



Psalms 78:2-4

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

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This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF contains chapter 4 of *God's Plan of the Ages*.

We live in an hour of great contrasts. At the end of this age we are seeing darkness grow darker and light increasing. Both deception and truth are advancing.

The Bible has foretold that this would be the character of the last days before the return of Christ. Though most of the world would be covered in gross spiritual blindness, even those in the church, there will be a remnant who receive greater revelation than all generations that preceded them.

Isaiah 60:1-3

"Arise, shine; for your

light has come, and the glory of Yahweh has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; But Yahweh will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising."

We should not be surprised that greater revelation is coming to a remnant of God's people while most are becoming ever more deeply mired in error and darkness. God has always worked through a remnant.

In the days of Elijah almost the entire nation of Israel turned to idolatry and Baal worship. They thought this was right and acceptable to Yahweh.

Myriads of prophets of Baal told them that they were pleasing to God. Yahweh, however, was not pleased. At the same time, He reserved a remnant for Himself who did not embrace Baal worship. Paul wrote to the church in Rome the following words.

Romans 11:4-5

"I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

Do not be surprised if you find only a remnant who are able to receive truth today.

Food for Thought

"Have courage for the great sorrows in life, and patience for the small ones. And when you have laboriously accomplished your daily tasks, go to sleep in peace, God is awake."

Victor Hugo

Scripture Memory

John 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Parables Newsletter

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God's Plan of the Ages

Crossing the Jordan

Most Christians have a very fuzzy understanding of the resurrections of man. Many believers imagine that there will be only one resurrection of the dead. The types and shadows of the Old Testament that Yahweh ordained to show forth truth pertaining to the resurrections are largely neglected by the church today. It is the rare minister who spends time instructing the body about these things, demonstrating to them what the shadows of an earlier epoch are pointing to.

Yahweh has revealed in the Old Testament, through types and shadows, that there will be three resurrections, three ingatherings of men from the

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

earth. As different groups are brought to maturity, they will be gathered to God, each in his own order. The three resurrections are not only revealed through

types in the Old Testament, they are shown forth in plain speech in the New Testament. The following Scripture reveals that there will be more than one 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...

There will be a total of three resurrections. Yahweh does all things with great order and design. The number three is a very significant in the Scriptures. E.W. Bullinger, in his book *Number in Scripture*, shares the following about the importance of the number three.

THREE

In this number we have quite a new set of phe-

nomena. We come to the first geometrical figure. Two straight lines cannot possibly enclose any space, or form a plane figure; neither can two plane surfaces form a solid. Three lines are necessary to form a plane figure; and three dimensions of length, breadth, and height, are necessary to form a solid. Hence three is the symbol of the cube--the simplest form of solid figure. As two is the symbol of the square, or plane contents (x^2), so three is the symbol of the cube, or solid contents (x^3).

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.

God's attributes are three: omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.

There are three great divisions completing time--past, present, and future.

Three persons, in grammar, express and include all the relationships of mankind.

Thought, word, and deed, complete the sum of human capability...

Three kingdoms embrace our ideas of matter--mineral, vegetable, and animal.

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

Three is the first of four perfect numbers.

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**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.

[End Excerpt]

If there were only one resurrection, it would lack the marks of being “*perfect, substantial, complete, and Divine.*” To bring the creation to a perfect and complete state Yahweh has determined that there must be three resurrections. We need go no further than the first chapter of the Bible to see resurrection depicted, and to find it related to the number three.

As Yahweh moved to re-create the earth, the narrative of Genesis tells us that on the **third** day God caused the earth to arise out from under the waters. Prior to this 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 arising out of death. Man's flesh was formed of the dust of the earth, and throughout Scriptures we see man passing through, or arising from waters, serving as a sign of death and resurrection. Baptism serves as a figure of the same.

Romans 6:3-5

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Yahshua have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection...

Baptism serves as a parable of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and of those who become one with Christ. As we are put beneath the waters, we symbolically die to our old Adamic life that is enslaved to sin. As we are brought up out of the water, we are resurrected to newness of life in Christ. This resurrection was foreshadowed as early as the first chapter of Genesis as the earth from which man's flesh would be formed arose from its watery tomb. This happened on the third day, even as Christ rose from the grave on the third day. The number three is inseparably linked to resurrection.

Baptism serves as a parable of the death, burial and resurrection

The three resurrections of man will be addressed more specifically later. At this time I will take a more general view of resurrection while bringing out certain truths. As we look at the types and shadows of the Old Testament we can determine when the first resurrection must occur. The types of the Old Testament also affirm the truth that all men will eventually be saved.

A common type that Yahweh has given to us to show forth resurrection is the harvesting of a crop. Christ employed a harvest allegory in one of His parables to reveal the resurrection at the end of the age.

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Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Yahshua presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them.

Allow both to grow together until **the harvest**; and in the time of **the harvest** I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn..." Then He left the crowds and went into

What is there on the earth that God desires to reap?

the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world;

and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and **the harvest is the end of the age**; and **the reapers are angels**. So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the Sun the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

In the book of Revelation, John also is shown images of angels reaping the earth, symbolizing the gathering to God of mankind.

Revelation 14:14-16

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

What is there on the earth that God desires to reap? Yahweh is not raising barley, or wheat, or grapes. He is raising up men to share in His image and likeness. Christ compared men to wheat in the parable above. In another place, Christ compared men to fish that are drawn up in a net out of the sea. Yahweh harvests both that which is on the land and in the sea. (One sense in which this is to be understood is that God will save both the living - those on the land; and the dead - those in the sea. Compare to Revelation 20:13) These illustrations are employed by Christ as symbols of both salvation and resurrection.

There is a very significant event in the Old Testament that combines the image of passing through water, and the imagery of harvest, into the same account. The event also marks an extremely important moment in the history of God's chosen people. We can accurately infer that it was intended as a parallel to equally important events in the kingdom of God.

After Israel spent forty years in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses, Yahweh raised up a new leader. Moses died and was buried without ever having set foot in the land of promise. Joshua was Yahweh's chosen leader to guide the people of Israel across the Jordan and into the land of their inheritance. The choice of Joshua was one of great design. This man bore the same name as the Messiah who would one day come and lead God's people into their spiritual inheritance in God.

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Joshua's first act as leader of God's people was to prepare them to cross over into their inheritance. This action parallels the work of Christ Who has come to prepare men to enter into their inheritance in the kingdom of God. In order for men and women to be readied to receive a spiritual inheritance they must be *consecrated* unto God. They must be separated from the world and its defilements. They must be holy unto Yahweh. This work of consecration by the Savior of mankind is foreshadowed through Joshua as he prepared the people of God to enter into their inheritance in the land of Canaan.

Joshua 3:5

Then Joshua said to the people, "**Consecrate yourselves**, for tomorrow Yahweh will do wonders among you."

I trust you are familiar, at least in a general sense, with the story of the crossing of the Jordan. Israel approached the Jordan, and it was at flood stage, an annual occurrence. The Jordan stood as a great obstacle in their way. It had to be crossed in order to arrive at the land flowing with milk and honey that God had promised to them.

Similarly, God has set an inheritance before the disciples of Christ.

Ephesians 1:18

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...

Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.

The natural inheritance of Israel was awesome. The land they were to inherit was exceedingly fruitful. A

single cluster of grapes had to be borne on the shoulders of two men. The land was full of orchards and cultivated fields. There were houses to be possessed that the Israelites would not have to construct themselves. There was fantastic wealth to be found among the treasures of the people they would drive out.

Deuteronomy 6:10-12

"Then it shall come about when Yahweh your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, then watch yourself, that you do not forget Yahweh who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

These things serve as parallels to that inheritance Christ has prepared for the saints. It too is extraordinary. We are to possess dwelling places we did not build ourselves. These dwelling places will be the glorified bodies of the saints that Christ has gone to prepare for us.

We are to possess dwelling places we did not build ourselves.

II Corinthians 5:1-4

For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, age-abiding in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will 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, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

It is glorified bodies that Christ was referring to

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when He told His disciples that He was going ahead of them to prepare a place for them. One thing stands in the way of our receiving these new and glorious habitations, even as the Jordan River stood in the way of Israel. We cannot receive our new bodies until after we have put off the old. Death is the obstacle in our way. As the Israelites passed through the waters of the Jordan, surrounded on either side, they were symbolically passing through death in order to attain to their inheritance that Joshua (a figure of Yahshua the Messiah) was to give to them.

*Death is the obstacle
in our way.*

There are many evidences provided in the details of this account that demonstrate that it was intended to serve as a parable of those things the saints must experience to enter into their inheritance in Christ. The Israelites had been camped before the Jordan River in their tents for three days (three is related to resurrection).

Joshua 3:1-3

Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they lodged there before they crossed. At the end of three days the officers went through the midst of the camp; 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."

Joshua led the Israelites to the Jordan, and Christ leads us to the disciple's cross. For three days the Israelites camped there, then Joshua told them to prepare themselves "for tomorrow Yahweh will do wonders among you." Can you think of anything more wondrous than to pass through death into life, and to receive the glorious inheritance prepared for the saints?

In the passage above we read of Joshua instructing

the Israelites to focus on the Ark of the Covenant. In a previous chapter I mentioned that the Ark is a symbol of mankind. To be more specific, the Ark is a symbol of perfected man. The Ark was made of wood, but it was completely overlaid with gold, both within and without. This speaks of purity. The Ark contained the tablets of the Law, and this symbolized having the Law (rule) of God engraved upon the heart of man. Christ was the first man to fulfill the types and shadows of the Ark. He was both the Son of Man and the Son of God. He was entirely holy. He ever lived to do the Father's will.

As the Israelites prepared to cross the Jordan they were told to observe the Ark. It would be carried on the shoulders of the priests into the waters of the Jordan before them. In the same way, Christ is our forerunner. He has tasted of death for each one of us, and He is the first to enter into His inheritance. When we see Christ crucified, then we know that the time is near at hand for each of us to depart from our dwelling places and to follow after Him. We too must experience the death of the cross, or we cannot enter into our inheritance.

Romans 8:16-17

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

A marvelous testimony is brought forth in this account of the crossing of the Jordan. The details of this event are pregnant with hidden meaning.

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."

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Why did the Father command that a distance be kept between the Ark and the next group of people to cross the Jordan? And why did the Father specifically determine that the distance be “about 2,000 cubits”? This is all by marvelous design. Christ must cross ahead of His brothers. Each cubit represents a year. It would be “about 2,000” years from the time that Christ tasted death and entered into glory until the next group to follow after Him would be resurrected into glory. Yahweh could have been very precise, but He has intentionally hidden the hour and the day from mankind. Therefore, He will tell us only that it will be “*about*” 2,000 years from Christ entering into His inheritance until a firstfruits group of overcoming Christians enters into their inheritance.

There is far more in the description of this crossing for us yet to glean. Consider the following details.

Joshua 3:14-16

So 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), 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.

I mentioned already that the Israelites had to leave their tents in order to cross the Jordan. This is a strange detail to include in the Scriptures. It should go without saying that the Israelites only journeyed by exiting their tents. A man cannot travel while still staying in his tent. Such a detail appears to be superfluous if one views this account merely on a physical level as history. This reveals an error of much of the church today. Many read the Old Testament as history, but do not study it to discern the hidden mysteries of this present age and the ages to come.

The mention of the Israelites setting out from their tents is not a meaningless detail when one views this event as prophecy. These things were written for our benefit, and our instruction. They were written for a generation yet to come.

I Corinthians 10:11

Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

The events that happened to Israel in the wilderness serve as “types of us.”

I Corinthians 10:6

And those things became types of us...

[Young’s Literal Translation]

Yahweh is revealing that we must set out from our tents, we must lay aside these earthly bodies, in order to enter into our inheritance. We cannot ascend to glory apart from tasting of death first. We cannot receive new habitations, or dwelling places, aside from first putting off the old. These things are not to be understood on a natural plane alone. There is spiritual truth in them.

We must die to our natural Adamic life if we are to enter into our inheritance in Christ. No man can cross into his inheritance apart from first becoming a partaker in Christ’s cross.

We must die to our natural Adamic life...

Matthew 10:38-39

“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”

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Paul spoke of the old Adamic life as something that must be put off.

Ephesians 4:20-24

But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Yahshua: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Even as the Israelites had to “set out from their tents” in order to become possessors of new and glorious dwellings, so too must we put off the old man and put on Christ. This is how we consecrate ourselves prior to crossing into our inheritance. Our old nature must be crucified that Christ might be revealed in us.

Another detail of the crossing was that it occurred at harvest time. “For the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest...” Harvests, as we have seen, are symbolic of God reaping the earth to gather men unto Himself. Yahweh, with great intent, determined that Israel must cross the Jordan at harvest time for their crossing was to serve as a symbol of resurrection.

In the account of the crossing, our Father has also given us another salient detail. If we see this account merely as history, the detail would mean very little. However, knowing that Yahweh is revealing mysteries through what is recorded for us, we are able to marvel at what is disclosed. We read:

*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...*

The waters of death were rolled back all the way to **Adam**. This detail is a further testimony that Yah-

weh has provided salvation for all mankind. Adam's name means “man” and he is the first of our race. In Adam was contained the seed of every man who would ever be born (with the exception of Christ who was born of heavenly seed). Yahweh gives us this detail, indeed He caused the waters to flow back to the precise location of this city, to prophesy of His intent to provide life to every man born of Adam.

I Timothy 4:10

For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is **the Savior of all men**, especially of believers.

John 3:17

“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but **that the world might be saved through Him.**”

How wonderful is the plan of God! His work will not be complete until He reconciles all men to Himself through Christ. Consecrate yourselves! There is an inheritance to be entered into. We must follow Christ through death as we embrace the cross. Then we can emerge into resurrection life.

Then we can emerge
into resurrection life.

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Lord of the Living and the Dead

A key doctrine that the saint in Christ must understand and receive in order to grasp Yahweh's plan to restore all creation to Himself is that Christ's work of reconciliation does not stop at the grave. A great many Christians have been taught, or have in some manner concluded, that when a person dies their fate is sealed for eternity. If an individual died separated from God, it is assumed that they must remain forever estranged from God.

It is this belief that man has only one shot at being reconciled to God that forms the foundation for the grotesque doctrine of eternal damnation. The prevailing teaching in the church today is that the majority of men and women from all ages, including the present time, are lost. They will die in their sins, never having come to know Christ as Savior and Lord. Because the majority of mankind did not receive Christ while they were alive on the earth, it is taught that they must be cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity. Even after billions of years have passed, it is taught that these tormented souls will have no possibility of ever escaping from torment, or being reconciled to the Father.

Such doctrines defame God, painting Him with an image of a severity so extreme that it beggars the imagination. The church teaches that Yahweh's wrath is greater than His love. How could it be otherwise if Yahweh will never relent of tormenting lost souls, even after they have endured punishments and suffering far in excess of the length of their earthly lives? According to the prevailing doctrine of the church, a person could spend a million lifetimes in Hell and not be any closer to being released, for it is taught that there is no opportunity for repentance or reconciliation beyond the grave.

Having been shown by the Spirit of Christ the error of the doctrine of eternal torment, I am bold enough to say that the god most Christians have envisioned in their minds is a cruel tyrant. This cruel tyrant in no way resembles the true and living God. Hell and the Lake of Fire do exist; There is

punishment and suffering awaiting those who sin; Yahweh is to be feared, but He is not going to subject any part of His creation to eternal torments.

If you find such a statement hard to bear due to the persistent proclamation of a message of eternal torment, I encourage you to review again what has been presented thus far in this book. The goal of Christ's reign is to reconcile "all things" to the Father. Christ must reign until He fills all things; until He has subdued every enemy under His feet. This subjection is not merely that of a conquered foe where Christ stands with His foot upon the neck of the rebellious in heart. What the Bible declares is that a full reconciliation must take place, attended by repentance and confession of the righteousness and power of God.

Yahweh takes no pleasure in punishing the wicked.

Some in teaching on the subject of the universal reconciliation of all men do err by climbing out of one ditch only to be cast headlong into the ditch on the other side of the road. Some deny that there is any punishment of sinners after this life. Such a conclusion ignores a wealth of Scriptures that declare otherwise. When one considers the whole counsel of the word of God, and have rightly divided it, they will perceive that Yahweh will indeed punish sinners. Many will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Yet, the wrath of God will come to an end when every man has repented. Yahweh takes no pleasure in punishing the wicked. What He finds pleasure in is a repentant heart.

Ezekiel 18:21-23

"But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die. All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares Yah-

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weh God, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?"

When God judges a people, we see a manifestation of His righteous wrath. However, the wrath of Yahweh is always temporal. He does not remain perpetually angry at anyone.

There are certainly Scriptures that seem to contradict such a conclusion. There are many Scriptures that speak of God cutting men off forever, of never showing them forgiveness, even of blotting out entire nations from the earth. If we were to view these Scriptures in isolation, we could certainly arrive at a doctrine of eternal damnation, or possibly of annihilation. When the entire counsel of the Scriptures is considered, it is revealed that the mercy of God will triumph over judgment in the end.

Following is one passage, if taken out of the larger context in which it is found, would appear to prove the doctrine that says God will reject some men forever. After Moses had delivered the Law of God to the Israelites, he then spoke of the punishment that would accrue to that man who disregards the Law of God by spurning those curses and judgments pronounced by the Law.

Deuteronomy 29:19-21

It shall be when he hears the words of this curse, that he will boast, saying, "I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to destroy the watered land with the dry." Yahweh shall never be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of Yahweh and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him, and Yahweh will blot out his name from under heaven. Then Yahweh will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the law.

Moses then proceeds to pronounce a similar judgment upon the entire nation of Israel if they should forsake Yahweh and His law.

Deuteronomy 29:22-28

Now the generation to come, your sons who rise up after you and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, when they see the plagues of the land and the diseases with which Yahweh has afflicted it, will say, "All its land is brimstone and salt, a burning waste, unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which Yahweh overthrew in His anger and in His wrath." All the nations will say, "Why has Yahweh done thus to this land? Why this great outburst of anger?" Then men will say, "Because they forsook the covenant of Yahweh, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they have not known and whom He had not allotted to them. Therefore, the anger of Yahweh burned against that land, to bring upon it every curse which is written in this book; and Yahweh uprooted them from their land in anger and in fury and in great wrath, and cast them into another land, as it is this day."

These judgments of God have actually been poured out. There were people, and even an entire land, upon whom Yahweh brought the most severe judgment. Yahweh refused to pass over the sins of His people. They did not find forgiveness. They were delivered into the hands of their enemies. They experienced slaughter, famine, pestilence and disease. Their wealth was looted, and those who remained were taken captive into foreign lands. Yahweh did make the land of Israel a wasteland like unto Sodom and Gomorrah. The people were blotted out as a nation. Their country was taken from them. They were dispersed among the nations.

We know, however, that Yahweh's wrath did not burn perpetually against His people. Though He demonstrated that He would not overlook their sins, and He proved willing to punish the evildoer,

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in time He showed His forsaken people mercy once again. The passage continues with the following words:

Deuteronomy 30:1-6

So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where Yahweh your God has banished you, and you return to Yahweh your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then Yahweh your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. Yahweh your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. Moreover Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

Is this not a marvelous thing? Yahweh in His wrath strikes a people, but in His mercy He restores them to Himself. Yahweh promises that He will take the rebellious people and circumcise their heart. He will remove ungodliness from the heart of man and write His law where there was only rebellion. This is what brings pleasure to Yahweh - restoring the rebel who has come to repentance.

In the passage we just viewed, Yahweh compared His judgments upon Israel to the judgment that befell Sodom. You may ask, "Certainly the judgment of Sodom was final, was it not? There is no room for repentance for those who died when God rained fire and brimstone upon them, is there?" The prophet Ezekiel reveals that Sodom will indeed be restored. Ezekiel, as did Moses, compares Yahweh's judgment upon His people to that of Sodom. Ezekiel affirms that not only will Yahweh put away His wrath toward Judah and Jerusalem, restoring

them to Himself, He will do the same for Sodom and for wicked Samaria.

Ezekiel 16:49-55

"Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it. Furthermore, Samaria did not commit half of your sins, for you have multiplied your abominations more than they. Thus you have made your sisters appear righteous by all your abominations which you have committed.

Also bear your disgrace in that you have made judgment favorable for your sisters. Because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you.

Yes, be also ashamed and bear your disgrace, in that you made your sisters appear righteous. **Nevertheless, I will restore their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and along with them your own captivity,** in order that you may bear your humiliation and feel ashamed for all that you have done when you become a consolation to them. **Your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will also return to your former state.**"

Yahweh will restore even Sodom...

Is it not an amazing testimony that Yahweh will restore even Sodom? That city in which God could not find five righteous will be shown mercy. Indeed, Christ said that the judgment of Sodom would be less than the judgment of certain cities of Israel, for Sodom did not receive the witness that Israel received.

God's Plan of the Ages

Matthew 11:23-24

"And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."

There is a parable in which Christ revealed that the wicked would be punished, but none would be punished eternally.

Luke 12:42-48

And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say

Those to whom much is given have much required.

to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women,

and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."

Although this parable is specifically addressed to believers, it reveals a truth of God's kingdom. Some who are wicked receive few stripes, and some many. There are none who receive unending stripes. If the sin of those who knew to do right is worse than that of those who did not, then how can

Yahweh punish disobedient believers for a limited duration, while punishing unbelievers eternally? Did not the believers have more truth and a greater witness while choosing to act wickedly? If these believers "share a place with the unbelievers" then is it not logical to conclude that there are none who will receive unending stripes?

Sodom is like that servant that did not know his master's will, and he acted wickedly. Israel is that servant that knew the master's will and still chose wickedness. This is why Christ said it would be more tolerable for Sodom than for the cities of Judea in the day of judgment. Those to whom much is given have much required.

Do not Christ's words regarding Sodom reveal that her punishment is not eternal? How could the punishment of Sodom be "more tolerable" than that of Bethsaida if the punishment was endless? Even in the Law of Moses we find that punishments had limits set to them.

Deuteronomy 25:1-3

"If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judges decide their case, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt. **He may beat him forty times but no more, so that he does not beat him with many more stripes than these and your brother is not degraded in your eyes.**"

Yahweh's punishments are meted out. Yahweh's wrath is only for a moment. His love for that which He has created leads always to a renewal of mercy.

Isaiah 54:4-8

"Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; And do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; But you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remem-

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ber no more. For your husband is your Maker, whose name is Yahweh of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the earth. For Yahweh has called you, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even like a wife of one's youth when she is rejected," says your God. **"For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment, but with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,"** says Yahweh your Redeemer.

The words above were addressed to Israel. Yahweh calls Israel His "firstborn" (Exodus 4:22). As such, Israel serves as a type and shadow of how Yahweh will deal with all the nations. Yahweh chose Israel to be a nation holy unto Him. Israel strayed often, forsaking Yahweh and serving other gods. Israel became filled with murder, adultery, and all forms of corruption. This led to Yahweh forsaking Israel in His wrath, but His wrath lasts for a brief moment. Soon Yahweh's everlasting lovingkindness once more was manifested and He took Israel back to Himself. What Yahweh did for Israel, He will do for all nations.

Two of Israel's greatest enemies were the nations of Egypt and Assyria. Both of these nations incurred the wrath of Yahweh. This wrath will have an end. Even Egypt and Assyria will receive mercy. Yahweh will transform these nations which formerly scorned Him into worshipers of the one true God. They will worship Yahweh alongside Israel.

Isaiah 19:22-25

Yahweh will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to Yahweh, and He will respond to them and will heal them. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom Yahweh of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the

work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."

Israel may be Yahweh's firstborn, receiving the inheritance, but Egypt is also God's people, and Assyria is the work of God's hands. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. In the book of Jonah we read of God instructing the prophet to go to Assyria and proclaim judgment against them that they might repent. Yahweh does not want to destroy Nineveh, for He has compassion on all His creation. Jonah, however, does not share Yahweh's burden to see all nations reconciled to Himself. Jonah wants Nineveh to be destroyed, so he flees from Yahweh.

*Yahweh... has
compassion on all His
creation.*

Yahweh prevails over Jonah and the prophet proclaims judgment against Nineveh. The entire city repented. Even the king donned sackcloth and proclaimed a period of fasting and prayer to Yahweh. Yahweh relented of the judgment, but Jonah was displeased. Yahweh spoke to Jonah the following words:

Jonah 4:11

"Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

Should not God also have compassion on Sodom, on Egypt, on Assyria, and on those who perished in the flood of Noah?

I Peter 3:19-20

He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark...

God's Plan of the Ages

As Christians, we need to cast off the false doctrine that states that the mercy of God does not pass beyond the grave. Christ's work of reconciling "all things" to the Father will not be thwarted by something as inferior to Him as death. Christ is Lord of both the living and the dead.

Romans 14:9

For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be **Lord both of the dead and of the living**.

Acts 10:42

And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as **Judge of the living and the dead**.

(See also II Timothy 4:1, I Peter 4:5)

Yahshua told those Jews gathered together to hear Him that must be heard even by those who had died.

John 5:28

"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which **all** who are in the tombs will hear His voice..."

In this account from John's gospel Christ is speaking of the resurrections to come. He states that some will be resurrected to life, others to judgment. It is this judgment that Christ referenced when He said that some would receive few stripes, and others many. Those who are resurrected to judgment must experience the Lake of Fire. As we have seen in previous chapters, the Lake of Fire is also called "the second death." It cannot continue forever, for "the last enemy to be destroyed is death." When the wrath of God has been fully spent; when every enemy has repented and sworn allegiance to Yahweh; when even Egypt, Assyria, and Sodom have become worshipers of Yahweh, then death will be no more.

Christ did not say that "some" who are in the tombs will hear His voice. He said that "all" must hear His voice. Does not such a declaration lead us to marvel? Tragically, many Christians refuse to accept this truth. Christ will reconcile ALL those who have died back to the Father. The waters of death will roll back all the way to Adam. Christ will provide a "merciful covering" for all who were born of Adam.

Christ will provide a "merciful covering" for all ...

I Corinthians 15:22-23

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

Who are the first to be made alive? It is the firstborn. There is both a natural firstborn, and a spiritual firstborn. The nation of Israel is Yahweh's natural firstborn. They must be the first nation to go through the pattern of death, burial and resurrection. They are the first to know the wrath of God, and will be the first nation to wholly turn to Yahweh in repentance and become worshipers of Yahshua.

Romans 11:26-27

And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."

Jeremiah 3:17-19

"At that time they will call Jerusalem 'The Throne of Yahweh,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of Yahweh; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers as an inheritance. Then I said, 'How I would set you among My sons and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful inheritance of the nations!' And I said, 'You shall call Me, My Fa-

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ther, and not turn away from following Me.”

What a glorious day it will be when Yahweh restores all Israel to Himself! Israel will then serve Yahweh as priests, leading the nations to repentance and restoration to the God of all creation. Israel has not thus far received this call. Like Jonah, Israel has fled from the call of God upon their lives. They have not desired to see the nations restored to the favor of Yahweh. Israel has manifested the attitude seen in the elder brother to the prodigal son. When the father was rejoicing that his son who had been lost had been restored to him, the elder brother was angry.

Luke 15:25-30

“Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.’ But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’”

The attitude of the elder son is detestable. He is angry because his father is merciful. So too were the Jews incensed at the idea that the nations should be reconciled to God. They wanted to be exclusive. Their hearts were selfish. They did not share the burden that the Father has for the prodigal nations. Contrast the attitude of the elder son with that of the father.

Luke 15:20-24

“So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

How remarkable is the love of God! He does not delight in the death of the wicked. He desires repentance and restoration. Reconciliation is what He takes pleasure in.

What the natural seed has done in showing scorn at the mercy of Yahweh toward the nations, the church has also done.

There are multitudes within the body of Christ who are offended when they hear it declared that the goal of Yahshua’s reign is to reconcile all creation back to the Father. This reconciliation includes both the living and the dead. There is an interesting passage found in Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi.

*How remarkable is
the love of God!*

Philippians 2:9-11

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Yahshua every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of **those under the earth**, and that every tongue should confess that Yahshua Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

God's Plan of the Ages

Who are those "under the earth"? Is it not the dead? Christ testified plainly that those who were in the grave would hear His voice. The father's words to the elder son in the parable of the prodigal form a parallel to the words Yahweh spoke to Jonah.

Luke 15:32

"But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found."

Jonah 4:11

"Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

Yahweh is ever having to defend His mercy to mankind, for man is far less merciful than his Creator. When David was given a choice between falling into the hands of men, or into the hands of God for judgment, he wisely chose God.

II Samuel 24:14

Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of Yahweh for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

David reveals in these words that man is not as merciful as Yahweh. The attitude of the elder brother to the prodigal has ever been present in the hearts of men. Is it any wonder that Christians today fall short of the mercy of God, proclaiming that those under God's wrath must endure eternal torments, never to be reconciled to Him. Nevertheless, the testimony of Scripture is certain. Yahweh will restore all things to Himself through Christ.

When we rightly divide the word of God we find that Yahshua's work of reconciliation does extend beyond the grave. Those in the tombs must hear

His voice. Christ descended into Hell and preached to the captives held since the days of Noah. Yahshua is Lord of both the living and the dead.

Did not Christ call Lazarus forth from the grave? So too will He call out to many who have perished and been buried. Those in the grave will hear His voice. Before the reign of Christ is fulfilled all who are "under the earth" will join in confession and worship of God. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Yahshua Christ is Lord; Lord of both the living and the dead.

*Those in the grave
will hear His voice.*

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PARABLES PRECEPT— The Bible



Among the Jewish people, parchments used for recording the Scriptures had to be created from the skins of kosher animals. A kosher animal was one that had a split hoof and chewed the cud.

Scribes were the ones whose duty it was to make copies of the Scriptures. The Jews had only the Old Testament, which they call the Tanakh. The word **TaNaKh** comes from the three divisions of

the Old Testament: The Torah; the Neviim; and the Ketubim.

Torah (teachings) refers to the first five books of the Bible which were written by Moses. Some refer to these five books as “the Law.”

Neviim (prophets) refers to the books written by the prophets.

Ketubim (the writings) refers to the remaining books of the Old Testament, such as Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon and others.

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. Aramaic was the language of Babylon in use when the Jewish people were taken into captivity. Portions of the books of Daniel, and Ezra, and a couple verses in Jeremiah

and Genesis were written in Aramaic, while the remainder was written in Hebrew.

The Old Testament was completely written by 450 B.C.. It would not be until the first century A.D. that the New Testament would be written. All 27 books of the New Testament were written in the span of the first century A.D., while the Old Testament was written over a period of about 1,000 years.

Among the men who wrote the books of the Bible, it appears that all of them have been Jewish. Some argue that Luke was a Gentile, but there are good arguments suggesting that he was actually Jewish.