



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.6-2

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF contains chapters 4 and 5 of the book *Christ in You - The Hope of Glory!*

Have you ever thought about the subject of contentment? It is one of the most important topics a Christian can consider.

The Scriptures reveal that every circumstance of a believer's life is ordered of the Father in heaven. The prophet Jeremiah wrote:

Jeremiah 10:23-24

I know, O Yahweh, that a man's way is not in himself; Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps. Correct me, O Yahweh, but

with justice; Not with Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing.

God's perspective of His creation is different than man's. Man primarily considers how to have a comfortable, enjoyable life. God, however, is looking to produce sons who share His character.

Because we learn best in times of difficulty and adversity, God leads man through many hard experiences. He must humble us, and teach us to abhor sin. These lessons are not easy, and our soul often detests them.

If we are discontent with our experiences,

this is often a sign that we are not seeking the same things that God is seeking. If we were, we would be content even with difficulties. This was the apostle Paul's declaration.

II Corinthians 12:10

Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake...

Are you "well content" with your present circumstances? Paul spent long periods in prison, yet this was his testimony. He understood that it was God who ordered his steps.

Food for Thought

"Instead of complaining at his lot, a contented man is thankful that his condition and circumstances are no worse than they are. Instead of greedily desiring something more than the supply of his present need, he rejoices that God still cares for him. Such an one is "content" with such as he has."

Arthur W. Pink

Scripture Memory

Hebrews 13:5

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you..."

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Christ in You - The Hope of Glory!

The Number of the Firstborn

There is a wonderful theme found throughout the entirety of the Bible relating to those who are the firstborn. The firstborn male that opens the womb was always reserved, set apart, as holy unto Yahweh.

Exodus 34:19

The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me...

That Christ Yahshua was the firstborn from the womb of a virgin was not by happenstance. It was the design of the Father in heaven. Yahshua would serve as a pattern for a group of elect, overcoming, firstfruits from among mankind who would be reserved as holy unto Yahweh.

Attaining to the number of the firstborn is a goal every Christian should strive towards.

Luke 2:22-23

And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought [Yahshua] up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every first-born male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord")...

Attaining to the number of the firstborn is a goal every Christian should strive towards. The Old Testament laws and practices centered around the firstborn serve as types and shadows of those who will be the first to attain to the resurrection from the dead, ascending to a glorified condition as the preeminent sons of God. This preeminence of the firstborn was revealed in Yahweh's choice of the firstborn male from every Israelite family to serve as priest. These firstborn males were "holy unto Yahweh." In every way the rights and privileges of the firstborn were superior to those born

after them.

Colossians 1:18

And he is... the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

I know some will be prone to object that this declaration is specifically in reference to Christ. This is true, but one must consider that Christ is more than Yahshua, the Son of God. Christ is a many membered body.

I Corinthians 12:12-13

For even as ***the body*** is one and yet ***has many members***, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, ***so also is Christ***.

To understand the promises of God to the firstborn one must come to embrace a truly Biblical mindset concerning the identity of Christ. Christ is not one person. The word Christ means "anointed." Yahshua, the Son of God is Christ. So too are those who are members of His body. Yahshua is the Head. As Head He holds a preeminence among His brethren. The Head is set atop the body, even as Yahshua resides in the highest place among those who are numbered among the body of Christ.

It is destined that all God's sons will attain to the stature of Christ, being conformed to the maturity of Yahshua, who is the Head.

Ephesians 4:12-13

To the building up of the body of Christ; ***until we all attain to*** the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to ***a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ***.

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This attainment to the stature of Christ does not occur at the same time for all the sons of God.

I Corinthians 15:22-23

For as in Adam all die, so also ***in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order...***

What does this mean, “In Christ all shall be made alive”? This is speaking of the resurrection from the dead. Not all will be resurrected at the same time. There is a resurrection for the sons of God that the apostle John describes as “the first resurrection.” This is the resurrection of the firstborn. Those who attain to the first resurrection will be preeminent in all ways over their brethren who will be resurrected at a later time.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection...

As we read in the previous Scripture, the firstborn to open the womb was reserved unto God. This is the meaning of the phrase “holy unto Yahweh.” The word *holy* indicates being set apart for a specific call, role or purpose. The firstborn are set apart specifically for Yahweh. It is evident that there is a correlation between the first resurrection and the types and shadows of the firstborn in the Old Testament, for John writes “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection.” This perfectly corresponds to the rights of the firstborn. Their blessings exceeded that of their brethren, and they were set aside as holy unto Yahweh.

Yahweh’s plan of taking the firstborn male for Himself was altered in form, but not in principle, when the Israelites transgressed in the wilderness by fashioning for themselves a golden calf and degrading themselves in its presence. From this point forward we find that Yahweh used a substi-

tute for the firstborn male. He chose men who had not participated in the idolatry of the golden calf to fill the role of the firstborn. Because the tribe of Levi did not enter into idolatry with the rest of the people at this event, every male from Levi became holy unto Yahweh, and God exchanged a male of Levi for the firstborn male of all the other tribes.

Numbers 3:40-41

Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Number every firstborn male of the sons of Israel from a month old and upward, and make a list of their names. And you shall take the Levites for Me, I am Yahweh, instead of all the first-born among the sons of Israel...”

The precise number of the sons of Levi after taking a census was found to be 22,000.

Numbers 3:39

All the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the command of Yahweh by their families, every male from a month old and upward, were 22,000.

This number is not an estimate, or rounded figure. This is an exact count, and it reveals something of the nature of those who are accounted as holy unto Yahweh. The number 22 denotes the removal of sinful flesh. It is the number of those who are circumcised in heart. Those who are holy unto Yahweh must of necessity be sundered from sinful attachments to this world and all of its manifold idolatry.

Not all will be resurrected at the same time.

The honor of being numbered among the first-

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born is no slight honor. Yahweh was Himself the inheritance of those so chosen. The Levites were granted access to the presence of Yahweh that was unique among their brethren.

Numbers 18:21-23

“And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. And **the sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, lest they bear sin and die. Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting...**”

Understand then that this is a parable of things to come. In the plan of Yahweh He has determined

Those who attain to the first resurrection will far exceed the glory of those who follow.

that there should be a firstfruit group of saints to enter into the glory of resurrected life in Christ. The portion of those who attain to the first resurrection will far

exceed the glory of those who follow. Those who attain to the first resurrection will excel all others in privilege, power, authority, honor, riches, and glory.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but **they will be priests of God and of Christ** and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

In this verse we can discern a relationship between the right of the firstborn and the significance of the first resurrection. Levi became a substitute company for all of the firstborn males of Israel. They were “priests of God.” Those who attain to the first resurrection are accorded a similar honor, albeit on a tremendously magnified scale (compare a pinpoint of light to the brilliance

of the Sun shining forth in its glory). It is my desire to show you the surpassing excellence of attaining to the number of the firstborn that I might provoke some to jealousy, inciting them to pursue the attainment of this elite company. The apostle Paul spoke of his own earnest yearning to attain to this group.

Philippians 3:10-14

To get to know him, and the power of his resurrection and fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death, - **If by any means I may advance to the earlier resurrection, which is from among the dead:** Not that I have, already, received, or have, already, reached perfection, but I am pressing on - if I may even lay hold of that for which I have also been laid hold of by Christ Jesus: - Brethren! I, as to myself, reckon that I have, not yet, laid hold; one thing, however, - the things behind, forgetting, and, unto the things before, eagerly reaching out, With the goal in view, I press on for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.

[Rotherham Emphasized Bible]

Note the fervent pursuit of the high calling of God in Christ Yahshua! Paul understood that there is a premier resurrection from the dead. There is a place of attainment in the resurrection where one is granted a closer abiding in the presence of the Father. There is a special reward for those who are numbered among the firstborn, and Paul earnestly contended for the prize. He buffeted his body and kept it under subjection that he might not be disqualified. He ran the race as one who was not without aim, for he knew what awaited those who crossed the finish line first. Paul applied all diligence, all discipline, all focus and determined effort, in the pursuit of attaining to the number of the firstborn from the dead.

If you and I have any inkling of what awaits the firstborn we would also be gripped by the pursuit of this high calling.

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I Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Paul clearly had something in mind here other than the common view held today by a majority of Christians concerning what awaited him in the afterlife, in the resurrection from the dead. Paul discerned that there was a prize for which to strive. Paul was raised as a Pharisee. He knew the Law and the prophets. Paul discerned the types and shadows of the Old Testament and he discerned that something of a profound nature was foreshadowed in the laws of the firstborn and the laws regarding firstfruits. He wanted to be numbered among that elite company.

In the Old Testament, the firstborn was considered the strength and honor of the Father.

Genesis 49:3

Reuben, ***you are my first-born; My might and the beginning of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power.***

Reuben was the firstborn son of Jacob. In what is spoken of him we can discern the role God has chosen for the firstborn. What does it mean to be “preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power”? The word preeminent is defined as “surpassing all others.” Those who attain to the first resurrection will surpass all others in the resurrection from the dead, both in dignity and in power. Most saints have no understanding that there will be distinctions in the resurrection, but

the Scriptures plainly teach that there will be VAST distinctions among mankind in the resurrection from the dead.

I Corinthians 15:39-42

All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. ***So also is the resurrection of the dead.***

There will be those in the resurrection of the dead who are preeminent, surpassing all others. These will have a glory as of the Sun shining in its strength. There will be others who have the glory of the moon and the glory of the stars. Consider that there are as many stars in the daytime sky as there are in the nighttime sky. The stars cannot be seen during the daytime due to the far surpassing glory of the Sun. The Sun in its radiance is so magnificent that it renders invisible to the eye of man all the other heavenly bodies.

There will be those in the resurrection of the dead who are preeminent, surpassing all others.

There will be saints in the resurrection whose portion is as the Sun, while many others will be as the moon and the stars. The apostle Paul declared that there is an imperishable wreath for which we are contending. It requires great focus, aim, sacrifice and discipline to receive the reward of the firstborn. Yet how many Christians today are running without any aim or discipline? Most do not perceive that there is a prize to be won, and a high calling above all other callings to strive toward.

Those who attain to the number of the firstborn

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will excel all others as the Sun excels the stars, as a man excels a fish. Perhaps you have not been taught the truth of the resurrection from the dead. Perhaps you have been lulled to sleep by the vain and errant prattle of ministers and Bible

The majority of Israel were disqualified from being selected to be God's priests...

teachers who proclaim that it is simply enough to confess Christ that you might go to heaven when you die. Perhaps you have been content to live as the majority of Christians, enjoying the

pursuits and pleasures of the world while declaring your love for Christ. Do not be deceived. There were eleven tribes out of twelve who were disqualified for the privilege of being numbered among the firstborn. Only those who separated themselves from idolatry were chosen to be holy unto Yahweh, to receive God as their inheritance.

Deuteronomy 10:8-9

At that time ***Yahweh set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, to stand before Yahweh to serve Him and to bless in His name*** until this day. Therefore, Levi does not have a portion or inheritance with his brothers; ***Yahweh is his inheritance***, just as Yahweh your God spoke to him.)

Everything in this Scripture is a parable of the firstborn from the dead. Levi would carry the ark of the covenant. This is a type of those who would carry the full and glorious likeness of Christ. Levi would stand in the presence of Yahweh, while access to His presence would be restricted to all those who embraced the idolatry of the world.

Ezekiel 44:12-13

Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn against them," declares Yahweh God, "that they shall bear the punishment for their iniquity. And they shall not come near to Me to serve as a priest to Me,

nor come near to any of My holy things, to the things that are most holy; but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed."

In the day of judgment there will be many of God's children who will understand that although they were called to serve as priests before God, because they did not separate themselves in a pure devotion to God, but were double-minded, pursuing the same idols of mammon and worldly success and pleasure as the world, they will not be granted access to the presence of Yahweh. This is a terrible tragedy, and it is reason enough to strive to attain to the number of the firstborn. What astounding things must be contained in the type and shadow of the Law where Yahweh told the tribe of Levi that He would be their inheritance! In all the ages to come it will be clearly revealed that there is nothing of greater value, glory, majesty and surpassing excellence, than to have Yahweh as a possession.

The majority of Israel were disqualified from being selected to be God's priests, His firstborn. Eleven tribes were not allowed to serve the Tabernacle, or to carry the ark of the covenant. Only one tribe attained to this honor. This same pattern is revealed in the life of Jacob's twelve sons. Reuben was the firstborn of his father. The pre-eminence should have been his, but he disqualified himself, and the right of the firstborn was given to one who excelled his brothers in purity and devotion to God, even Joseph.

Genesis 49:3-4

"Reuben, you are my first-born; My might and the beginning of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it - he went up to my couch."

Reuben had sexual relations with Bilhah, the con-

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cube of his father. This became known to Jacob, and Reuben forfeited the honor and dignity of the firstborn. In place of dignity he received shame. In place of power he was made weak. Another who was more worthy took his place.

Consider the message of this event. Many Christians today are truly the children of their heavenly Father. They could walk in all the preeminence of those who are the firstborn from the dead. Yet many forfeit this right because of uncontrolled passions. In order to satisfy some passion or desire of the flesh, they give themselves over to actions that are disgraceful and should not be named among the saints of God. Little do these ones know how much they are forfeiting. They will discover that their sin has been akin to that of Esau, who for a bowl of stew sold his birthright to his brother Jacob. In the eyes of God, such a trade is among the most grievous transgressions named among men.

Hebrews 12:15-17

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God... that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

Reuben cast away the preeminence that would have been his for a single sexual encounter with Bilhah. Esau sold his birthright to satisfy the momentary hunger of his belly. Multitudes of Christians are making similar diabolical transactions in this hour. When they stand before God they will see what they have forfeited. Like Esau they will cry out bitterly with tears for God to allow them to receive the blessing reserved for the firstborn from the dead. But God will not hear. God will not repent. Their choice will stand. Truly there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth among the children of God on that day.

What is required in order to attain to the number of the firstborn? We know that one will not be able to live as the majority of their brothers and attain this honor. There were twelve sons of Jacob, but only one was chosen. This son was the eleventh born. He was among the youngest, and he had a different spirit than his brothers. This son of Jacob was spiritually minded, and he had an unusual attachment to his father. Joseph loved his father, and his father loved him. After spending years in Egypt, Joseph's thoughts were constantly turned toward his father whom he loved.

Genesis 43:27

Then [Joseph] asked them about their welfare, and said, "Is your old father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?"

Genesis 45:13

Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen; and you must hurry and bring my father down here."

Genesis 46:29

And Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time.

As you are sojourning in this land of Egypt (the world) are your thoughts continuously turning toward your Father in heaven? Do you yearn to be in His presence, partaking of His fellowship? Is this desire revealed in the time you spend in prayer and the study of His word? Or are you captivated by all the pleasures and pursuits of this world, with its allure to the sensual nature of man? Do you stand apart from your brothers in your devotion to your father? Do you turn away

Esau sold his birthright to satisfy the momentary hunger of his belly.

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from sin as Joseph turned away from Potipher's wife who sought to seduce him, or are you as Reuben who failed to curb his fleshly lust and had sexual relations with his father's concubine? The choices we make now in this life will determine whether we will attain to the preeminence of the firstborn from the dead.

The firstborn always received a double portion from their father when the inheritance was given to the sons.

Deuteronomy 21:17

But he shall acknowledge the first-born... by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the first-born.

As we have seen, being granted the right of the firstborn is a spiritual parable. This right is not granted according to natural order, but according to worthiness, and love for the Father. Thus Jacob received the double portion instead of Esau, and Joseph received the double portion instead of Reuben.

(A note of interest. My name is Joseph and from my childhood one of my favorite foods has been a Reuben Sandwich. It is the right of those who are chosen as substitutes for the firstborn, to consume that which would have gone to another.)

Genesis 48:21-22

Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die..., and I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

Genesis 49:22-26

Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring..., from the God of your father who helps you, and by the Almighty who blesses you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.

In the resurrection from the dead there will be those who are distinguished among their brothers. Their blessings will surpass the blessings of all others. The blessings of their Father in heaven will be on the head of those who attain to the number of the firstborn.

Those who would be numbered among the firstborn should study the life of Joseph. His brothers discerned that he was loved of his father above them. This is a spiritual parable. Yahweh will show a greater favor to those destined to be firstfruits unto Him, than He does to others. Jacob made for Joseph a special garment, and the firstborn will be clothed with the favor of God. Yet this favor will cause jealousy among the brothers of the firstfruits company. This is seen not only in Joseph's life, but in the life of Yahshua.

Yahshua came as One destined to receive the inheritance of the firstborn. The Jews had Him killed due to their jealousy.

Matthew 27:17-18

Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas, or Yahshua who is called Christ?" For **he knew that because of envy they had delivered Him up.**

It was impossible to deny that the favor of the Father rested upon Yahshua. He manifested a wis-

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dom that could not be refuted. He walked in a power that was clearly divine. Despite the fact that the blessings of the Father rested upon Yahshua, the Jews did not refrain themselves from persecuting this favored Son. In the same way, Joseph's brothers could see that Joseph was adorned in the special garment of his father, but they had no regard for their Father's judgment in this matter. They persecuted Joseph, spoke of killing him, and eventually sold him as a slave into the land of Egypt.

Those who would be firstfruits unto God must anticipate that such rejection by their brethren will be their portion. One cannot be too attached to a desire for fellowship among brethren if they would attain to the high call of their Father in heaven. A time will come when such sons of God will recognize that their devotion and love for the Father will lead them to be rejected by their brethren, and they must be willing to bear the cost. They must be willing to walk alone, separated from the companionship of other earthly relations.

John 1:11

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Luke 14:26

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”

The walk of the firstborn is a lonely walk. It is a life set aside for the pleasure of Yahweh, our heavenly Father. When one walks with God, they will find themselves with little earthly company. The church today has lots of fellowship. There are myriads of brethren who meet together regularly, feasting together, playing together, dwelling together, while the Joseph's are alone.

One might think that Joseph finally knew fellowship when his brothers came to Egypt to buy grain and were reunited with him, but this is not so. We read the following about Joseph's circumstances.

Genesis 43:32

And the servants set out the food for Joseph by himself, and for his brothers by themselves, and for those Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, according to the Egyptian custom not to eat food with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

Three groups of people are revealed here in type. The Egyptians are a picture of the world. Joseph's brothers are a type of the church. Joseph is a type of the overcomer in Christ.

We find that those who will walk as overcomers will dine alone. The world despises the overcomer. The church cannot eat from the same table, and therefore the overcomer must dine alone. The overcomer can take food from his table, speaking of the revelations of God, and send them to his brothers, but he will find that it continues to be his lot to abide by himself. As much as his heart may yearn to be seated among his brothers, there is always something that keeps the separation in place. This phenomenon is of God. It serves to keep those who are numbered among the firstborn set apart unto their Father, and protects them from being ensnared in the mixture and impurity of their brethren.

One cannot be too attached to a desire for fellowship among brethren...

Many truths are discerned through a study of the life of Joseph. In Joseph we see the preeminence to be granted to the firstborn.

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Genesis 41:39-41

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are. ***You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you.***" And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "***See I have set you over all the land of Egypt.***"

Pharaoh is in this instance a symbol of God who rules over the kingdoms of men. Egypt signifies the world, and Joseph the firstborn from the dead. (That Joseph is a type of the firstborn from the dead is seen in the event where his brothers took his coat and dipped it in blood and told his father Jacob that a wild animal had killed him. Thus Joseph is pictured as being dead, and later is revealed to be alive, a symbol of the firstborn from the dead.)

We see then in this parable that the firstborn will be granted ruling authority over all the earth. They will be granted divine wisdom and discernment in order to judge and rule the people. Only the Father will be greater, and nothing will be done in all the earth apart from the command of the firstborn from the dead.

At a time not far off, the Father will bring this Joseph Company out of their prison houses. (Note that Joseph was in Pharaoh's prison reserved for those who were ministers in government.) Joseph stands in this instance as those who must be trained under a strict discipline, where all personal freedom and liberty is removed, until they come to do nothing except at the command of God. For a period, such restriction will seem to chafe greatly and appear as a great injustice.

Genesis 40:12-15

Then Joseph said to him..., "Only keep me in mind when it goes well with you, and please do me a kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For I was in fact kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon."

There is a period of perplexity for all who are so trained by God. As they observe the freedom of their brethren, they cannot understand why they are being subjected to experiences much harsher, lonelier and restrictive. The firstborn candidates are living as slaves while their brothers are walking in great liberty, doing as they please. Then an even further narrowing of their lives manifests, pictured in Joseph being cast into prison. All this serves to teach the sons of God to not do anything of their own initiative. They are to live for the will and pleasure of God. They are not free to do anything arising from their soul's desires. They are not free to pursue any worldly possession, any personal goal. They are to come into strict confinement to the will of the Father. They are to move only at His command. They are to be so perfect in this that they speak only what the Father commands them to speak.

John 12:49

"For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak."

We see that Joseph has come to this same state of complete surrender of his being to the will of God when he is brought to stand before Pharaoh. Joseph has learned to not speak anything arising from self. He makes no petition to Pharaoh to deliver him from his bondage. He does not take advantage of the situation to seek anything for self. He is surrendered to the will and pleasure of God for that moment.

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Genesis 41:15-16

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; and I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."

With these words, Joseph revealed that he had come to a place of complete surrender to the will of God. His lips would be given to God that God might speak through him, and this God did.

Joseph's life was much harsher than his brothers. Joseph knew more sorrow, more loneliness, more trials, more injustice than his brethren. Yet the glory and honor that commenced at the hour of his promotion far excelled that of his brothers. When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt they dwelt as despised shepherds.

Genesis 46:33-34

And it shall come about when Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' that you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' that you may live in the land of Goshen; ***for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians.***

Joseph's brothers partook of their good things in their youth, and were therefore without honor in their maturity. Joseph, in contrast, knew evil things in his youth, and he was given surpassing glory while his brothers were loathed.

Luke 16:25

But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony."

People of God, this life is fleeting. Will you pursue a life of ease and comfort and pleasure now, forfeiting immeasurable glory and honor and blessing in the ages to come? Or will you contend earnestly for the crown to be given to those who cross the finish line first?

James 1:12

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

II Timothy 4:7-8

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Run in such a way that you might attain the crown, for there is a reward for all those who attain to the number of the firstborn.

Each in His Own Order

Because there is almost no knowledge among Christians today concerning the various resurrections from the dead, and the distinctions among them, it seems prudent to lay a solid foundation regarding this topic. The Scriptures actually have much to say about the resurrections (plural), but if you were to ask the majority of Christians today of this topic they would say that they know of only one resurrection. As we have seen in reading John's writing in the book of Revelation, it is plainly declared that there are more than one resurrection.

Joseph's brothers partook of their good things in their youth...

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Revelation 20:4-6

And I saw the souls of those who had been be-headed because of the testimony of Yahshua and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. ***This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection...***

Some in reading this may think that it is stating that there are two resurrections. However, this is itself an erroneous conclusion based upon a misunderstanding of these words. John states "the rest of the dead did not come to life until the

Three notes divine perfection.

thousand years were completed." What is declared is that there would be a space of a thousand years between the first resurrection (the number of the first-

born) and any subsequent resurrection. There would not be any resurrections during the Millennial period where the firstborn are ruling with Christ. We must look at other Scriptures to determine the total number of resurrections, for the Scriptures reveal that there will be a total of three resurrections of men.

It should not be surprising that there are three resurrections, for three is a number relating to fulness and completion. E.W. Bullinger, in his book *Number in Scripture*, shares the following relating to the number three.

Three, therefore, stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire.

All things that are specially complete are stamped with this number three...

When we turn to the Scriptures, this completion becomes Divine, and marks Divine completeness or perfection.

Three is the first of four perfect numbers.

- * Three denotes divine perfection;*
- * Seven denotes spiritual perfection;*
- * Ten denotes ordinal perfection; and*
- * Twelve denotes governmental perfection.*

Hence the number three points us to what is real, essential, perfect, substantial, complete, and Divine.

E.W. Bullinger notes that "three notes divine perfection." There are three persons in the Godhead; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Resurrection is man entering into the fulness of spiritual life. It is embracing the divine perfection for which man was created. We should therefore find it affirming to learn that there are three resurrections, for this number is bound up with the entire doctrine of resurrection and man attaining to divine perfection, being perfect and complete in Christ Yahshua, the Son of God.

We even note this number in relation to the resurrection of Christ, for we are told that He arose on the third day. We observe the relation of the third day and divine perfection in the following words of Christ.

Luke 13:32

And [Yahshua] said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and ***the third day I shall be perfected.***'"

Yahshua was speaking truths on many levels with

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these words. The third day was a reference to His own resurrection, when He would be perfected. Yet it was also a reference to the resurrection of the firstborn sons of God. For two days (two thousand years) the church would be given authority to cast out demons and perform cures. After two days, at the dawning of the third day, the number of the firstborn would attain to the resurrection as firstfruits unto God. This company of men would themselves be perfected, being conformed to the image of the glorified Son of God.

Many Christians understand that a day stands as a symbol for a thousand years, for this knowledge has been restored to many in an hour when it is necessary in order to discern the work of God. For those who are unfamiliar, I will share the following Scripture which serves as a foundation for this understanding.

II Peter 3:8

But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that ***with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.***

This is a key to understanding many of the types and shadows of the Scriptures. Knowing that a day is as a thousand years serves to unlock the prophetic significance of many events and declarations found in Scripture. We can go back to the first chapter of Genesis and see this symbolism. We are told that as Yahweh moved to re-create the earth in the first chapter of Genesis, that on the third day He caused the earth to arise out from under the waters, for prior to this time the waters covered all things.

Genesis 1:9-13

Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good... And

there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

On the third day we see the first pattern for resurrection. The land arising out of the water stands as a symbol of man, whose flesh was formed of the dust of the earth, arising in resurrection life out of the waters of death. That this occurs on the third day is by the design of Yahweh.

Some might object that man is not at the end of day two (two thousand years) from the formation of Adam in the Garden of Eden. This is certainly true, for it has been six thousand years since Adam was created. This places us at the end of six days prophetically, and poised to enter the seventh day. We must keep in mind, however, that the earth has known two men, two Adams. The first was formed six thousand years ago, and the second appeared two thousand years ago.

***With the Lord one day
is as a thousand
years...***

I Corinthians 15:45-49

So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

"The last Adam" is a reference to Yahshua, the Son of God. He came as the Head of a new race of men. Therefore we have two different genealogies running concurrent to one another. We have the genealogy of the first Adam which is poised to enter its seventh day. We also have the genealogy of

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the last Adam, which is on the brink of entering the third day. Thus the seventh day and the third day will arrive simultaneously. We will see the many membered body of Christ perfected on the third day, for this is the time appointed for their resurrection.

We can observe this truth in many other instances of Scripture. Following is another Scripture that contains a prophetic message relating to the perfecting of the sons of God.

Hosea 6:1-2

“Come, let us return to Yahweh. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. **He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him.**”

For two days mankind has known a divided state. Those who have been born again of the seed of Christ have known the battle between the Spirit of Christ within them and the sinful flesh. As the

For two days mankind has known a divided state.

apostle Paul declared, “these are contrary to one another.” This torn condition of man has existed for the past two thousand years, ever since the first Pentecost

when the Spirit descended upon those gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. It is not the will of God that man should perpetually remain in this divided condition. There is a second salvation where man will be loosed from the bonds of this sinful flesh, and will receive a new, glorified body that does not know sin.

Hebrews 9:28

So **Christ** also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.**

The time appointed for this to occur is at the beginning of the Millennial period, the seventh day from Adam and the third day from Christ.

In Revelation we read of a great event taking place in the heavens, and this event is a dramatization of the firstborn sons of God coming forth in resurrection power and life.

Revelation 12:1-6

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems... And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

What is symbolized here is the birth of the firstborn in the resurrection from the dead. I have a number of Bibles that include notes and headings placed in the text by the translators and editors. Some place a heading over this passage declaring that it speaks of the birth of Jesus. This is misleading, being one more attempt of Satan to deceive the children of God regarding the inheritance that awaits them. John is not writing in the book of Revelation of things that have happened in the past, but of things that will happen in the future.

Revelation 1:1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, **the things which must shortly take place...**

(NAS)

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The woman in the heavens is the church. The child she is giving birth to is the elect saints, the overcomers who attain to the first resurrection. These are caught up to the throne of God, being called to rule with Him. This is a reference to those who will attain to the first resurrection.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but ***they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.***

As the number of the firstborn are entering into the power and preeminence due them, the church is fleeing into the wilderness. The church must undergo a further refining, for when the time of the first resurrection came she was not ready.

Revelation 20:5

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed.

There are firstborn sons of God, and there are the later born sons of God. The firstborn are a remnant portion of the whole. These will be a small company in comparison to the multitude of the sons of God. We see then that the first resurrection from the dead is close at hand, but not all will attain unto it. The majority of Christians will have to await a later resurrection. Before we pass on to speak of the three resurrections, let us look at one more type and shadow that speaks of the fast approaching first resurrection.

As Joshua (a type of Yahshua) led the people of God into their inheritance at the crossing of the Jordan River, we are given clear types of the first resurrection from the dead. The Promised Land serves as a type of the inheritance of the saints, which is their resurrected state in glory. Even as the Jordan had to be crossed, we have to cross

over from death into life. Observe now the symbolism of this crossing.

Joshua 3:3-4

And they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. However, there shall be between you and it a distance of about 2,000 cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before."

The ark of the covenant stands as a symbol of the presence of God in His glory. It was forbidden to look in the ark, or to touch it, lest the man should die.

The church must undergo a further refining...

Exodus 33:20

But [Yahweh] said, "***You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!***"

I Timothy 6:15-16

He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; ***whom no man has seen or can see.***

Joshua commanded the priests to carry the ark into the waters of the Jordan, and all who followed were strictly charged to remain at a distance of about 2,000 cubits. Every detail of the word of God is pregnant with meaning. Yahshua would be the first man to cross into the inheritance prepared for the sons of God. It would be "about 2,000" years before any others were to follow in entering into this same inheritance prepared for the saints in glory. The 2,000 cubits

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stand for 2,000 years. We should note, however, that it says "about 2,000," for no one knows the hour or the day. We are not told that it would be precisely 2,000 years from the time of Yahshua's resurrection to the time of the resurrection of His firstborn brothers. We are only told that it will be "about 2,000" years.

Joshua 3:5-6

Then Joshua said to the people, "**Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow Yahweh will do wonders among you.**" And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.

What an awesome foreshadowing of the resurrection of the saints to glory is found in these words. Truly Yahweh would do wonders for those who consecrated themselves.

I John 3:2-3

We know that, **when He appears, we shall be like Him**, because we shall see Him just as He is. And **everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself**, just as He is pure.

This is the fulfillment of what was observed at the crossing of the Jordan. The wonders Yahweh would do among us is to transform us into His own glorious image. This is the meaning of "consecrate yourselves." John said "everyone who

Do you want to attain to the resurrection of the firstborn?

has this hope... purifies himself." Do you want to see the wonders of Yahweh? Do you want to attain to the resurrection of the firstborn? Then you must lead a

consecrated life. You must be wholly devoted, leading a life dedicated to the will and pleasure of God.

Christ has crossed over ahead of His brethren. A space separates Yahshua and those of His people who follow Him of about 2,000 years. It has now been about two thousand years. All who would attain to the first resurrection must be whole-hearted in their pursuit of the goal. Their eyes must be fixed on the finish line. They must let nothing distract them or slow them down.

Joshua 3:14-16

So it came about when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest), that the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho.

What is signified in the words "So it came about when the people set out from their tents"? The apostle Paul gives us understanding.

II Corinthians 5:2-4

For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

We must leave this tent of mortal flesh in order to enter into our inheritance in Christ. There is a body prepared for us, a dwelling suited to our new status as glorified sons of God.

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Note in the account of Joshua leading the people across the swelling of the Jordan that the waters which symbolize death, “rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam.” This signifies that all men will have access to the crossing of the Jordan, as far back as Adam. All men will be granted the ability to follow Yahshua across the Jordan into the inheritance prepared for the sons of God.

Let us focus upon one more detail of this narrative, for it will lead us into a discovery of the three resurrections prepared for man. It is written in this account that the priests stepped into the Jordan while it was in flood “for the Jordan overflows its banks **all the days of harvest.**” These words are as full of meaning as every other detail we have looked at. It was at harvest time that they crossed the Jordan, and this understanding will lead us to a wonderful testimony set in Scripture by the wisdom of Yahweh. All resurrections are pictured as harvests. Even as we harvest the ripe and mature grain of the earth, so too will God reap the earth and gather together those who have come to maturity. Not all mature at the same time. Each one comes to maturity, and therefore resurrection, in their own order.

When Yahweh gave the Law to Moses, He established certain festivals that were to be observed with meticulous detail. Every detail was to serve as a lesson, part of a grand parable, revealing Yahweh’s work with mankind. The Law contained portions relating to the observance of three feasts that the Jews were to observe annually. Each of these feasts occurred at the time of a major harvest in the land of Israel. Following is a list of the feasts and their associated harvests.

Passover - Barley

Pentecost - Wheat

Tabernacles (Sukkot) - Grapes

Deuteronomy 16:16

Three times in a year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your God in the place which He chooses, **at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover)** and **at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)** and **at the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles)**...

Three times a year the people of Israel were commanded to appear before God. Appearing before God is symbolic of resurrection. That Moses instructed the Jews to appear three times every year was a foreshadowing of the three resurrections of man (“each in his own order”). In very symbolic language, the word “ingathering” was also used in association with these harvests.

Appearing before God is symbolic of resurrection.

Exodus 23:14-17

“Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread... at the time appointed in the month of Abib..., and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of **Ingathering** at the end of the year, **when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.** Three times in the year all your males shall appear before Yahweh God.”

God has been laboring in the field of this earth to bring forth mature sons after His image. There will be three harvests of men from the earth, each different in its character even as the three feasts were different, and the crops harvested at each one were different. These feasts would have been nothing without the harvests associated with them. The harvests were the key component of every feast. Each man was to bring with him fruit from the harvest when he appeared before Yahweh.

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Exodus 23:15

And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.

God looks for fruit in the lives of men. Tragically, there will be those who appear before God without any fruit to show forth from their lives. These will receive a curse rather than a blessing, even as Yahshua cursed the fig tree that did not have any fruit on it when He came to inspect it.

Even as the fruit was gathered together and the firstfruits brought to Yahweh three times in the year, so will Yahweh send out His angels into the earth to gather together from all mankind those who are mature and fruitful.

God looks for fruit in the lives of men.

Matthew 24:31

"And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and **they will gather together His elect** from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."

As we saw in the previous chapter, there are vast differences between the three resurrections of men and women to stand before God. There is a preeminence that belongs to those who attain to the first resurrection. The resurrections that follow will be of a lesser glory, honor and dignity. These differences are foreshadowed in the three harvests.

This first resurrection is associated with the barley harvest. Barley is an early ripening crop. It ripens about fifty days before wheat, and is therefore harvested earlier, not having to undergo all the heat of the summer. This is a parable. The overcomers who attain to the number of the first-born will come to maturity quicker than the rest of the body of Christ. Because they gave them-

selves eagerly to pursue God's will for them of becoming like Christ, they will not have to experience the heat of the Great Tribulation and the Lake of Fire, even as barley doesn't have to go through the heat of summer.

Barley differs from wheat in a very critical way. Barley contains little gluten, while wheat has an abundance of gluten. Gluten is the component of grain that reacts with yeast to make the bread rise. Because barley lacks gluten it is often baked as an unleavened bread. This is a parable, for bread represents man's flesh and leaven represents sin. The barley crop speaks of a people whose flesh does not rise up at the presence of sin, for they have crucified the flesh with its affections and desires. These are the overcomers, and like Christ, they rule over the flesh.

Wheat contains an abundance of gluten and it is baked as a leavened bread. This is a picture of God's people who have not removed the sin from their lives; whose flesh reacts strongly in the presence of sin. The action of the yeast in wheat bread continues to cause the bread to rise until the bread is placed in the oven and baked. The heat of the oven stops the reaction between the leaven and the gluten in the bread, and it ceases to rise. This is also a parable of this latter group of Christians who will only turn away from sin, and learn righteousness, as they go through the heat of the Great Tribulation and the Lake of Fire.

These first two resurrections speak of those who are the people of God. Not all those who are God's people walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. Many are living lives of ease and comfort, sin and impurity. Only a remnant of the people of God will attain to the first resurrection. The rest will have to await the next resurrection after the thousand years are over.

Paul wrote of the order of the resurrections, and those who attain to them in the following words.

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I Corinthians 15:22-26

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

(NAS)

The words from the New American Standard translation represent a common rendering of the words of this passage. I believe the translators have failed to capture the true intent of Paul's meaning, however. Paul was well aware of the symbolism of the harvests as they related to resurrection, and I believe he had this analogy in mind when he penned these words to the believers in Corinth. As it has been previously mentioned, the word Christ means anointed. During the feasts of God the firstfruits were presented to God, and they were anointed.

What is not observed in our English translations is the presence and absence of the definite article "the" in the original Greek. This article is present in the phrase "so also in (the) Christ all shall be made alive," as well as in the phrase "after that those who are (the) Christ's at His coming." This definite article is absent, however, in the phrase "Christ the first fruits." This could be taken to indicate that Paul is not speaking of "the Christ" here as a reference to the Son of God, but that he is speaking of "anointed firstfruits," which is understood to be a company of elect saints.

Numbers 28:26-28

'Also **on the day of the first fruits**, when you present a new grain offering to Yahweh in your Feast of Weeks... you shall offer a burnt offering for a soothing aroma to Yahweh, two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs one year old, **and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil...**

It should be noted that anointing the firstfruits was something done specifically with the first feast which was Passover, and with the flour made from the barley. This anointing of the firstfruits with oil was not done in the following two feasts. Regarding the second feast associated with the harvest of wheat, the instructions are quite different. Rather than adding oil to the grain, leaven is added.

Leviticus 23:17

You shall bring from your dwellings two loaves of bread to be waved, made from two-tenths of **an ephah of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven**, for firstfruits to the Lord.

Leaven symbolizes sin, whereas the removal of leaven is a major part of the Feast of Passover. Christ Yahshua was the firstfruits of those who arose from the dead, and He was without sin.

Those who attain to the first resurrection will likewise be those who "crucify the flesh with its passions and desires." Understanding the relationship of the harvests, and their accompanying symbols, we can translate the apostle Paul's words in the following manner:

*Leaven symbolizes
sin...*

I Corinthians 15:22-26

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: the anointed first fruits (Barley/Passover), after that those who are Christ's at His coming (Wheat/Pentecost), then the remainder (Grapes/Tabernacles), when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

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Paul attaches to his words on the order of the resurrection the words "He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet." These words

Mercy will triumph over judgment, and all will be summed up in Christ.

express the thought that the resurrection work of God among mankind will not be complete until the enemies of God are dealt with. These will be last in resurrection,

and like grapes which are trodden under the feet of man, the enemies of God will be trodden under God's feet, experiencing His wrath.

Isaiah 63:2-6

Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? "I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger, and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment. For the day of vengeance was in My heart, and My year of redemption has come. And I looked, and there was no one to help, and I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; so My own arm brought salvation to Me; and My wrath upheld Me. And I trod down the peoples in My anger, and made them drunk in My wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

God's work among mankind will not be finished until all mankind have entered into that which Paul described with the following words: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order." All men died in Adam. All shall be made alive in Christ. Even the enemies of God will come to the end of their rebellion, and they will confess that in God alone are righteousness and strength. All who were incensed with God will be ashamed of themselves, and will come to a long awaited repentance. Thus we see that Isaiah describes the day of God's wrath not only as "the day of vengeance," but also as "My year of redemption."

Isaiah 45:23-24

I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. They will say of Me, 'Only in Yahweh are righteousness and strength.' Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him shall be put to shame.

This then will be the third and final resurrection. Even as Tabernacles occurred late in the fall of the year at the time of the grape harvest, the enemies of God will be resurrected to a resurrection of judgment, resulting in their redemption. The enemies of God are pictured as grapes which are trodden under foot, and these will be resurrected last of all. This will be the consummation of the work of God among man. Mercy will triumph over judgment, and all will be summed up in Christ.

I Corinthians 15:25-28

For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. ***For He has put all things in subjection under His feet.*** But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. And ***when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.***

There is an order to God's plan of reconciliation of the creation back to Himself. "Blessed and holy are those who attain to the first resurrection." Truly it will be said, "Many were called, but few were chosen." If you are a son of God, the opportunity is set before you to attain to the number of the firstborn. Will you live in such a way that you might be chosen, or will you be assigned a portion with the wicked?

Matthew 24:48-51

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But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Yahweh is calling out to His sons in this hour to remove all unrighteousness from their lives. He is calling out to all who have ears to pursue Him with an undivided heart. The path is difficult. There are sorrows and trials that all the righteous must pass through. Yet we are given the following promise:

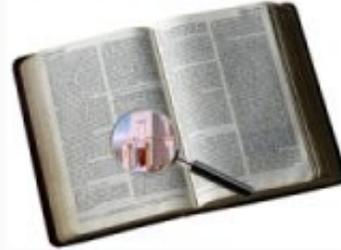
Psalms 30:5

Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.

We stand close to the morning of the third day. It will be a time of unparalleled joy for a company of overcomers. These have known much of sorrow and difficulty, and their Father in heaven will not be stinting in their reward. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will no longer be any mourning or crying or pain. The first things will have passed away.

A shout of joy comes
in the morning.

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PARABLES PRECEPT—The Hebrew Alphabet



(Image source: Ancient Hebrew Resource Center's Website)

Pictured above is the Hebrew letter Tav. In its early picture form it represented two crossed sticks.

You can see in the Middle Semitic form of this letter that it was rotated so that it resembles our English letter X. It is believed by some that the letter Tav represented a mark, as one would make to denote ownership. We

often hear the expression today, "X marks the spot."

Interestingly, the letter Tav forms the shape of a cross. God sets His seal upon His sons, and this seal is in the form of a cross.

Yahshua declared that no man could be His disciple unless he took up his cross daily and followed Him. Christ bore a cross, and so too must all his disciples.

The apostle Paul referred to the

many things he suffered as a Christian as God's brand-marks on his body.

Galatians 6:17

"From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Yahshua."

Christ also had "brand-marks" from the cross He experienced. He showed His disciples the nail holes in His hands and sides. All who take up the cross will have some mark to show for it. Your scars may not be physical, but they will be real nonetheless.

Do you bear on your body the brand-marks of Christ? Have you suffered for your obedience to Him? If you have, consider these brand-marks a badge of honor.