine adoption as sons**, and the glory, and the covenants, and **the lawgiving**, and the service, and the promises; whose are the patriarchs; and **from whom is Christ according to the FLESH**, being God over all, blessed to the ages. Amen.” Romans 9:4. So the separation of Israel from the rest of the world through the ordinances of the Law, was a necessary aspect until Christ came, which is a PIVOTAL moment in all of HISTORY. As such, when considering the INCIDENT described in the main text of our study, the MOST IMPORTANT point that is being expressed is in respect to all the consequences that came on the account of Him to whom the Promise was made, which is to illustrate the end of one dispensation, and the beginning of another, that is the end of FLESH governed by the Law, and the beginning of the New Creation as SPIRITS, governed by the Spirit of God.

Timeline of Incident.

Now, the incident described in the main text of our study is found in the MIDST of a Three Day event, the essence of which is portrayed in another parable in respect to the Fig Tree which Luke describes saying, “A certain man had a **Fig Tree planted in his VINEYARD;** and **he came seeking fruit on it, and not did find any.** And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Behold, throughout **these THREE YEARS I come seeking fruit on this Fig Tree, and do not find any. Therefore cut it down!** Why even should it use up the ground?’ And answering, he says to him, ‘**Sir, let it alone this year also, until I shall dig around it, and put in manure, and if indeed it should bear fruit in the time, so be it.** But if not, you will cut it down.’” Luke 13:6-9. The Man in this parable is a reference to the Lord, having

planted Israel in the land of milk and honey, and having given them His Laws, is now seeking fruit from it. [Isaiah 5:1-6.] The THREE years mentioned in this parable, we can associate with that of the ministry of the Lord, the FOURTH being in respect to the sacrificial offering of His body, through which everything associated with the Fig Tree was brought to a CLOSE. In the Law, the Passover lamb is kept with the household from 10th of the month of Nisan until the 14th when it is killed. Now, it is IMPORTANT to bear in mind, the cutting down of the Fig Tree is NOT some NEGATIVE thing, but a necessary aspect, in order to bring forth a New form of Life that is APART from the association to the Fig Tree of the Garden of Eden, that is the FLESH.

And, in order for us to lay bare the intended plan of God, we need to build a clear narrative of the incident by pulling from all four gospels. In doing so, we have to view each Gospel writer from the perspective they are writing from. Pastor Joseph Prince teaches that Matthew, which is represented by a Lion, is written from the perspective of the King of the Jews, so the genealogy of the Lord is traced as the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, which is SPECIFIC to Israel. Mark, who is represented by an Ox is written from the perspective of a Servant in relation to a High Priest, with no genealogy because the service of Priesthood which the Lord provides is NOT according to the Fleshly Descent but according to Melchizedek. As Paul says, “For it is evident that **our Lord has sprung out of Judah**, a tribe as to which Moses spoke **nothing concerning priests**. And it is yet more abundantly evident if another priest **according to the likeness of Melchizedek arises**, who has been constituted **not according to a law of a fleshly** commandment, but **according to the power of an indestructible life**.” Hebrews 7:14-15. [Hebrews 8:4.] That is to say, the Priesthood in service to God is of the Spirit and NOT that of the Flesh. Luke is represented as a Man which is meant to be from the perspective of all of Mankind that is the Gentiles, so the Genealogy of the Lord in this gospel is traced ALL the way back to Adam. Finally, we have John represented by an Eagle, which is in respect to God, as such there is no genealogy of beginning or end, therefore in the Gospel of John, the Lord is not described as being taken up from the Earth, but is left in the midst of us as an everlasting presence, whom we are to follow, illustrated by **Peter and John**. [John 21:9-22.]

Here it is worth considering, why from all the disciples of the Lord, ONLY Peter and John were described as following the Lord. Now, many times the issue of Peter’s name as a STONE has been a cause for great division within the church, with some erroneously interpreting Matthew 16:18, have attributed Peter to be the foundation the Church is built on. Even when God clearly tells us Christ is the foundation, as Isaiah says, “Behold, I lay in Zion a **stone for a foundation**, a tried stone, a **precious cornerstone, a sure foundation**; Whoever believes will not act hastily.” Isaiah 28:16. [Romans 10:11.] And Paul also says, “For no one is able **to lay another foundation**, besides the one being already laid, **which is Jesus Christ**.” 1 Corinthians 3:11. As such, Peter’s name as “STONE,” has more to do with the Law of Moses, as in the “**Tablet of Stones**,” that is given to the children of Israel, than the Church. It is the very reason Peter is known as the apostle to the Jews, as Paul says, “I have been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision [that is Gentiles,] **just as Peter of the circumcision — [that is Jews]**.” Galatians 2:8. Now, in the same respect, we have John following the Lord, whose name means, “**God is Gracious**.” So what this passage is illustrating to us is, the two covenants, one of the Law that is Peter, and the other is of Grace that is John. As such Peter as a representative of the Law is commanded to follow the Lord to his DEATH. However, John as a representative of GRACE, his end is left ambiguous, the Lord said, “**If I desire him to REMAIN until I COME**, what is it to you? **You FOLLOW Me!**” John 21:22. The purpose of which was to demonstrate, the present period of Grace which we are under, will come to an end when the Lord returns to receive His bride at the Rapture. And Christian tradition states that Peter died some time

between 64 & 68 AD, just shy of 70 AD, when Jerusalem and Temple worship was brought to a predetermined end.

Now, we find the beginning of the INCIDENT, described in the main text of our study to be on Palm Sunday, when the Lord was coming into Jerusalem riding on the colt of a donkey. And John begins the FIRST day in association with Lazarus, whom the Lord raised from the dead. [John 5:21.] And the people gathered to receive Him with Palm branches in their hands, crying out, “**Hosanna! Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord! And the King of Israel!**” John 12:13. At this point, Luke states the indignation of the priests saying, “And some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Him, “**Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.**” And answering He said, “**I say to you that if these will be silent, the stones will cry out.**” Luke 19:39-40. Now, as He was coming into Jerusalem, ONLY Luke recorded the statement of the Lord when He wept describing the destruction that was about to come upon Jerusalem, “**because she did not know the season of her visitation.**” [Luke 19:41-44.] And, as profound as this statement of the Lord is, it is very curious that only Luke makes mention of it. The purpose of which was to illustrate how the coming event was hidden from the sight of the Jews, so neither Matthew nor Mark recorded this event. At this point Mark makes a note of the end of the first day saying, “**And He entered into Jerusalem, into the temple; and having looked around on all things, the hour being already LATE, He went out to Bethany with the Twelve.**” Mark 11:11.

The SECOND day begins in the morning when the Lord was on the way to the Temple, and Mark records the first time the Lord interacted with the Fig Tree seeking fruit from it but finding none, He cursed it. And Mark distinguishes this moment saying, “And His disciples were **LISTENING.**” Mark 11:14. Meaning even though the disciples of the Lord heard Him curse the Fig Tree, they did not see any change in the tree that very moment or day.

This was followed by the event in the temple which is recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke as, “And having entered into the temple, **He began to cast out those selling,** saying to them, “It has been written: ‘**And My house will be a house of prayer.**’ **But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’**” Luke 19:45-46. [Matthew 21:12-13, & Mark 11:15-17.] Now, from the perspective of Luke, as a Gentile, no specific detail in regards to doves, as an offering for sins was necessary to be mentioned. But Matthew and Mark add, “He overturned the tables of **the money changers and the seats of those selling the doves.**” Matthew 21:12. Now, Matthew from the perspective of the Jews this detail has significance, because during Passover Jews from all around the world come to worship in Jerusalem. [Acts 2:5,8-11.] So, changing money to a local currency in order to buy what is required for the offering of sins, like that of doves, is convenient if conducted within the courts of the Temple. But Mark makes this observation from the perspective of the Servant in terms of the Priesthood. That is, the casting out of business from the Temple courts aggravated the Scribes and Pharisees far more than those that conducted the business, saying, “**And the CHIEF priests and the scribes HEARD it,** and they were seeking how they might destroy Him.” Mark 11:18. Because, business conducted within the premises of the temple courts benefits the Scribes and Pharisees, who most likely charged for the privilege.

Finally, Mark adds one more detail, saying, “**And He would not permit that anyone should CARRY a vessel THROUGH the temple.**” Mark 11:16. Mark is making this statement from the perspective of a servant on duty going about their daily business, using the Temple as a shortcut. So, we see the Lord clearing out the Temple of all COMMON use, the Jews in respect to the convenience of those that buy, the ministers of the house in terms of financial gain in respect to those that sell, down to the lowly servant going about their daily duties, and makes a statement saying, “**My house**

will be called a house of prayer for ALL NATIONS.” Mark 11:17. Now, Matthew in respect to Jews, and Luke in respect to Gentiles, do not specify “**all nations**,” but only Mark, which is a reference to the service rendered to God is not according to FLESH be it Jew or Gentile but that of the Spirit. As John says, “**God is Spirit**, and it behooves **those worshipping Him to worship in spirit and truth.**” John 4:24. That is to say, All nations are ONLY able to approach God by one Spirit. [Ephesians 2:18.]

To this Matthew adds, how on the same day, He healed people in the Temple. And unlike the previous day when He came into the city riding on the Donkey and the DISCIPLES were singing, this time the CHILDREN were singing the same as the previous day saying, “**Hosanna to the Son of David,**” and the priests were once more being indignant said to Him, “Do you hear what these say?” And Jesus says to them, “Yes, have you never read: ‘**Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings You have prepared for yourself praise**’?” Matthew 21:15-16. And at this point both Matthew and Mark record the end of the SECOND day, saying, “He went out of the city to **Bethany, and He passed the night there.**” Matthew 21:17.

The THIRD day begins once more as they are going to the Temple. And Mark states, “And passing by in the morning, **they saw the Fig Tree having been dried up from the roots.** And Peter having **REMEMBERED**, says to Him, “Rabbi, look, **the Fig Tree that You cursed is dried up.**” Mark 11:20-21. Now, unlike Mark who distinctly separated the moment the Lord SPOKE, to the moment they **saw** the Fig Tree dried up from its roots. Matthew simply states the statement of the Lord **on the day they saw** the Tree having dried from the Root, saying, “**And the fig tree withered immediately.**” However, he gives a slight hint to time having passed from the reaction of the disciples saying, “**And having SEEN it**, the disciples marveled, saying, “**How did the fig tree wither so quickly?**” Matthew 21:19-20. So, Matthew does not specify the moment they heard the Lord speak, but recounts the entire event on the day they saw the outcome. Meaning, from the perspective of the Jews, there are many things the Lord had said to them, and even though they heard, they did not recall it to mind until they saw it come to pass, to which we can attribute, His Crucifixion, His resurrection, and even His commandment to preach to ALL the WORLD. This being said, the Lord used this as an opportunity to teach them on faith, that is speaking believing the thing we say will come to pass and do not doubt, we will see the result. [Mark 11:22-24.] Meaning when the Lord spoke that word, the Fig Tree already withered away, even though it was not apparent to the eye until the NEXT morning.

No More Ministers of the Law.

Now, as the Lord came to the Temple with His disciples, Matthew, Mark and Luke, all describe the moment the Lord was confronted by the Scribes and Pharisees, inquiring to find by what authority He does these things. And this is where the Lord gives another parable in regards to the Vineyard and the Vinedressers. In which the Lord relays the plight of the owner of the vineyard, seeking fruit from those to whom he has lent his vineyard. So time after time he sent his servants seeking fruit from them, but they beat, stoned, and killed the servants of the owner of the vineyard. So finally he sought to send his son to them, expecting them to respect him, but they in return saw it as an opportunity to take possession of the inheritance, so they conspired to kill and cast him out of the vineyard. And in response to which the owner of the vineyard, coming down, destroyed the keepers and gave the vineyard to others. And the Lord said, “Did you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The **STONE that those BUILDING rejected, this has become the Chief Corner.** This was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? Because of this I say to you that **the kingdom of God will be taken away from you**, and will be **given to A PEOPLE producing its fruits.**” Matthew 21:42-43. The response

of which is that, “And the **scribes and the chief priests** sought to lay hands on Him in that hour, and **they feared the people**. For they perceived that **He was speaking this parable AGAINST THEM.**” Luke 20:19.

The vinedressers are representatives of the ministers of the Law, that are set apart from the rest of the population. And Matthew shows THIS distinction by giving an introduction to the parable in terms of the COMMON people that believed John the baptist and were baptised by him, and the Scribe, Pharisees and Elders, knowing John the baptist having come to them in the way of righteousness did not repent to be baptised by him, through which they rejected the will of God for themselves. [Luke 7:29-30.] The point being, John the Baptist provided a specific service to the Jews. The Lord said, “Truly I say to you, **among those born of women** there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist. **Yet the least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he!**” Then He said, “**For all the prophets and the law prophesied UNTIL John.**” Matthew 11:11 and 13. The Baptism of John was of significance to Jews of that time, because it was a means for ushering the New, and the CLOSING of the Old as prophesied by Malachi 4:4-6, in respect to the coming of Elijah. So when John the Baptist described his ministry, he said, “And I did not know Him. But so that **He might be REVEALED to Israel**, because of this, **I came BAPTIZING with water.**” John 1:31. And Paul also summarising John’s ministry says, “John baptized **a baptism of repentance**, telling the people that **they should believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Jesus.**” Acts 19:4. So the rulers having rejected John, in effect BLINDED themselves from seeing the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. As John says, “**He came to [His] own, and [His] own did not receive Him.**” John 1:11.

And this disparity between the common people that believed John, and the rulers that did not, is evident in the response the common people gave to the parable of the Lord, saying, “**They say to him,** “He will destroy them, the wretches, grievously, and **he will rent out the vineyard to other farmers** who will **give to him the fruits in their seasons.**” Matthew 21:41. So Matthew using the example of John the Baptist in the context of the Jews, makes distinction between those baptised to receive revelation of the Truth, and those that rejected and were blinded. So, when the Lord said, “**the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and will be given to A PEOPLE producing its fruits.**” The Lord was specifically speaking to the ministers of the Law. And the term, “a PEOPLE,” as in “ethnos,” is referring to a SINGLE group of people of the same NATURE, which is a reference to those that are NOT born of women, in whom there is a disparity of blood descent, but the oneness of the Spirit. The Scribes and Chief Priests are of the Law, and have their position according to the preference of a bloodline of the Levitical priesthood, as those born of women. However, those that bear the fruit of the kingdom belong to a PEOPLE of the nature of the Spirit. As Paul says, “**But now we have been released from the Law**, having died to that which we were bound, **in order for us to serve in newness of the Spirit**, and not in oldness of the letter.” Romans 7:6. So, fishermen and tax collectors became ministers of the New Covenant to bear the fruit of the Kingdom to God, while the Levitical priesthood which was according to the Law was brought to an end. And Luke as one who was out of covenant with God, according to the Law, is the only one that records the response of the scribes, priests and elders, who excluded themselves by rejecting Christ as to become out of covenant with God.

The point is the kingdom of God does not belong to anyone of the FLESH, as Paul says, “**Flesh and blood is not able to inherit the kingdom of God**, nor does decay inherit immortality.” 1 Corinthians 15:50. That is, since the Law was fulfilled, in the abolishment of Sin, and the flesh put to death, the service to God according to the letter of the Law was NO LONGER required, but according to the Spirit. There is no more fruit to be had through the ministry of the Law! So the Fig Tree is cursed in

respect to the administration of the Law. The main point being, the end of one dispensation and the beginning of another, that is of the Spirit in whom there is no distinction between Jew or Gentile, man or woman.

No More Flesh.

Now, in all the discourse above Luke says nothing in respect to the Fig Tree, that is for the purpose of portraying the Gentiles who were outside of the Covenants of Circumcision and that of the Law. As Paul says, “**At that time [the uncircumcision] were separate from Christ**, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and **strangers to the covenants of the promise**, not having hope and **without God in the world.**” Ephesians 2:12. As such, Luke makes no mention of the Fig Tree. However, Matthew in terms of portraying the end of election by **the merit of fleshly descent**, and Mark in terms of service to God also not of flesh descent, but of a New Creation make a point about the Fig Tree withering away from its ROOTS.

And John, illustrating the coming of the end of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, describes the events that surround the incident from the perspective of God, and introduces the GREEKS seeking to see Jesus, in the midst of the feast of the Passover. [John 12:20-22.] At which point, the Lord makes the statement, “**The hour has come that Son of Man should be glorified.** Truly, truly, I say to you, unless **the grain of wheat, having fallen into the ground**, should die, it abides alone; **but if it should die, it bears much fruit.**” John 12:23-24. And John, writing from the perspective of God, states a voice from heaven spoke saying, “**I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again.**” John 12:28. And the Lord explaining the voice, states how through His death, the ROOT of the problem will be addressed, that is to say, the father of ALL sin, the ruler of this world will be judged and cast out. And the effect of which is that, He says, “**And I, if I am LIFTED up from the earth, will draw ALL to Myself.**” John 12:32. So, in the Gospel of John the picture being portrayed is the eternal purpose of God, which from the very beginning has ALWAYS been the salvation of ALL of MANKIND, as Isaiah says, “**It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob**, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; **I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles**, that You should be My salvation **to the ends of the earth.**” Isaiah 49:6.

And this is what the Jews of the time failed to see, Israel was the means through which salvation to the world was to come, as the Lord said, “**for salvation is of the JEWS.**” John 4:22. And the intended purpose of God in referring to the Seed of the woman is not only in respect to Mary, who was a subpart of the whole, that is Israel, which John illustrates in Revelation 12 as a pregnant woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and garlands of 12 stars on her head, which are the twelve tribes of Israel. [Genesis 37:9-11.] The result of which was that, when her Child was taken up to heaven, the dragon was cast out with his angels, as to be crushed under His the feet of the Seed of the woman. [Genesis 3:15.] And Paul, in Galatians 4 gives an illustration of two mothers, Jerusalem on earth who was under the Law from whom Christ came in the FLESH, and to whom Mary the mother of the Lord belongs. As Paul says, “**But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son**, having been **BORN of a woman**, having been **BORN UNDER the Law.**” Galatians 4:4. The second is the heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of Christians, for those that are born of the Spirit of Christ. That is JUST as Eve did not have a mother, but was taken out of the side of Adam who was made from the DUST of the Earth, we will also be taken out of the resurrected Christ, the Heavenly Man, that we may be formed of the the substance of Heaven in the likeness of Him. [1 Corinthians 15:47-49.] So, there is a necessity to be cut off from the earthly through death, in order to belong to the heavenly. [Romans 7:4, Galatians 2:19.]

Now, at the beginning of our study, we have suggested that the foremost concept that is portrayed in the Fig Tree of the Garden of Eden was the concept of the FLESH, that was born under Sin. That is to say, the serpent was the father for the creation of the Sinful-Flesh of Mankind. As such, the foremost thing which the Lord has done was to abolish Sin in the Flesh, through the sacrifice of Himself. Through which He disarmed the devil that had the power of death. [Hebrews 2:14, Hebrews 9:26.] The result of which was that, if the ROOT cause is addressed, then the subsequent requirements that were established on the account of the ROOT are no LONGER necessary. As such, the ordinances that separated Jews and Gentiles, that is the Covenants of Circumcision and that of the Law, were made null and void in Christ Jesus. As Paul says, “For He Himself is our peace, **having made both one** and having **broken down the barrier of the partition of hostility**, having **annulled in His flesh the law of commandments in ordinances**, so that He might **CREATE in Himself the two into one New Man**, making peace, and He might **reconcile BOTH to God in one BODY through the CROSS**, by it having **slain the hostility**. And having come, **He proclaimed the GOSPEL: peace to you**, the ones **far** off, and peace to those **near**. For **through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit**.” Ephesians 2:14-18. So the result of abolishing the body of sin through the sacrifice of the Body of the Lord, was that both Jews and Gentiles are brought together to be one, to receive the call of God through the SAME message of the Gospel of Christ. [Galatians 2:15-16.]

The idea being the selection according to the FLESH descent as it relates to Israel, was no longer applicable, but of faith only. The purpose of God being to bring forth mankind that walks no longer according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And in Corinthians, Paul writes, “Therefore from now, **we regard no one according to the FLESH**. Even though we have regarded Christ according to flesh, **yet now we regard Him thus no longer**. Therefore **if anyone is in Christ, he is a NEW CREATION**. The **old things** have passed away; behold, **the new has come into being**.” 2 Corinthians 5:16-17. That is, the things of the FLESH having been done away with, in order to make way for the things of the Spirit. The result of which was that, as Paul says, “**There is neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is **neither male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus**. Now **if you are of Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed**, heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:28-29. Here, it is important to interject, the service to God which is represented in Mark in respect to the Royal Priesthood, is under no GENEALOGY, or CATEGORY of the flesh but of the Spirit. [Revelation 1:5-6, Revelation 5:9-10.] Meaning, women are able to render service to God as PRIESTS, as much as their male counterparts. Consider, the circumcision of Christ through the baptism of water, applies to women as much as it does to any man. That is, the distinction that sets men apart in the Law according to the FLESH, no longer applies in the Spirit. Therefore, if we set limits in the service of God according to gender, it is because we see according to the flesh and NOT that of the Spirit.

So, in Christ, Gentiles that were far off, having no blood relation to Abraham, have become his seed and inheritors of the kingdom of God through faith. And John the baptist warning Israel of the coming judgement, said, “And do not begin to say in yourselves, ‘**We have Abraham as father**.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” Luke 3:8. In this new dispensation, counting on being the direct fleshly descendant of Abraham is of no value, as Paul says, “**Know then that those of faith, these are sons of Abraham**. And the Scripture, having foreseen that **God justifies the Gentiles by faith**, foretold the gospel to Abraham: “**All the nations will be blessed in you**.” Galatians 3:7-8. And again Paul says, “**For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything**; instead, a **new creation**.” Galatians 6:15. And again, “**For there is no difference between Jew and Greek**; for the same Lord of all is rich toward all those calling Him.” Romans 10:12. So, in

the new dispensation, what is of value is being a New Creation, that is spirit-mankind through the Lord Jesus Christ, as ones that are cut away from the Fig Tree, to which every tribe and nations of the world are equally invited. [Romans 4:16-17.]

And Paul is a great example of one, who saw the merit of circumcision in the flesh as it relates to the history of the Jewish people in relation to God, and says, "What then is the superiority of the Jew? Or **what is the benefit of the circumcision?** Much in every way. For **CHIEFLY indeed, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.**" Romans 3:1-2. And having given due credit in respect to the righteousness of the flesh, he describes his previous standing as, "If any other thinks to trust in the flesh, I more: **circumcision on the eighth day**; of the nation of Israel, of **the tribe of Benjamin; a Hebrew of Hebrews**; according to the Law, a Pharisee; according to zeal, persecuting the church; **according to righteousness in the Law, having become faultless.**" Philippians 3:4-6. However, he follows this by explaining how the benefit of the righteousness that is of Christ through faith far exceeds, saying, "But **whatever things were gain to me, these I have esteemed loss because of Christ.** But indeed, therefore, **I also count all things to be loss** because of the excelling knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, **because of whom I have lost all things, and esteem them rubbish,** that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness which is of the Law,** but that which is **through faith from Christ, the righteousness of God on the basis of faith.**" Philippians 3:7-9. Paul understood the value of putting aside something he held dearly all his life, which is according to the flesh, in order to obtain the greater that is of God Himself, which is in respect to the Spirit of God having been given on the account of FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consequence of Blindness.

And it is on the basis of the SAME concept, which Paul himself once held dearly that he describes the blindness of those that reject Christ, saying, "For **I bear witness about them that they have zeal for God,** but not according to knowledge. For being **ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish [their] own righteousness,** they did not submit to the righteousness of God. **For the end of Law is Christ, unto righteousness to everyone believing.**" Romans 10:2-4. Meaning, those that rejected Christ were unwilling to set aside the merit which is according to the flesh. This was evident in Acts 21, when the mere presence of Paul, as an advocate against circumcision and an opponent of the Law, set the whole city of Jerusalem in uproar, even among those that believed. And they laid the charge against him saying, "Now they have been informed about you, that **you teach all Jews** among the Gentiles **apostasy from Moses,** telling them **not to circumcise the children** nor to **walk in the customs.**" Acts 21:21. As a result, they even compelled Paul to shave all his hair in show of solidarity of obedience to the Law. The point being, even having come to faith in the Lord, they were unwilling to depart from the practice of beautification of the flesh through the ordinances of the Law, in which they saw their distinct identity of Jewishness. So even though Paul sought to appease them, they beat him to the point of death, and sought out means to destroy him.

Following Christ has a cost, so whoever comes after Christ must be willing, to put aside custom, tradition, nation, family or friends, as the Lord said, "The one loving father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me, and the one loving son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. **The one having found his life will lose it, and the one having lost his life on account of Me will find it.**" Matthew 10:37-39. So most of those that believed at that time were not willing to be cut off from their traditions, as Johns says, "Nevertheless, **indeed many even of the rulers believed in Him,** but on account of the Pharisees

they were not confessing, **so that they might not be put out of the synagogue.**” John 12:42. As such, many through veneration of their own people, customs and traditions are unwilling to accept Christ.

In the previous section, we have seen how the parable of Vineyard and the Vindressers was speaking SPECIFICALLY to the ministers of the Law, that is the class of the Rulers and Priests, from whom the Kingdom of God was taken to be given to “A PEOPLE” bearing its fruit. This event was followed in the VERY next chapter by the parable of a King’s Banquet for His Son, which is an analogy for the CALL under the New Testament. This time, the intended audience of the parable were the People of Israel as a whole, for which purpose ONLY Matthew records this parable, in which the king sent out his servants to invite his subjects to his son's wedding supper. Israel is known as the sons of the kingdom, so the parable is told from the perspective of a King, that is God and his subjects the Jews. However, those invited made light of it and some even seized his servants, treated them spitefully and killed them. At which point Matthew writes, “And the king was angry, and having sent his armies, **he destroyed those murderers and burned their city.**” Matthew 22:7. After which the king sent out his servants to invite those that are on the highways to the wedding feast. [Matthew 22:1-14.] So, at the rejection of the Gospel by those that were FIRST invited, that is the Jews, the invitation of God went out to those who were **OUTSIDE**, to those that were on the highways, that is the Gentiles. [Matthew 8:11-12.]

Now, before all this had taken place, Israel was given a period of Grace which lasted for nearly 40 years, which John describes as there was a silence in heaven for half an hour. [Revelation 8:1.] Which in itself is an illustration of the time Israel spent outside the promised land, and Paul in his letter to Hebrews, used it as an analogy urging his countrymen to enter into the rest of the Lord, and not to be left outside. [Hebrews 3 & 4.] So, throughout his ministry he repeatedly showed the Gospel must go out to the Jews first, but when they hardened themselves, rejecting the words that were preached to them, each time he tells them we are now going to turn to the Gentiles, at the Beginning of his ministry in Acts 13:46-47, the middle of his ministry in Acts 18:5-6, and at the End of his ministry in Acts 28:25-28. The significance of which was that as they rejected the truth of Christ for themselves they were in effect being given over to blindness. Which Paul describes as, “**But if indeed our gospel is concealed, it is concealed to those who are perishing, in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the UNBELIEVING, so as for not to beam forth the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**” 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.

And this point is illustrated in the last recorded statement of Paul from within the confines of a prison in Rome, when he strove to persuade the people of his flesh to the truth of the Gospel of Christ. As Luke writes, “And indeed, some were persuaded of the things he is speaking, but **some REFUSED to believe.**” At which point, Paul said, “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly by the prophet Isaiah to your fathers, saying: ‘Go to this people and say, “**In hearing you will hear and never understand; and in seeing you will see and never perceive.**” For the heart of this people has grown dull, and with the ears they barely hear, and they have closed their eyes, **LEST** ever they should see with the eyes, and they should hear with the ears, and **they should understand with the heart, and should turn,** and I will heal them.’ **Therefore be it known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!**” Acts 28:24-28. As such the period that followed is commonly known as “**The Times of the Gentiles,**” which has lasted for nearly two millennia. [Luke 21:24, Romans 11:25-26.]

And in Israel's case, the rejection of the Gospel was followed with the destruction of Jerusalem, which was an inevitable consequence, as the Lord Himself prophesied in **Luke 19:41-44.** That is, God had

moved from the Covenant of the Law, to that of Grace through the Lord Jesus Christ, from that of the works of the FLESH, to that of the SPIRIT through faith. So, while in the past Israel's obedience to the Covenant of the Law was in effect their protection, which we see time and again, from the days of the judges through David, Hezekiah and so on. However, in their rejection of Christ, they in effect excluded themselves from the New Covenant, the means by which the blessing of God was now meant to be obtained. As a result they literally made themselves to be a target for the wicked one. As John says, "And **when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who had brought forth the male child.**" Revelation 12:13. So the devil sought to destroy Israel, as prophesied by Daniel, saying, "And the people of the prince who is to come **shall destroy the CITY and the SANCTUARY.**" Daniel 9:26.

Here it is important to recognise the ROOT cause for this calamity, which Daniel calls, "**the transgression of desolation,**" in Daniel 8:13, is the rejection of the Gospel of Christ, as Luke stated saying, "For days will come upon you that **your enemies will cast around you a barricade, and will surround you and will hem you in on every side.** And they will level you to the ground, and **your children within you,** and will not leave a stone upon a stone within you, **BECAUSE** you did not **know the season of your visitation.**" Luke 19:43-44. So, when the Lord said, "When you shall see '**the abomination of desolation,**' having been spoken of by the prophet Daniel, **standing in the holy place.**" He was simply referring to the trigger, which provoked the Jews to war against the Roman Empire, through which the enemy burned down Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, and sold the people of Judea into all nations. [Matthew 24:15-22, Mark 13:14-20, Luke 21:20-24.] Through which the Fig Tree Israel as a Jewish nation separated by the Covenant of Circumcision and that of the Law, was quenched from among the nations of the world, and a stump of the holy seed was left. [Isaiah 6:13.]

Stumbling Block.

The issue that affected Israel was in failing to recognise the reason the Law was given. That is they saw the Law to be an end of itself, rather than the means it was intended to be. As Paul says, "Now **before faith came, we were held in custody under the Law,** having been locked up until the faith being about to be revealed, so that **the Law has become our trainer unto Christ, so that we might be justified by faith.** And faith having come, we are no longer under a trainer." Galatians 3:23-25. The Law was meant to bring them to the Messiah, to whom the Promise was given in Abraham. And that the Law was never meant to justify the SINNER, but to condemn him. The common problem that affected both Jew and Gentile was the state of fallen flesh of mankind in which sin dwelt, as Paul says, "For of **the Law being POWERLESS** in that it was **WEAK through the FLESH,** God, having sent **His Son in likeness of sin of flesh and for sin, condemned Sin in the FLESH,** so that the righteousness of the Law should be fulfilled in us **not walking according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**" Romans 8:3-4. Meaning, the Law was good and holy, nevertheless it was made powerless by the weakness of our flesh, as such God had to address the ROOT cause which was Sin in the Flesh.

So, the basic essence of the Law is not for the purpose of justification, but to expose Sin that was hidden in our body without our knowledge. As Paul says, "**I have not known sin, if not by Law.** And indeed, **I had not been conscious of covetousness** if the Law had not said, "**You shall not covet.**" Romans 7:7. The Law dictates what we OUGHT NOT to DO, and if sin was not present in the world we would have no need for such commandments! The result of which is that, the Law of God serves to provoke sin that was found in our body, so that we may be made aware of the need we have of the Mercy of God, that we may live in His Grace. As such Paul says, "**by works of the Law, not any**

flesh will be justified before Him; for through the Law is knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20. [Galatians 2:16.] So, the knowledge of Sin through the Law is NOT a means for justification, but CONDEMNATION, as Paul also says of the Law, “**The ministry of DEATH, having been engraved in letters on stones, was produced in glory,**” and again he says, “For if glory was in **the ministry of condemnation.**” 2 Corinthians 3:7 and 9.

So through the Law we do not find the justification of our CONSCIENCE but condemnation, so we are forever propelled in the mindset of making restitution year after year, but NEVER finding justification, being mindful of the sins of our ways. [Hebrews 10:1-3.] The fact that we feel compelled to make an offering for our sins is the evidence of a condemned conscience. “For it is **impossible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sins.**” Hebrews 10:4. So when the Lord came seeking fruit from the Fig Tree, as the fruit of righteousness in a conscience that is cleansed from the condemnation of sin, He found NONE, but only leaves, that is the covering of the flesh in the appearance of righteousness. The leaves are an expression for the covering of the flesh, as it was in the garden of Eden, through various ordinances without addressing the heart issue, that is the presence of sin in the body, which compelled mankind to do all manner of wickedness and a conscience that is evil. So animal sacrifice in the Law became a means for a temporary covering for mankind, nevertheless we are kept at a distance, as Adam and Eve were ushered out of Eden, even though their shame was covered with a tunic of an animal skin which God himself had made. And Pastor Joseph Prince, illustrates how at the giving of the Law, at the foot of Mount Sinai, God CLEARLY stipulated to Moses, for the people NOT to draw near lest they die. [Exodus 19:12-13, Hebrews 12:18-21.] On which account, the Lord repeatedly told the ministers of the Law to address the ROOT issue first, that is the state of the heart of mankind, as to clean the inside of the cup first. [Matthew 7:3-5, Matthew 23:26, Mark 7:18-23, Luke 11:39-41.]

Meaning, the Law is given to govern the LAWLESS, as such the Law does not address the root cause, it simply treats the SYMPTOM. For which reason Paul says, “For indeed, **there is a putting away of the preceding commandment, BECAUSE of its weakness and uselessness (for the Law perfected NOTHING),** and the introduction of **a better hope, by which we DRAW NEAR to God.**” Hebrew 7:18-19. Now, God does not make the first obsolete without first addressing the purpose for which the Law was given in the first place, that is the NATURE of Sinfu-Flesh. As Paul explains in Hebrews, “**This is the covenant that I will make with them,** after those days, says the Lord, **putting My Laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them into their mind,**” and, “**Their sins and their lawless acts, I will remember no more.**” Now where there is forgiveness of these, **no longer is there an offering for sin.**” Hebrews 10:16-18.

But Israel, failing to perceive this, has made the pursuit of righteousness through the works of a BODY tainted by sin, to be their OBJECTIVE. And Paul, describing the dilemma they faced, writes, “**Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not attain to that law. Why? Because it was not by faith, but as by works. They stumbled over the stone of stumbling.**” Romans 9:31-32. The body of Sin, is not meant to be beautified by the works of the Law, it can only be put to DEATH according to the one through whom Sin first entered the world. So until Israel perceives the MERIT of Christ having come to deal with the ROOT cause that afflicted all of mankind through the sacrifice of Himself, they remain blinded. As Paul says, “**But their minds were hardened; for until the present day, the same veil remains at the reading of the old covenant, not being lifted, which is being removed in Christ. But unto this day, when Moses shall be read, a veil lies over their heart. But whenever one shall have turned to the Lord, the veil is taken away.**” 2 Corinthians 3:14-16.

Restoration of Israel: the Last.

Now, the story of Israel in the Representation of the Fig Tree does not end in desolation. In which respect the Lord explaining the CLOSING of the present age of Grace, once again gives the Fig Tree as an example as He did at its OPENING, saying, “Now **learn the parable of the Fig Tree**: When its branch already may have become tender and **it puts forth leaves**, you know that the summer is near. So also you, **when you see all these things, know that He is near, at the doors.**” Matthew 24:32-33. The Fig Tree putting forth leaves is an analogy for Israel once again being established as a Jewish Nation. This is more evident in the writing of Luke, which states, “Behold **the Fig Tree and ALL the TREES**. When they sprout already, looking for yourselves, you know that already summer is near.” Luke 21:29-30. Luke presents the Fig Tree in contrast to ALL the Trees, as to illustrate Israel being set apart from the rest of the nations.

The late great teacher, Derek Prince, taught extensively on this subject. And he pointed out that, the Jews, who were integrated amongst the nations of the world, being mixed among them, and indistinguishable for nearly 1900 years of desolation was brought to an end, in the creation of Israel in 1948. The result of which was that, Jews following the atrocities of the Second World War, began to come out from among the Gentile nations and to return to their Jewish Home. This was also marked by the sprouting of leaves of many other nations, declaring their independence from the colonial systems that were broken down through two world wars. And this is the sign the Lord used to portray to the world that the times of the Gentiles are coming to a close, when the favour of God will once again turn towards Israel for the purpose of Salvation. That is, as the eyes of Israel are opened to recognise and receive the Messiah, the rest of the world will be given over to blindness, as Paul says, “**They did not receive the love of the truth** in order for them to be saved. And **because of this**, God will send to them **a working of delusion, for them to believe what is false.**” 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11.

So, the Lord was portraying, as the death of the Fig Tree marked the opening of the way for the Gentiles, now the Fig Tree sprouting leaves also means, the salvation of God is once more going to return back to the Jews. So, Paul first says, “I ask then, **did they stumble that they might fall?** Never may it be! But **in their trespass is salvation to the Gentiles**, so as to provoke them to jealousy. But **if their trespass is the riches of the world**, and their failure is the riches of the Gentiles, **how much more their fullness!**” Romans 11:11-12. Paul is pointing out the stumbling of Israel served to be a benefit to the Gentiles, and to this he adds, “For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you may not be wise in yourselves: **A hardening in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles may come in.** And so **ALL ISRAEL will be SAVED.**” Romans 11:25-26. The main point is this, Israel is the firstborn, as such they had the first message of the gospel given to them, and they will also be the Last, as the Lord said, “And behold, **there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.**” Luke 13:30.

And this point is illustrated in the Gospel of Luke from the perspective of ANOTHER Banquet. This time the Lord tells this parable in response to someone saying to Him, “**Blessed is he who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.**” Now in Matthew, the parable of the King’s Banquet was told in relation to a king and his son, which was SPECIFICALLY referring to the Jews. However, this time the parable of the Banquet is told from the perspective of an INDISTINCT man, which is meant to be aimed at the Gentiles. And in this parable also, the man holds a banquet and sends out his servant to invite those for whom it is prepared. But all with one voice began to excuse themselves, the first said he has bought a field, the second, he has bought five oxen, the third he has married a wife. At which

point the man being angry sent out his servants saying, “Go out quickly into **the streets and lanes of the CITY**, and bring in here **the poor and crippled and blind and lame.**” And then **AGAIN** he says, “**Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in**, so that my house may be filled. For I say to all of you that **not one of those men having been invited will taste my supper.**” Luke 14:15-24.

In the parable of the king's banquet for his son, the invitation was first sent out to the Jews, but at their rejection, the invitation was sent out to the Gentiles that were **OUTSIDE** on the highways. However, in the parable Luke, at the rejection of those that were invited during the dispensation of the Times of the Gentiles, there are two invitations that are sent out, one after another. The first is sent out to the poor, crippled, blind and lame that are in the streets and lanes of the city. This call is confined within the limits of the **CITY**, meaning it is to those that belong within the dispensation of the times of the gentiles. The Poor, Crippled, Blind and the Lame, are in contrast to those that think they are rich, and are able to see and know how to walk. The foremost example of such a condition is the church **Lodiceans** who say to themselves, “**I am rich, and I have grown rich, and I have need of nothing.**” And you do not realize that you are **wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.**” Revelation 3:17. Please note, they are a church meaning they are considered to be part of the body of Christ. The important point is the **CONTRAST** referring to those amongst the gentile world in relation to those that rejected the invitation. So the Poor, meaning poor in faith, Crippled, meaning hurt and abused people, Blind meaning, those that do not know, Lame meaning those that are bound in sins.

The second is sent out to those that are on the highways and hedges to compel them to come in, which is referring to the Jews that are **OUTSIDE** being in direct disobedience to God. Remember the older brother in the parable of the Prodigal son, who refused to come in, because his father forgave his wayward brother. [Luke 15:11-32.] Likewise, the Jews are currently out of covenant as it relates to the Covenant of Grace and Righteousness, however, it is in this state of disobedience they will receive mercy from God, as Paul says, “For just **as you once were disobedient to God**, but now have been shown mercy by the disobedience of these, **so these also now have been disobedient** for your mercy, so that they also now may have mercy shown them. **For God has bound up all in disobedience, that He may show MERCY to all.**” Romans 11:30-32. Here the **CONTRAST** is told from two parables that are seemingly indistinguishable from one another, yet one portrays a message specific to Jews in respect to Matthew, which is at the opening of the dispensation of **GRACE**, the other through Luke, in respect to Gentiles at the closing of **THIS** age. As such in the parables there is one group considered **WITHIN**, while the other is **WITHOUT**.

And in respect to those that are invited which Luke writes about, the most telling feature is that they showed **NO AGGRESSION** towards the servants of the Man, unlike in Matthew, meaning they are of one accord with them. That is, Luke is specifically telling the parable from the perspective of those that are of the household of God, that is the **CHURCH**. So the question being asked in this parable is that, are those that are being invited to the banquet **LIVING PREPARED**? Or are they being carried away by the cares of life? Which we can conclude from their responses, one bought a field meaning the pursuit of riches as in increase [Isaiah 5:8.], the other bought five oxen, meaning the pursuit of work and careers [1 Timothy 5:18.], the other married a wife, meaning the pursuit of family life. Now, it is important to bear in mind these things are not evil of themselves, however the issue is that they have taken **PRIORITY** over the one thing that matters, that is the pursuit of righteousness. [Matthew 6:33.] As such Luke warns the people of our age saying, “And take heed to yourselves, **lest your hearts ever be burdened with dissipation and drunkenness and the cares of life**—and that day would come **upon you suddenly as a snare.** For it will come upon all those sitting upon the face of

all the earth. **Watch also at every season, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things** that are about to come to pass **and to stand before the Son of Man.**” Luke 21:34-36.

The main point of Luke being, the DANGER is to SEASONED Christians of the PRESENT age, who think they see yet live careless lives. They have taken their position lightly and are being consumed by the things of the world. There is an age of accountability EVEN in the Spirit. So at their failure to live prepared lives, due to carelessness, or due to false doctrines being unwilling to heed correction. [2 Timothy 4:3-4.] Their position is given to those, that will come up in the last great harvest of the Age of Gentiles, and these being literal babes of the faith, will be ushered into the kingdom of God, even if their lives does not quite reflect it as yet, while the wise in themselves will be left out. So the warning for the Church is to be VIGILANT in prayer and the pursuit of a life that exhibits His nature, that is of the Spirit as we see day drawing near. [Hebrews 10:23-25.] But we in church being UNABLE to distinguish between being saved from Death through the Cross of Christ in the forgiveness of sins, and the expectation there is to live life by the Spirit of God in righteousness, have downgraded the IMPERATIVE requirement for christians to persevere in Prayer, reading of the Word, and to produce works befitting of repentance. [Acts 26:21, Romans 5:9-10.]

Now unlike in Matthew, the careless approach of these groups of people does not cause them to be destroyed, but to simply miss out on the opportunity to eat bread in the kingdom of God, meaning they will fall short of the honour of becoming spirits. The parable of the Ten virgins is a representative of these people, though the gates are closed, the Lord does not say to the five foolish virgins depart from Me. [Matthew 25:1-12.] Nevertheless, they missed out on the feast of the marriage supper of the Lamb, which is held in HEAVEN, before the Lord returns to the earth with His saints. [Revelation 19:7-9, 13-14.] However, those that are left on earth will face the consequence of their choices being made subject to the tribulation that will come upon the earth. As John says in respect to those that are RAPTURED, “**Because you have kept** the word of My patient endurance, **I also will KEEP you out of the hour of the TRIAL being about to come upon the WHOLE inhabited WORLD**, to try those dwelling upon the earth.” Revelation 3:10. In contrast, in Matthew those that rejected the Lord will face the dire consequence of being cast out into the outer darkness. As the Lord says, “And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and will recline **with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness**; there will be weeping and gnashing of the teeth.” Matthew 8:11-12. The term, **Abraham and Isaac and Jacob**, is specifically used to refer to the Jews only, as sons of the kingdom. So in Matthew the rejection of the gospel is the main issue, the very reason those to whom it was preached acted violently, while in Luke it is the care of life.

And the consecutive nature of the two calls of the closing of the PRESENT age is also portrayed in the Gospel of Luke as it relates to Noah and Lot. [Luke 17:26-37.] Noah represents the RAPTURE, when the Ark is lifted up to the heavens by the flood of water the moment its gates are closed. The Water is a representation of the Holy Spirit, being lifted up from the Earth with His Church. [2 Thess. 2:7.] And Noah, with his three sons, and their wives are representative of all the nations of the world, as in the Times of the Gentiles. And just as Noah spent 100 years building the Ark, so the grace of God in the closing of the PRESENT age is also given in respect to ONE generation, as the Lord said, “Truly I say to you that **THIS GENERATION will not have passed away** until all these things shall have taken place.” Matthew 24:34. A generation according to the bible is 100 years, as God explained to Abraham equating four hundred years, to four generations in Genesis 15:14-16. Meaning, from the moment the Fig Tree sprouted leaves, that generation is at the VERGE of coming to CLOSE.

And as this period ends, another is opened which is in respect to Lot, being taken out of the midst of Sodom by the two angels. This time, a SINGLE family, that is Israel, is represented as being drawn out from among a world that is steeped in sin, as also it was in respect to Rehab from the midst of Jericho. Please Note, Lot is not raptured, but is simply set APART, as the Fig Tree is set apart from all the other Trees. And this SPECIFIC point in relation to the salvation of the Jews through the ministry of the Two Witnesses, is addressed in Revelation 11, as a people that were separated within the CONFINES of a covenant represented by the Temple, which is the LAST act before the Seventh Trumpet sounds. Now, THIS is NOT to say there is salvation by the Law, but in order to pinpoint a group of people that are distinct from all the nations of the world, as John says, “They are singing **the song of Moses**, the servant of God, and **the song of the Lamb**.” Revelation 15:3. And John specifies this point in order to clearly portray, he is speaking to ONLY JEWS, since NO other Nations has ANY CLAIM on MOSES, except the Jews! So those among the Jews that lose their lives resisting the purpose of the beast, will be elevated to be spirits, in place of those that refused to prepare themselves. [Revelation 20:4.]

And the preference of Israel as a Fig Tree that is REDEEMED will continue into the NEXT millennium, when the Lord reigns over the world as King from Jerusalem. The main point of the people of this age is that, though they are in a body of flesh and blood, there is NO SERPENT in the world to corrupt their passion and desires. And Zechariah says, “In those days **ten men from EVERY language of the nations** shall grasp **the sleeve of a Jewish man**, saying, ‘**Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.**’” Zechariah 8:23. And again, “And it shall come to pass that **everyone who is left of all the nations** which came against Jerusalem **shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts**, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” Zechariah 14:16.
