

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



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 2.12.1

Series 2 of the Parables Bookshelf contains a variety of writings covering a wide range of topics related to the Kingdom of God. These writings originally appeared as posts on the Heart4God website, or the Parables Blog, both of which are the websites of Bible teacher Joseph Herrin.

The Next Appearance of Christ

Joseph Herrin (01-09-2009)

II Thessalonians 1:7-2:1

When the Lord Yahshua shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Yahshua. And these will pay the penalty of age lasting destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, **when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day**, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed. To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness

and the work of faith with power; **in order that the name of our Lord Yahshua may be glorified in you, and you in Him**, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Yahshua Christ.

The common conception of the next appearance of Christ is a reflection of the church's lack of understanding of Christ in them. The church ever thinks of a Christ that is far away, sitting in heaven, who must return bodily to be among His disciples once more. Rarely does a believer understand the mystery of Christ dwell-

ing in them, nor do they understand the desire of the Father for Christ to be fully formed in all of His sons and daughters.

The image of Christ returning bodily in the clouds of the sky to catch up His saints into heaven is commonly presented to the body of Christ to describe what His appearance at the end of the church age will be like. The idea of Christians suddenly being raptured out of this world, leaving cars careening wildly, homes empty, airplanes without pilots, and a host of other calamitous disappearances has been popularized by

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books such as the *Left Behind* series, as well as in movies, in thousands of sermons, and in a multitude of fiction and non-fiction books on the Bible. Such a concept is not Scripturally supported, and the next appearance of Christ will not resemble these fables in any way.

The apostle Paul in writing to the church in Thessalonica described the next appearing of Christ. The apostle spoke of **“when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day...”** The next appearing of Christ will not be in the literal clouds of the heavens. It will be a manifestation of Christ “in His saints.”

Consider for a moment how much in error the Jewish believers were concerning the appearing of the Messiah 2,000 years ago. They were looking for the Messiah to appear in a manner totally foreign to reality. Despite the testimony of Scriptures, and prophecies concerning a virgin giving birth, of a Savior whose form would not be one to stir desire, and of a suffering servant, the Jews had adopted a very different belief of the appearing of Christ. The Jews were looking for that which was pleasing to them, to their flesh, their ambition, and their religious pride. They anticipated a conquering king who would sit on the throne of David and loose the yoke of Rome from about their necks. They were looking to a Messiah who would re-establish the glory of Solomon’s kingdom and who would elevate them among the nations.

Christians today should take a lesson from Solomon.

Ecclesiastes 1:9

That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So, there is nothing new under the sun.

Christians today are repeating the error of the

Jews 2,000 years ago. The church has the Scriptures, and they study them after a fashion on a very regular basis. Yet the conclusions they are arriving at are all wrong. They are expecting the Lord to return in a manner pleasing to their own carnal desires. They anticipate living for their own pleasures now, and when the world begins to enter into tribulation they expect to be raptured out and spared all suffering and judgment. How easy it is to neglect an entire body of Scriptures that speak otherwise.

Christ will only receive His bride to Himself **after** she has been purified. He will not rapture a fleshly, pleasure seeking, idol loving group of unrighteous confessors into His presence to spend eternity with Him. Judgment must begin at the house of God. Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will continue to act wickedly.

God has always been seeking a habitation. The tabernacle and temple of the Old Testament were merely physical illustrations of that spiritual temple God seeks to dwell within. Christ manifested great zeal when He found the money changers and merchants had set up shop in His Father’s house. This was also a parable. The people of God today resemble the temple in the time of Herod. The church is pursuing all things material. The sound of the merchants and money changers rings loudly within the souls of the people of God. They are focused upon their next expenditure, their next acquisition, when God has created them to be a house of prayer.

Christ must cleanse the house before He can appear in glory in the midst of it. Surely the church is deceived to believe that they will be partakers of the glory of Christ apart from first silencing all the noise and activity of worldly pursuit in their lives. All idols must be cast down. All trafficking in the things of a fallen world must end. The church must return to her first love. She must devote herself to Christ as a pure virgin, for the

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harlotry of her behavior has brought a great reproach in this hour.

When Christ has purified, cleansed vessels, then He will appear in glory **in them**. The glory of this appearing will differ for each individual according to their worthiness. Christians do not like to speak of qualifying themselves for reward and glory. They prefer to believe that all will be based upon grace and forgiveness and given as a free gift. This frees them from personal responsibility. They need not crucify the flesh, nor suffer, nor take up the cross. They prefer the fable that all will receive the same poured-out abundance of reward and glory at the appearing of Christ. Once more they have neglected a host of Scriptures.

I Peter 4:12-13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but **to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.**

To the degree that **YOU** share in the sufferings of Christ, you will also partake of His glory. **No suffering, no glory.** Do not be deceived. God will not be mocked. You will reap according to that which you sow.

II Timothy 2:12

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us...

I Peter 5:10

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and

establish you.

God is not unjust that He would pour forth the same reward upon all Christians simply because of their confession. He will examine each man's life and works. God will not be mocked. There are many who honor God with their lips while their hearts are far from Him. He will judge each man's life according to that which he has done.

Romans 2:5-11

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, **who will render to every man according to his deeds:** to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **For there is no partiality with God.**

People of God, you are called to obedience. You are called to hear the voice of the Spirit and do as He says in all things. All those who follow Christ with a whole heart will experience suffering. God will always lead His children to suffer that they might be perfected. He is a rewarder of the obedient. None who follow the Spirit, embracing difficulties and suffering, will ever come out the loser in the deal.

Romans 8:18

For I consider that **the sufferings** of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory that is to be revealed in us.**

The Next Appearance of Christ

Let not the Christian who avoids suffering by failing to submit to the leadership of the Spirit of Christ be deceived into thinking that they will receive reward for their carnal actions. When Christ comes to be revealed **in His saints**, those who have avoided the working of the cross will find that His appearing is unobserved in their members. This is Paul's warning to the Thessalonian church. There are a number of Scriptures that reveal that not all of God's people will be partakers of the glory of Christ's next appearing. It is those who have made themselves ready who will experience His glorious appearing **in them**.

Hebrews 9:27-28

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, **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**.

Does not the apostle here speak of the second appearing of Christ? He qualifies this event by saying His appearing will be "to those who eagerly await Him." Those who eagerly await the appearing of Christ are those who are making themselves ready. Those who are living for pleasure, rather than for the will of God, will not experience the next appearance of Christ.

Christian, take this to heart. Be warned. You may very well miss the appearing of Christ just as the Jews failed to discern His appearing 2,000 years ago. There is nothing new under the Sun. Just like the Jews, when many Christians observe the appearance of Christ in His saints, many Christians will deny that this is that which was prophesied. They will declare that it cannot possibly be the appearing of Christ, for they are not partakers of it. They will even set themselves to persecute those in whom Christ has appeared as the Jews persecuted the Son of God at His first appearing. "That which has been, is that which will be." Those who do not learn from history are doomed

to repeat it.

Coming In the Clouds

How is it that the church has so misunderstood the nature of the Lord's next appearing? How have they failed to comprehend that Christ must appear in His saints, when it is testified in Scripture. One of the means by which this has happened is that the church has taken a literal meaning of an expression that is repeated throughout the Bible, rather than seeing its spiritual understanding. Let me cite some of the verses that contain this expression.

Daniel 7:13-14

I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, **with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming**, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

This is the first mention of Christ appearing "with the clouds of heaven." Prophecy teachers today would have you believe these clouds are literal rain clouds. This is a great error. The clouds are not the puffy white clouds we see in the sky, they are symbolic of the overcoming saints, ascended to heavenly places in Christ. The Scriptures use such language to describe the overcomers.

Please take time to read the following passage, as it is critical to understanding this symbolism.

Hebrews 11:32-12:1

And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith

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conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, **since we have so great a cloud of witnesses** surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...

This entire passage describes those who have led an overcoming life. These were those of whom the world is not worthy. Even as a cloud rises above the earth, so do these victorious people of God stand far above the level of this evil age. They are described as “a great cloud of witnesses.” This is a heavenly body of God’s elect, called out ones from the earth.

We can know with assurance that it is people that Daniel was speaking of when he wrote of the Son of Man appearing before the Ancient of Days with the clouds of heaven, for we are told that the Son of Man is given ruling authority over all people and nations and tongues. We know that Christ is not to rule alone in the age to come. Those who attain to the first resurrection will rule with Him.

Revelation 20:4-6

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded 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; 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.**

The Son of Man will appear with “the clouds” to receive ruling authority over the earth. These clouds are not cumulus, nor cirrus, nor stratus. They are the souls of the overcomers. Let us understand the Scriptures to discern what they are truly declaring, laying aside the fables of Babylon. Many will miss the appearing of Christ, for they are looking for it to occur in the wrong place. Christ will appear in His saints, not in the clouds of the upper atmosphere.

Matthew 24:30-31

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, **and they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.** 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.**

Did you notice that this passage does not say that the people of God will be gathered from the earth. No! The angels will “gather together His elect

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from the four winds.” This speaks of an area above the earth. This imagery is repeated as He says, “from one end of the **SKY** to the other.” What is it that are found in the sky? It is clouds, and these clouds represent the overcoming people of God. These will be gathered together at the appearing of Christ. These are not physical clouds being referred to here.

Matthew 26:64

Yahshua said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, **and coming in the clouds of heaven.**"

Need I say it again. The clouds that Christ will appear upon are His people. It is that which Paul described to the Thessalonians. Christ must appear **“in His saints.”**

Mark 14:62-63

And Yahshua said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and **coming with the clouds of heaven.**"

Notice that Mark says Christ will come **with** the clouds of heaven, but Matthew said **in** the clouds of heaven.

Both expressions are correct. Matthew uses the Greek word *epi*. Mark uses the Greek word *meta*. Both words express the idea that Christ is superimposed upon His people; accompanying them, being IN their midst. Strong's Concordance defines these words as follows.

epi; a primary preposition; properly, meaning superimposition (of time, place, order, etc.), as a relation of distribution [with the genitive case], i.e. over, upon, etc.

meta: a primary preposition (often used adverbially); properly, denoting accompaniment; "amid" (local or causal); modified variously according to the case

Does this not explain beautifully what will occur at the next appearing of Christ? Christ will be revealed “amid” His people. He will be observed accompanying them. He will be in them, and they will be in Him.

Consider also the dual statement in these Scriptures. Yahshua said that the Jewish leaders would “see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, **AND** coming in the clouds of heaven.” Was Yahshua saying that He would be seen in His own physical body sitting at Yahweh’s right hand, and that He would be seen in His physical body coming in the clouds of heaven, both of these being separate events, or was he speaking of two things that would be concurrent with one another? I believe it is very possible He was speaking of two concurrent events. Yahshua would be observed seated at the right hand of power, and He would be observed coming in the clouds of power simultaneously. This will be fulfilled as He appears IN HIS SAINTS.

One passage that often confuses Christians is found in Acts where the ascension of Christ is described.

Acts 1:9-11

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, **and a cloud received Him out of their sight.** And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? **This Yahshua, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.**"

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Was it a literal, physical cloud that the disciples saw receiving Christ into the heavens. I do not doubt that this is what their physical eyes saw. Very often the physical eyes of men do not see clearly into the spiritual realm around them. Consider the experience of Elijah and his servant when the mountain around about them was filled with angels and fiery chariots. Until Elijah prayed for his servant's eyes to be opened, he could not see them. Consider the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were conversing with the resurrected Christ but their eyes were veiled from recognizing Him. Yet at the moment He determined, their eyes were opened and they observed the Savior. He then vanished from their midst.

I believe that the disciples who were present at the ascension of Christ very probably experienced a similar event. They saw Christ ascending in the cloud, as their eyes were veiled from seeing the great cloud of witnesses that received Him triumphantly into the heavenly Jerusalem in the same way that He had ridden a donkey triumphantly into the earthly Jerusalem some weeks earlier.

Some may argue that these saints who made up the great cloud of witnesses were already dead and in the grave, awaiting the resurrection. Yet we read that after the crucifixion that these overcomers, prophets, and patriarchs came out of the grave and were seen by many, testifying of the Messiah. Would not these ones then have ascended to heaven to await their King?

Matthew 27:51-53

And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened; **and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city** and appeared to many.

First the natural, then the spiritual. They ap-

peared in "the holy city" Jerusalem on earth before appearing in its heavenly anti-type. These could not come out of the grave until **after** the resurrection of Christ, for He is the firstborn from the dead. Yet they did come out, for the One who is the resurrection and the life raised them from the dead. It seems likely that these did not return to the grave, for it is appointed to man "once to die." Rather, they ascended to the Father and awaited the return of their Savior. Christ was received into heaven by the clouds, and He will appear again in the same way, in the midst of His overcomers.

If you understand that Christ is in you even now, why would you look for His glorious appearing anywhere else other than in you? It is an unbelieving church that is looking for the appearing of Christ outside of themselves. God, however, has a much higher and greater plan. He seeks to have Christ revealed in glory in the midst of His saints.

Matthew 24:30

And **they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.**

John 17:22-24

"And the glory which You have given Me **I have given to them;** that they may be one, just as We are one; **I in them,** and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that You did send Me, and did love them, even as You did love Me.

The glory of Christ will be revealed in His disciples. Christ will appear in them. He will be seen in the clouds, that heavenly host of overcomers who abide in heavenly places, no longer bound to this fallen earth. These are those who have set their affections on things above, not on the earth below. These look to the return of Christ, for His appearing will be glorious.

Joseph—Preparing the Body for Burial

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with ***the glory that is to be revealed in us.***

II Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory...

Ephesians 5:27

That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

Colossians 3:4

When Christ, who is our life, ***is revealed,*** then ***you also will be revealed with Him in glory.***

It should be abundantly evident from these verses and many more, that the clouds upon which the Lord will appear with power and glory are none other than His body of overcoming saints. This will be His next appearing - ***in His saints.*** Will you witness this appearing? Will you experience His appearing in you? All those who have this hope, purify themselves as He is pure.

Joseph - Preparing the Body for Burial

Joseph Herrin (04-23-08)

Have you heard the phrase “the Joseph Company?” Do you know who this company is, what is their calling, and whether you are a part of it? In this last hour of the church all overcoming saints will either be a part of the Joseph Company, or they will be ministered unto by those so designated.

First, let me assure you that “the Joseph Company” is not a reference to myself personally, or those in league with me. Yes, my name happens to be Joseph, and the Spirit bears witness that I am called to be a member of this company that shares this name. However, I was not the first to use this term to describe the activity of a chosen people at this late hour, nor am I the only one writing about them. I have come across many others who are being given profound insights into this end of the age group of saints and their specific calling.

There are a variety of things that this Joseph Company will do in coming days. I have written previously of their calling to open up the storehouses of God containing the precious truths of the Kingdom, and with this vast supply to feed the starving masses in coming days. This work is typified in Joseph, the son of Jacob, storing up grain in Egypt and feeding the world in the years of famine. Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath Paneah, which the Latin Vulgate rendered as Revelator Occulti, being translated “Revealer of Hidden Things.” There is a company of people who have been learning many things, storing up treasures received from the Spirit of Christ, in preparation for a day when mankind will seek out the truths of the Kingdom with a great hunger.

I have also written of the preparation of this Joseph Company. Even as the son of Jacob was re-

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jected by his brothers, among whom were those who spoke of killing him, so too have the members of the Joseph Company found that they have had no place among the sheep and shepherds belonging to their Father. Even in Egypt, Joseph was alone. When he called his brothers to dine with him they all sat at one table, the Egyptians sat at another, while Joseph dined at a table by himself. Such is the price to be borne by those who are members of the Joseph Company. The food belongs to them, and it is distributed by them to others, even as Joseph took food from his table and had it served to his brothers. Yet, the Joseph's of this hour dine alone. You can read more of this aspect of the Joseph Company in the writing *Parables*, found on the Heart4God website: (<http://www.heart4god.ws/id592.htm>)

More recently I have been led to focus on another aspect of the ministry of the Joseph Company. This is their role as forerunners and pioneers in embracing the cross and having their flesh crucified in order that they might be used as guides to a great company who soon must take this same road. Joseph, the son of Jacob, went before his brothers to Egypt. The day came, however, when it was necessary that they follow in his steps. If they refused to go to Egypt they would die, for great was the famine in the land.

Yahweh has had a group of sons and daughters who have willingly embraced the cross, and have submitted their flesh to be cut away in order that they might arise as spiritual creatures. They have understood that this work is necessary, and cannot be avoided by any. They have also discerned that there is a greater grace given to those who present themselves as a free will offering for their flesh to be consumed upon the fiery altar of purification. Therefore they have asked Christ to bind them to the horns of the altar until His fiery work be accomplished, and He has willingly done so.

A much larger group of Yahweh's people have remained at home, content to sit among the shep-

herds and the sheep, even though an evil report of their activity has come to the ears of their father (Genesis 37:2). These have not submitted themselves to the grinding wheels and threshing instruments of Egypt. There is a process of crushing, breaking, and spiritual release that must come to all of Yahweh's children. It is pictured in the following words of the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 28:27-29

For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin; But dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club. Grain for bread is crushed, indeed, he does not continue to thresh it forever. Because the wheel of his cart and his horses eventually damage it, he does not thresh it longer. This also comes from Yahweh of hosts, Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great.

The children of God are to be as food to feed the world, yet all grain must be prepared. The hard outer shell of the flesh must be broken in order that the Spirit within, Who brings life, might come forth to feed a starving world. The higher the purposes of God in your life, the more intense will be the breaking and refining. The greatest baked delicacies are made from flour that has been reduced to the finest powder. Your usefulness in God's kingdom is determined by your willingness to suffer.

Joseph went to Egypt before his brethren and was a slave from the day he arrived. Later he entered the double refinement of an even more intense subjugation as he became a slave in prison. His brothers were to follow, and upon the death of Joseph they too became slaves in Egypt. Even as Joseph suffered many things, they too were placed under cruel taskmasters, and they remained there until the day appointed for their release.

Why did Joseph have to go first? To prepare a place for his brothers; to save many from perish-

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ing, and being impoverished.

Genesis 45:7, 11

And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance... There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, lest you and your household and all that you have be impoverished.

The children of God will enter into the age to come with many being cast into the Lake of Fire, and many suffering loss, unless they too go down to Egypt and allow Yahweh to deal with their flesh as He has dealt with Joseph.

I Corinthians 3:12-15

Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

Thus far, most Christians have been building with that which will not stand the fire. Their works will be burned up and they will suffer loss. It is therefore necessary that they follow the Joseph Company and also present their flesh to be crucified that they might receive reward and be passed over by the second death, which is the Lake of Fire. We will either go through the fire as a free will offering, and receive reward, or as a mandatory offering where reward is absent.

It is this work of the Joseph Company that I would focus upon in this writing. It is a work of preparing the body of Christ for burial, and it is found typified in both Old and New Testaments.

Let us begin by observing the work of this company as it is found foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

Genesis 46:1-4

So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "I am God, the God of your father; **do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there.** I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; **and Joseph will close your eyes.**"

We observe here a great parable, for every detail is pregnant with spiritual truth. Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, was the progenitor of the nation which bore his name. Out of Jacob came twelve sons who gave rise to the twelve tribes of Israel. Therefore, the words spoken to Jacob in this encounter can be observed as a parable of the entire nation. It is a revelation of that which ALL of God's people must pass through in order to become the "great nation" which is their destiny.

Notice that there is fear in going down to Egypt, and this fear must be overcome. Yahweh would also say to all of His children, "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there." What is the method of this preparation? It will entail 400 years of slavery where the flesh is roughly treated. Yet at the end of this period of refinement there will not be a sick or infirm person among their numbers. It will be a healthy and strong people who emerge from Egypt.

This process of crucifying the flesh is something that all of the children of God must pass through. If they refuse it they will not attain to the stature of a mighty nation. They will find themselves im-

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poverished in the same sense that the church of Laodicea was impoverished. They had the world's goods, and much ease and pleasure, but in the eyes of their Savior and Lord they were "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." So are all those who remain in bondage to the flesh.

What was Joseph's role in this? Joseph was the son who was appointed to "close the eyes" of Israel. Joseph was to be there at his death and to prepare his body for burial.

Genesis 50:1-3

Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. Now forty days were required for it, for such is the period required for embalming.

Is it not evident that this is a spiritual parable? Notice how long it required to prepare the body for burial. Forty is a number everywhere seen throughout Scriptures bearing great significance. It is the number of trials and testing, even as the Israelites wandered forty years in the wilderness until all who belonged to the generation of unbelief died out. During these forty years they ate manna every day, being called to fast from all that they formerly ate in Egypt. It is the number of days that Yahshua spent in the wilderness fasting, and being tempted by Satan.

This number forty is related to the reduction of the man of flesh and the proving of a spiritual man. It is in the wilderness that we must decrease, but Christ must increase in us. There is a wilderness path appointed to all of Yahweh's people, and it is only with great loss that any refuse to endure it. It will be the Joseph Company, who has gone before, that will prepare the way for others to also come and embrace this difficult walk where the flesh man is brought to an end and a spiritual creation arises.

Let us now observe this same pattern in the New Testament.

Mark 15:42-46

And when evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, **Joseph** of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and **asked for the body of Jesus...** and **he granted the body to Joseph.** And **Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb** which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

Yahweh is a God of precise detail, having numbered the very hairs upon a man's head, and determined the days of a man's life. We must understand that every name in the Bible is also significant. Once more we see a Joseph preparing a body for burial. This body also speaks of God's people, for the church is "the body of Christ." We are therefore once more observing a parable in this account which is a parallel to the actions of the son of Jacob who bore the same name.

Even as Jacob was the head of a nation that bore his name, Israel, so too we see here that Yahshua the Christ stands as the Head of a people who also bear His name. We observe that even as the sons of Jacob had to go down to Egypt for their flesh to be dealt with, until it should be buried, so too must the same occur to the offspring of the Christ. The cross must be borne by all. The flesh must be put to death. Once more we see Joseph being involved as he ministers to the body of Christ in preparation for burial.

Unless the body submits to death, a spiritual creature will not arise. Jacob had to be buried,

Joseph—Preparing the Body for Burial

but he did not remain dead. Yahshua testified of this fact.

Mark 12:26-27

“But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of **Jacob**'? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken.”

Jacob is not in the grave anymore. His body was buried, but a spiritual creature arose. He now lives before God. The same is true of Christ. He went into the tomb, but three days later He arose. He now sits in great glory and honor and power at the right hand of God the Father. The body of Christ must also pass through death to attain to resurrection life. If we protect the flesh we will remain fleshly. The flesh must be crucified that we might walk as spiritual men and women. It is the ministry of Joseph to prepare the body as it must pass through death to attain to life.

Consider a further parallel brought out in these twin accounts. We read in the above passage from Mark that Joseph of Arimathea went before Pilate, the Roman Governor, and asked that he might be given the body of Christ to bury it. This same petition was made by the son of Jacob as he asked Pharaoh to allow him to bury his father.

Genesis 50:4-6

And when the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh, saying, 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am about to die; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.'" And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury

your father, as he made you swear."

Pharaoh had authority over all those who dwelt in his kingdom, even as Pilate had authority over all those under his dominion. Who has authority over the church, the body of Christ? It is Yahweh, God the Father. What is shown in type in these two Joseph's asking that a body might be given to them in order to be able to prepare it for burial is a picture of the intercessory work that the Joseph Company must also enter into.

The Joseph Company, observing that the body of Christ is spiritually dead, being filled with sin and the foul odor of the flesh, must petition the Father that the body might be given into its hands that it might be prepared for its burial. The body must not sit out in the open in its state of decay and be allowed to fester and stink, becoming noxious to all. It must be embalmed. It must be prepared with spices, and wrapped in linen, speaking of the righteous acts of the saints. It must be hidden away until it is resurrected as a spiritual creature. As I have mentioned in many writings, this process is pictured in the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into a butterfly. It must go through a cocoon stage where the old fleshly form is transformed into a state of winged glory.

It is time now for the Joseph Company to begin petitioning the Father that the body of Christ, full of death as it is, might be given into their hands that they might prepare it for burial. The stink of the church has already begun to offend many, and it must be quickly wrapped and hidden from sight until it has shed its fleshly form and is ready to emerge in the image of Christ.

Are you a member of this Joseph Company? Then arise with tears and weeping as you observe the death among the people of God. This was the heart of Joseph.

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Genesis 50:1

Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him and kissed him.

We too should weep when we observe that the body of Christ has become so thoroughly leavened with sin, and has rejected the disciple's cross, which alone works in it sanctification and holiness. We should desire that the church arise to be that glorious body that it was called to be, lamenting at the lifeless corpse she has become. Ask God to deliver the body to the Joseph Company that it might be prepared. Observe again the parable in the following words:

Mark 15:42-44

And when evening had already come, ***because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath***, Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

Do you recognize the day we now are in? The Sabbath is close at hand. The Millennial reign of Christ corresponds to the seventh day. We are now at the end of six thousand years, six days in spiritual type. The seventh day is at hand, and the body has yet to be prepared. This must be a quick work. We must act quickly, and with courage, and petition the Father that He might deliver the body to be prepared for burial.

May many have eyes to see the wonderful truth of these prophetic types that must be fulfilled at this hour.

The Work that Refreshes

Joseph Herrin

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If you were to examine Christians today to determine their mental state you would be struck by how much depression there is among them. Many Christians today are fatigued, weary, worn-out, burned-out, and despondent. Many of those in this state are some of the most earnest and sincere of God's children. Many have been, or are now, involved in Christian ministry. Many of the saints of God, who desire with all of their hearts to be found pleasing to God, are suffering from this wasting away of their spiritual vitality. What is the cause of this? Certainly this existence is not the "overcoming" and "more than conquerors" description given of Christians in the New Testament.

The book of Hebrews, in chapters 3 and 4, speaks of "entering into God's rest." Hebrews 4:9, 10 states, "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His." This *rest* is what the children of God so badly need today. Notice the verse which says, "For the one who has entered His rest has *himself* rested from *his* works." Herein is the key to finding rest.

Christians today are experiencing fatigue and depression in droves because they have not ceased from their own works. You may ask, "Are Christians to sit and do nothing? Are we not to be doing some kind of work?" Certainly, Christians are to be working. Christ said, "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming when no man can work" (John 9:4). The question is not, "Should we work?", but, rather, "What work should we be doing?"

There are two main areas of Christian work. The first area, and probably the one in which Christians wear themselves out the most, is in the area of

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salvation. Many Christians today are wasting themselves away in a vain effort to either establish their salvation or maintain it. There is only one work that will purchase and forever maintain our salvation, and that is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Our only part in this is to believe it; Jesus did everything else for us. John 6:29 states, “Jesus answered and said to them, ***This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.***”

The only work left to us regarding our salvation is clearly shown in this verse, “that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” Even this believing does not originate from within us, it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8, 9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith [in Jesus]; and that [faith] not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”

Even the faith to believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ that purchased for us our salvation does not come from within us, it is the gift of God. Why then do so many Christians wear themselves out trying to earn or maintain their salvation? Such striving is all wasted effort. The only work of salvation on our part is to believe that Jesus perfectly and eternally purchased our salvation for us on the cross, and even our faith to believe is given to us by God.

Hebrews 3:19-4:3

And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest.

(NAS)

Do you believe in the good news of Jesus Christ, that He has once and for all paid the penalty for sin? Do you trust in Him alone for your right standing before God? This belief is your only work in regard to salvation, and, as we have seen, even this faith to believe is given to you by God. There is no need to wear yourself out by trying to achieve salvation.

But, some might ask, “What then about maintaining my salvation? Don’t I have to do certain things to stay saved?” I will let the Apostle Paul answer you as he did the Galatians.

Gal 3:1-3, 11

You foolish Galatians [Christians], who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ***“The righteous man shall live by faith.”***

(NAS)

Having begun our life in Christ through faith, can we now maintain it by keeping a set of laws? God forbid! Our only work in regard to salvation from start to finish is “that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”

This striving to achieve or maintain salvation by keeping the Law or performing certain duties is wearing out many Christians today. Also, it is a slap in the face of God. It is saying, “Christ’s work was not enough, I must add to my salvation.” Galatians 2:21 declares, ***“for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”*** Galatians 5:4,

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“You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law.”

If Christians today would lay hold of this truth, that salvation comes by faith, then much fatigue and depression caused by wearing themselves out through vain effort would be erased. By this act of believing, many could “enter into God’s rest.” There is, however, another area of works where Christians are failing to enter into God’s rest. This area is in our service to God.

Our service to God is distinguished from the work of salvation in that it has no bearing upon salvation. Service has to do with our fruitfulness as Christians. Whether we bear little fruit, or much fruit, we are still Christians, but God desires that we bear much fruit. Many Christians are wearing themselves out in their service to God and have failed to enter into the work that refreshes.

To understand how to serve God without growing weary, we must first understand what constitutes true service to God. Our service is something that we render to God because we are rightfully His. You work for your employer because he pays you wages. We work for God because we have been purchased with the blood of Christ.

God paid for us with the life of His Son. The purchase price has been paid up front and in full. I Corinthians 6:19b, 20a, *“You are not your own. For you have been bought with a price.”* We are no longer our own masters (we never really were). We belong to God. God is not only our rightful owner, He is our Creator and Lord and Master. We are totally under His authority.

Because we are under God’s authority, it is He who determines what our service will be. It is at this point that many Christians stumble and consequently exhaust themselves.

If a grocer hired you to work in his store, you would expect him to tell you what your duties would be. If he hired you to stock the shelves, he would not be too pleased to come back and find that you had spent your time cleaning the windows. You could argue that you were indeed working, but he would not be impressed because you failed to do what he hired you for. By ignoring his authority, you have become useless to him. In the same way, many Christians fail to remain under God’s authority and they do not wait for His Spirit to lead them into their activities. Rather, they choose for themselves what their service will be and they end up walking in the power of the flesh and are soon discouraged and exhausted.

To live and serve under God’s authority we must allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit of God.

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:14). God does not intend for us to bring our reason to bear upon what our activities should be. Man’s mind can justify many things and our reasoning will not lead us to obedience. Only by being led by the Spirit of God can we know what the will of God is and be able to walk in it. The life under God’s authority is by necessity a life in tune with God’s Spirit.

Matthew 7:21-23 reveals what the outcome is of doing good works apart from the authority of God.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

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We see in these verses that it is not enough to simply do good works. We cannot reason as a Christian, “I must do good works, therefore I will do whatever is at hand.” This is action without obedience. First you must allow God’s Spirit to guide you to those things He wants you to do. Jesus said, “He who does the will of My Father will enter the kingdom of heaven.”

We must place ourselves under the authority of the Father and only move at His command. To move without command is to remove oneself from God’s authority and this is lawlessness. **Therefore, to be involved in a work apart from the clear direction of God’s Spirit is to practice lawlessness.** This is why Jesus told those who were doing things in His name, but not by the will of the Father, “Depart from Me; you who practice lawlessness.”

Jesus’ own example was always to do the will of the Father. He says in John 5:19, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing.” John 5:30 likewise records, “I can do nothing on My own initiative... I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” Again, in John 6:38 we read, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

We see from Christ’s example that doing the will of the Father is of the ultimate importance. Nothing else constitutes obedience. Jesus did not decide for Himself who He would preach to, or who He would heal, or what miracle He would perform. He did not act on His own initiative, but always did the will of the Father. Likewise, we as children of God must not determine for ourselves what activities are worthy of our labors.

We must not mistake a need for a command. There were many needs in Jesus’ day, but Jesus only addressed the needs the Father commanded Him to address. There were great needs among the gentiles, but Jesus said the Father had not sent Him to the gen-

tiles. There were great injustices in government, but God had not led Him to address these injustices. Jesus did not heal every leper, nor did He feed every person, or cast out every demon. He only did what the Father showed Him to do; anything else would have been lawlessness.

Satan’s tempting of Jesus in the wilderness dealt with this very issue. Satan tempted Jesus to do something that would meet a very real need, but he wanted Jesus to do it of His own initiative. Jesus’ need for food was very real. He hadn’t eaten in forty days and He was hungry. Satan tempted Jesus to turn the stones into bread and so to meet His need of food. Jesus, however, waited on God to meet the need in His own timing. He said in another place, “My meat is to do the will of My Father.” **If Jesus had of His own initiative acted to fill a need, He would have missed the will of the Father.**

We cannot choose to pour ourselves into activity or ministry simply because there is a perceived need. Only when the Spirit of God directs will God also provide the power to accomplish His will. To act without command is to commit oneself to striving in the flesh and we will miss “entering into God’s rest.”

Before the fall, Adam could work tirelessly, even effortlessly. Adam could work from sunrise to sundown without fatigue. Only after choosing his own way was he cursed to work by the sweat of his brow. Today, if we will refuse to choose our own way, but will wait upon the Lord, we will have the promise of Isaiah 40:31, “Yet those who wait upon the Lord will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings as eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.”

Yes, our bodies will still require rest, but our spirit will be renewed within us. We will not experience the depression that results from following our own course and striving in the power of the flesh. We will be built up in our inner man as the Spirit of God “gives life to our mortal bodies” (Romans 8:31). As

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we cease from our own labors we will be able to “enter into God’s rest” and truly know the work that refreshes.

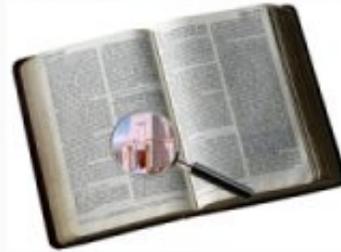
To sum it all up, we must be sure in any activity that we engage in that we are being led into it by the Spirit of God. Do not mistake a need for a calling. To work without God’s command is to practice lawlessness because we have removed ourselves from under His authority. To be led by our reason leads to fatigue, depression, and burn-out.

Let us allow God to lead us into the paths He has ordained for us to walk in. Then we will bear much fruit and our way will be prepared before us. Let us have this same attitude that was in Christ Jesus, who never sought His own way, but always did the will of the Father. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, *which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*” (Ephesians 2:10).

Hebrews 4:11

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone should fall through following that same example of disobedience.

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Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Bible Devotion

"Ye must be born again."
[John 3:7](#)

Regeneration is a subject which lies at the very basis of salvation, and we should be very diligent to take heed that we really are "born again," for there are many who fancy they are, who are not. Be assured that the name of a Christian is not the nature of a Christian; and that being born in a Christian land, and being recognized as professing the Christian religion is of no avail whatever, unless there be something more added to it—the being "born again," is a matter so *mysterious*, that human words cannot describe it.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the

sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Nevertheless, it is a change which is *known and felt*: known by works of holiness, and felt by a gracious experience.

This great work is *supernatural*. It is not an operation which a man performs for himself: a new principle is infused, which works in the heart, renews the soul, and affects the entire man. It is not a change of my name, but a renewal of my nature, so that I am not the man I used to be, but a new man in Christ Jesus.

To wash and dress a corpse is a far different thing from making

it alive: man can do the one, God alone can do the other.

If you have then, been "born again," your acknowledgment will be, "O Lord Jesus, the everlasting Father, Thou art my spiritual Parent; unless Thy Spirit had breathed into me the breath of a new, holy, and spiritual life, I had been to this day 'dead in trespasses and sins.' My heavenly life is wholly derived from Thee, to Thee I ascribe it. 'My life is hid with Christ in God.' It is no longer I who live, but Christ who liveth in me."

May the Lord enable us to be well assured on this vital point, for to be unregenerate is to be unsaved, unpardoned, without God, and without hope.