

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

## WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

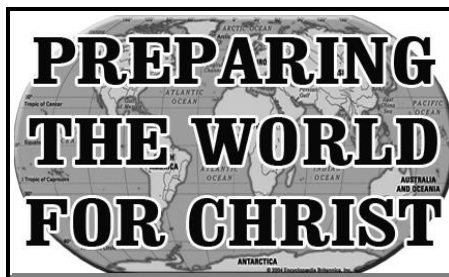
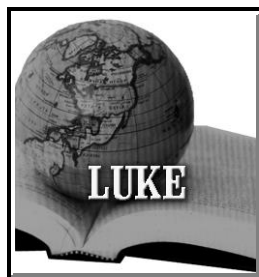
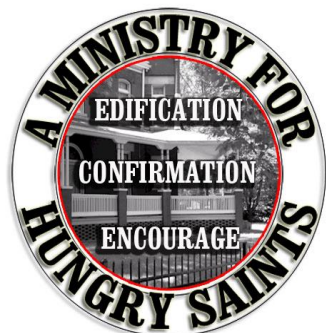
*An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely*

LESSON NUMBER 46

COMMENTARY ON: 13:18-30

### JOURNEYING TOWARD JERUSALEM

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem, determined to lay down His life a ransom for many, and take it up again – as His Father had determined (John 10:17-18). However, even when focusing on His mission, He teaches along the way. In this text all the people were rejoicing *"for all the glorious things that were done by Him."* Rather than being turned aside by the accolades of men, He begins to teach them about the Kingdom of God, concealing His teaching in the wrapping of a parable. It tells them of the expansive nature of "the Kingdom of God: – that though it begins small, it does not stay that way. Without providing any details, the Spirit simply says, *"And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem"* (Luke 13:22). Just a few details are provided, but they are enough to show us the nature and determined destiny of the Kingdom of God. It provokes an inquiry concerning if only a few will be saved. Jesus insightfully responds.



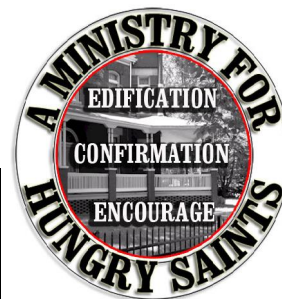
Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ





## The Book of Luke, 12/9/16

### Lesson Number 46



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

#### 54 VERSIONS OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES

ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005); AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965); ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901); BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949); BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899); EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885); ETH=Etheridge Translation (1849); ETRV=Easy to Read (1999); ESV=English Standard Version (2001); GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599); GNB=Good News (1966); GSNT=Goodspeed (1923); GWN=God's Word (1995); IE=International English (1973); NIRV=New Int'l Readers Version (1998); ISV=International Standard Version (1967); JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917); JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611); LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976); LEW=Lewis Translation (1896); LIVING=Living Bible (1971); MESSAGE=The Message (1993); MGI=Peshitta Translation (2006); MIT=Idiomatic Version; MKJV=Modern KJV (1962); MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001); MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852); NAB=New American Bible (2002); NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977); NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995); NIB=New International Bible; NIV=New International Version (1984); NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985); NKJV=New King James Version (1979); NLT=New Living Translation (1996); NOY=George Noyes Bible (1869); NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989); PHILLIPS=J.B. Phillips New Testament (1962); PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595); ROT=Rotherham Bible (1999); RPTE=Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament; RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952); TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985); WEB=Webster Bible (1833); WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903); WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937); TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526); WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382); YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

#### GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

FRIBERG; LOUW-NIDA; LIDDELL SCOTT; THAYER; VGNT GREEK DICTIONARY; GINGRICH, DANKER,

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# JOURNEYING TOWARD JERUSALEM

LUKE 13:18 "Then said He, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? <sup>19</sup> It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. <sup>20</sup> And again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? <sup>21</sup> It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. <sup>22</sup> And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup> Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, <sup>24</sup> Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. <sup>25</sup> When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: <sup>26</sup> Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. <sup>27</sup> But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity. <sup>28</sup> There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. <sup>29</sup> And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. <sup>30</sup> And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last." ..... Luke 13:18-30

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem, determined to lay down His life a ransom for many, and take it up again – as His Father had determined (John 10:17-18). However, even while focusing on His mission, He teaches along the way. In this text all the people were rejoicing *“for all the*

*glorious things that were done by Him.”* Rather than being turned aside by the accolades of men, He begins to teach them about the Kingdom of God, concealing His teaching in the wrapping of a parable. He tells them of the expansive nature of *“the Kingdom of God”* – that even though it begins small, it does not stay that way. Not

only does the Kingdom grow and expand, there is nothing that thoroughly compares with its growth. He refers to something that is unusually small, yet advances forward to something unusually large. This kind of growth confirms the presence of Divine wisdom and power. Divine is always so characterized.

Jesus expounds the Kingdom of God, and declares what is required to enter it – Given O. Blakely

## CONTENTS

- ▶ **INTRODUCTION**
- ▶ **WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD LIKE? (13:18)**
- ▶ **LIKE A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED (13:19)**
- ▶ **IT IS LIKE LEAVEN (13:20-21)**
- ▶ **HE WENT THROUGH THE VILLAGES TEACHING (13:22-24)**
- ▶ **WHEN THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE IS RISEN UP (13:25-28)**
- ▶ **THEY SHALL COME FROM THE EAST WEST, NORTH, AND SOUTH (13:29)**
- ▶ **THERE ARE LAST WHICH SHALL BE FIRST (13:30)**

Without providing any details, the Spirit simply says, *"And He went*

*through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem"* (Luke 13:22). Just a few details are provided, but they are enough to show us the nature and determined destiny of the Kingdom of God. It provokes inquiry, and a question concerning if many will be saved? After challenging the questioner with an arresting statement, the Lord Jesus delivers a parable depicting the rejection of local people, but the eventual gathering of a mass of people from all directions and places.

It is apparent that Jesus has a preference for speaking about the Kingdom of God – a subject that dominated the preaching of John the Baptist before Him (Matt 3:2), and of Jesus' own matchless ministry. In the Gospels there are ninety-eight references to *"the Kingdom of God"* or

*"the Kingdom of heaven"* (the manner in which Matthew most often refers to it). The Epistles provide teaching concerning *"the Kingdom of God"* in eight places (Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Col 4:11); 2 Thess 1:5). It also refers to *"the Kingdom of Christ and of God"* (Eph 5:5), *"the Kingdom of His Dear Son"* (Col 1:13), *"His Kingdom"* (1 Thess 2:12; 2 Tim 4:1), *"the heavenly Kingdom"* (2 Tim 4:18), *"Thy Kingdom"* (Heb 1:8), *"a Kingdom which cannot be moved"* (Heb 12:28), and *"the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet 1:11).

If you are going to walk with Jesus, you will confront a lot of teaching about the Kingdom of God – the Kingdom over which Jesus is presently presiding. This is the Kingdom that governs the affairs of this world.

## WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD LIKE?

LUKE 13:18 *"Then said He, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?"*

Matthew also mentions these likenesses, referring to them both as *"another parable"* (Matt 13:31-33). Mark records them in Mark 4:30-32, referring to them as *"such parables"* (Mk 4:33).

Parables were not intended to clarify, but to conceal the truth being taught. When Jesus' disciples asked Him why He taught the multitude in parables He replied, *"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given"* (Matt 13:11). Other versions read, *"He replied, 'The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.'"*<sup>NIV</sup>

First, we see that God Himself determines who is to understand His Kingdom and who is not to understand it. This is based on His perception of them – a perception

seeing some as having no interest in what God has to say and do. From the lowest view, this is because Satan has blinded them. From the highest view, it is strictly owing to God's determination, which is wholly righteous. We know there is such a thing as *"the children of the wicked one"* (Matt 13:38). Jesus said to some of His critics, *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do"* (John 8:44). Saul, who later was referred to as *"Paul,"* said to a sorcerer named Elymas, *"O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"* (Acts 13:10). Paul spoke of those who were *"enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction"* (Phil 3:18). John wrote of those who were *"the children of the devil"* (1 John 3:10).

God would not divulge to these *"children of the devil"* the secrets of His Kingdom, He would not enable them to identify or appreciate it.

These *"children of the devil,"* as I understand it, cannot be changed. Only God knows who they are. Prior to be *"added to the Lord"* (Acts 5:14), the people of God were not known as *"children of the devil,"* or *"tares"* (Matt 13:25-26, 30, 41-42). Their unregenerate identity is described as follows.

⇒ *"Servants of sin"* (Rom 6:17,20).

⇒ *"Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Cor 6:9-11).

⇒ *"... were dead in trespasses and sins"* (Eph 2:1).

- ⇒ "... without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12).
- ⇒ "Ye were sometimes darkness" (Eph 5:8).
- ⇒ "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2).
- ⇒ "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" (Col 1:21).
- ⇒ "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:3).
- ⇒ "Which in time past were not a people . . . had not obtained mercy" (1 Pet 2:10).

- ⇒ "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet 2:25).

#### SATAN'S CHILDREN

Some of Satan's children, or offspring, are specifically mentioned.

- ⇒ "Children of Belial" in Israel (Deut 13:13; Judges 20:13; 1 Sam 10:27; 30:22; 1 Kgs 21:13; 2 Chron 13:7). Note: Paul refers to Satan as "Belial" in 2 Corinthians 6:15).
- ⇒ Cain (1 John 3:12).
- ⇒ Judas (John 6:70; 17:12).
- ⇒ The "man of sin" (2 Thess 2:3).

I understand these to be unretrievable. Care must be taken not to assume we are capable of ourselves of recognizing such people.

When Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God, among other things, He does so with these realities in mind.

#### WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD LIKE?

"Then said He, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? . . ."

The word "like" means *ōsimilar* to, resembling, *ō* <sup>THAYER</sup> introducing similarity, *ō* <sup>FRIBERG</sup> *ōsimilar* to something else in some aspect. *ō* <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> This does not mean equal to, but refers an facet or trait of the Kingdom of God that can be seen in something in the earth. It is not intended to set forth a precise duplicate, for there is only one "Kingdom of God."

#### WHEREUNTO SHALL I RESEMBLE IT?

" . . . and whereunto shall I resemble it?"

This comes from the same root word, but with a slightly different emphasis. Something like the Kingdom of God speaks of a fact, revealed or not. "Resemble" means a revelation of the similarity, spoken, in this case, by the Son of God.

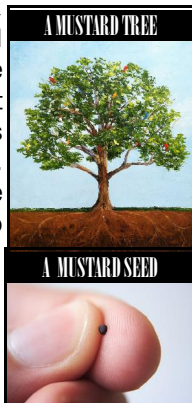
Other versions read, "compare it," <sup>NKJV</sup> "what shall I compare it to?" <sup>NIV</sup> "whereunto shall I liken it?" <sup>DARBY</sup> "How can I illustrate it?" <sup>NLT</sup> As In the previous word, this is a partial comparison, not an entire or complete one.

## LIKE A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

<sup>19</sup> "It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it."

The Kingdom of God is not merely like a mustard seed, but like a mustard seed which grew! The emphasis is that it begins small, but does not remain that way. Further, it is the nature of the Kingdom to grow.

God gave a dream to Nebuchadnezzar, which was interpreted



by Daniel, that depicted the Kingdom of God as a small stone that became larger and larger as it progressed, finally filling the entire earth (Dan 2:31-25). That was the Kingdom of God from the perspective of Divine purpose, or intent.

Matthew observes that the mustard seed "is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree" (Matt 13:31). From a tiny herbal seed to a great tree! Remarkable!

Now, Jesus says, the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. In fulfillment of Daniel's vision, it was being "set up" on the earth during the time Jesus walked among men: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of

heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan 2:44).

Jacob was given a dream quite similar to this. He saw a ladder "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it . . ." (Gen 28:12-13).

In all three – the parable of Jesus, the dream of Jacob, and the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the point was that God Almighty was going to work out



His *"eternal purpose"* (Eph 3:11) in the world. His wisdom and power would be employed in which His Person and will would be made known to both men and angels.

In the Kingdom of God, growth implies purpose, and an appointed objective. In men themselves, it implies the fulfillment of responsibility and productivity.

So it is with the Kingdom of God. It is not merely to exist, like a valuable

relic, to behold. It is not for simple observation, or for a mere gathering point. God's Kingdom is the context in which He is accomplishing something that will bring glory to Himself, and demonstrate more fully who He is.

Because God's Kingdom is not a mere impersonal tree, its growth and advance spans centuries, and even millennia of time. There have been lengthy periods when it did not appear to be advancing. But that is from the topographical point of view. While it did

not appear that much was taking place above ground, a lot was being accomplished beneath the surface. Firm roots were being established that could sustain a large growth above ground. Growth is really from the root upward. (Isa 37:31). The Lord Jesus Himself was described as a *"root out of dry ground"* (Isa 53:2). As Zechariah wrote, *"Do not despise these small beginnings"* <sup>NLT</sup> (Zech 4:10). The Kingdom of God has survived spiritual famines, and floods of delusions – and it is still growing.

## IT IS LIKE LEAVEN

*"<sup>20</sup> And again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? <sup>21</sup> It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."*

Perhaps you have heard it said that *"leaven"* is always a type of wickedness. That it is likened to wickedness cannot be denied – but only it is particularly *"old leaven"* that bears that likeness (1 Cor 5:6-7). There is also *"the leaven of the Pharisees"* (Matt 16:6). Whether speaking of good leaven or old leaven, *"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"* (Gal 5:9). That is, it tends to spread until the whole of the thing into which it is found is impacted by the influence of the leaven.

Leaven is yeast, which is placed in

small measure in a batch of dough, and finally pervades the entire batch, producing a loaf of bread.

Both wickedness and sincerity with truth are likened to *"leaven"* – *"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth"* (1 Cor 5:8). Both of these leavens spread – it is their nature to spread. In this text, Jesus is speaking of the leaven-like nature of the Kingdom of God. It tends to increase and expand. The presence of *"the leaven of malice and wickedness"* neutralizes and finally stifles this good leaven. That is why the church must be purged of *"old leaven"* (1 Cor 5:7).

### THESE PRINCIPLES SEEN IN THE EARLY CHURCH

This nature of the Kingdom of God was lived out in the early church. Things started in a *"house"* (Acts 2:2). It then spread to the Temple, and from house to house (Acts 2:46; 5:42). Then all Jerusalem was filled with the Gospel doctrine (Acts 5:28). Soon it spread to Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:20), then all Asia (Acts 19:26-27), also to Rome Italy (Acts 28:16,30-31), and even to *"Caesar's household"* (Phil 4:22).

This same thing will take place wherever *"old leaven"* is kept out of the church, and proper growth is experienced. *"Old leaven"* inhibits the growth of the body of Christ. The reason for this circumstance is found in the fact that *"old leaven"* provides a door of entrance for the wicked one and the forces he commands. Wherever it exists, it brings the intrusion of darkness.

## HE WENT THROUGH THE VILLAGES TEACHING

*"<sup>22</sup> And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem."*

### CITIES AND VILLAGES

*"And He went through the cities and villages . . ."*

The distance between Galilee and

Jerusalem is estimated to be about seventy miles. The cities and villages along the way number in the hundreds. At the very least, we are talking about quite a few cities and villages along the way, and Jesus was probably saying something in all that He passed through. He was a prodigious preacher and teacher, and was always noted for what

He said – either by his enemies or those who gladly heard Him.

### TEACHING

*" . . . teaching . . ."*

The word translate *"teaching"* means *ōto* hold discourse with others in order to instruct them; to impart instruction,

instill doctrine into one; to explain, expound, a thing. <sup>THAYER</sup> Teaching postulates the communication of a certain body of knowledge – in this case *“the Kingdom of God.”* When teaching the multitudes He couched the truth in parables so they would not be able to discern the true nature of what He said. However, by employing parables He provided for understanding to be appropriated once their eyes were enlightened, and their ears circumcised.

In the Gospels the words *“teach,” “teaches,” “teaching,” “teacheth,”* and *“taught”* are used fifty-four times. In Romans thru Revelation they are used thirty times.

THE ENTIRE GODHEAD TEACHES US  
God (John 6:45; 1 Thess 4:9), Jesus (Eph 4:20-21; 1 John 5:20), the Holy Spirit (Lk 12:12; John 14:26; 1 Cor 2:13; 1 John 2:27). They all teach us.

God has places teachers in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:18; Eph 4:11). Exactly how do we account for those who profess to be Christians for long periods, yet remain fundamentally ignorant of God, Christ, the Spirit, and the Kingdom of God? You may be sure that during the day of judgment a strict account will have to be given for the existence of such a condition. If Jesus took time to teach while journeying to the place where He would *“lay down His life a ransom for many”* (Matt 20:28), what possible reason can be cited for the people of God not being taught today?

It ought to be noted that the subject being taught pertains directly to God and Christ, and the so great

salvation” that was initiated, and is being maintained, by Them. Search and see! Jesus did not give extensive teaching about family life or strictly social matters. ALL OF His teaching had to do with Divine purpose, with the ultimate confrontation of God in the day of judgment being a fundamental consideration.

### JOURNEYING TOWARD JERUSALEM

*“ . . . and journeying toward Jerusalem. ”*

Other versions read, *“proceeding on His way to Jerusalem,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“as He made His way to Jerusalem,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“always pressing on toward Jerusalem,”* <sup>NLT</sup> *“making progress toward Jerusalem.”* <sup>YLT</sup>

The time when He would *“offer up Himself”* (Heb 7:27) now began to dominate the Lord’s mind. It was a time when the iniquities of us all would be laid upon Him (Isa 53:6), He would be made to be sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), would be made a curse for us (Gal 3:13), and would *“taste of death for every man”* (Heb 2:9). It would take every thing that He had to accomplish this sacrifice. In fact, angelic assistance would be required in readying for the appointed occasion (Lk 22:43).

Just before His transfiguration Jesus, *“From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day”* (Matt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19; Mk 8:31; 9:31-32; 10:33-34; Lk 9:22; 18:31-

33). This spanned a period of a little less than one and a half years. Most of His ministry during this time was to His disciples. Miracles He performed during this time included healing a demon-possessed boy (Lk 9:37-43), a blind man healed when Jesus put clay on his eyes (John 9:1-41), Lazarus raised from the dead (John 11:1-45), and the healing of ten lepers (Lk 17:11-19).

The significant reduction of is miracles, and the increased time spent with His disciples, confirmed that in coming into the world, His focused mission was not alleviating conditions related to life in this world. He was merciful and tender, and considerate, *but His focus was on accomplishing the mandate to lay down His life, take it up again, and return to heaven commence up-holding and bringing “many sons to glory”* (Heb 2:10).

Human illnesses and hardships are the result of sin, not the cause of it. Jesus came primarily to address the cause of sin by making an *“end of sins”* (Dan 9:24), taking away the sin of the world (John 1:29), destroying the devil (Heb 2:14), plundering principalities and powers (Col1:15), and ending the Law as a means to righteousness (ROM 10:4). That would clear the way for the justification of sinners to be done by God righteously. It would also free Jesus to ready us for the world to come. His purpose was not to clean up this world, for it is already targeted for destruction. His work would enable us to clean escape the world. His grace would enable us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live righteously in this world (Tit 2:11-13).

## ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?

*“<sup>23</sup> Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, <sup>24</sup> Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”*

We now enter into an area where men are guilty of a remarkable amount of speculation. Some hasty statements that are made by men, but not specifically stated in Scripture, are *“God wants to save everyone,” “God does not want anyone to be lost,” “God*

*loves everyone.”* While it cannot be denied that there is an element of truth reflected in these statements, they are not precise enough for God to have spoken them. All of them are actually conclusions that are seemingly based upon what God has actually said. Let

us briefly examine some of these inspired statements.

⇒ **GOD IS NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH.** *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet 3:9). This text is not about the world, but about the saved. His longsuffering is not here said to be toward the ungodly, but is *"to us-ward."* Other versions read, *"toward us,"* NKJV *"toward you,"* NASB *"is patient with you,"* NRSV and *"but He is long-suffering (extraordinarily patient) toward you."* AMPLIFIED The phrase *"not willing that any should perish,"* means not willing for any of **the saints** to perish. That is precisely why He bears long with them, not striking them down at every offence.

⇒ *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:4). In this context believers are exhorted, *"that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:1-4). First, note that Paul is not speaking of individual men, but of classifications of men: *"all men,"* including *"kings and all that are in authority."* These prayers are not that the people may be saved, but *"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"* (1 Tim 2:2). So far as this text is concerned, we are not admonished to consider God's election, which is emphatically taught elsewhere. **Rather the scope of salvation is as broad as the circumference of sin.** The effects of redemption reach as far as sin reached. The truth of election, Divine choice, and predestination is expounded ONLY to those who are in Christ Jesus (Matt 20:16; Rom 8:18-33; 9:11; 11:5-7,28; Eph 1:4-5, 11; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:4; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2;

2:9; 5:13; 2 Pet 1:10; Rev 7:14). Election, then, is **the explanation** for God's acceptance of us in Christ, and provides the assurance that the work He has begun will be finished for His glory. That is how the Holy Spirit uses the language.

### ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?

*"Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? . . ."*

Other versions read, *"Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"* NASB *"are only a few people going to be saved?"* NIV *"will only a small number have salvation?"* BBE and *"will only a few be saved (rescued, delivered from the penalties of the last judgment, and made partakers of the salvation by Christ)." AMPLIFIED*

The only place this subject is directly addressed is in the Revelation – and there it views the end, or outcome, of God's great salvation: *"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."* (Rev 7:9-10).

There you have an answer as to whether or not only a few will be saved. However, Jesus does not provide this information to the inquirer. It was too early to speak of this matter. While He was with them, neither did He inform His disciples of the final number of the *"saved."*

The final outcome of the salvation wrought by Christ will not be divulged until the greatness of the work He accomplished is discerned. Even then, it would be revealed only to those who were satisfactorily participating in that great salvation. Of what value would such information be to those who were unstable, and being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Eph 4:14).

Jesus will stifle this request,

informing the inquirer where his focus ought to be.

### STRIVE TO ENTER

*" . . . And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate..."*

Other versions read, *"Make every effort to enter through the narrow,"* NIV *"Struggle to get in through the narrow door,"* CJB *"Strive with earnestness to enter in through the narrow door,"* DARBY *"Try your hardest to enter by the narrow door,"* NJB *"Strive to enter by the narrow door [force yourselves through it]." AMPLIFIED*

How does this match up with statements like, *"Anyone can be saved,"* *"It is easy to be saved,"* *"Repeat this simple prayer after me."* The answer of Jesus clarifies that, from a human point of view, it is not easy to be saved. It is like squeezing through a gate that is extremely narrow. That is precisely why Peter, – after telling those who asked what they should do (Acts 2:37), and were told precisely what to (Acts 3:28) – *"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation"* (Acts 2:40). Only when they had *"gladly received"* that word were they baptized (Acts 2:41).

The word Jesus delivered is a very real requirement. People who are casual about salvation will not participate in it. People should be able to figure this out. Those outside of Christ are *"dead in trespasses and sins"* (Eph 2:1), are living *"according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air,"* and he is now working *"in the children of disobedience"* (Eph 2:2). They are *"alienated from the life of God"* (Eph 4:18; Col 1:21), *"enemies"* of God (Rom 5:10), and *"without God and without hope in the world"* (Eph 2:12). How can anyone possibly be casual about that situation, and imagine they will be saved? Their casualness and mediocrity is evidence Satan is at work in them.

### MANY WILL SEEK TO ENTER



*" . . . for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able."*

Other versions read, *"many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"A number will make the attempt to go in, but will not be able to do so,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"many will be demanding to get in and won't be able to,"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough."* <sup>NAB</sup>

There are, I am persuaded, a great

number of people who do not believe this statement is true – that some would try to enter, yet not be able to do so. The word of Jesus, however, is absolute truth, and is to be told to the people. Those who are dawdling around in the vestibule of neglect must be told they will not always be *"able to enter."* There is coming a time when the door will be shut! Those who are *"at ease"* – even *"in Zion"* – are told, *"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom*

*the house of Israel came!"* (Amos 6:1). Even *"the heathen"* are told, *"And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction"* (Zech 1:15). The NIV reads, *"but I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they added to the calamity."* Some people are making God angry.

Now, Jesus will affirm that the door of salvation will eventually be shut, and no others will be saved.

## WHEN the MASTER OF THE HOUSE IS RISEN UP

*"<sup>25</sup> When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:<sup>26</sup> Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets.<sup>27</sup> But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.<sup>28</sup> There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."*

### WHEN THE MASTER RISES UP

*"When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door . . ."*

This will mark the conclusion of *"the day of salvation."* It is the time when He will thrust His sickly into the earth, and reap His own wheat (Lk 3:17; Rev 14:15). It is when the holy angels will gather in all of the saints (Matt 24:31; Mk 13:27). This is the time when the heavens and the earth shall flee from before His face (Rev 20:11). It is when all of the dead will be raised to appear before the Lord to be judged (John 5:John 5:28-29). This is *"the end,"* when the heavens and earth shall pass away in a fiery

holocaust (2 Pet 3:10-13).

In the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus depicted this as the time when the Bridegroom came, and the door was shut (Matt 25:10).

### SOME WILL BEGIN TO KNOCK

*" . . . and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets . . ."*

These will be people among whom Jesus walked, ministered, and called out for the weary to come to Him. That time could have been an advantage to them, but when the door is shut, it will prove to have been their greatest disadvantage.

### THE MASTER WILL SAY

*"...But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity..."*

To the chagrin of the slothful and dilatory, Jesus will acknowledge that He never did know them, never did recognize them, and never did receive them. They thought His presence in their streets equated to His approval, but it did not.

When I think of the staggering number of people who have been offered access to God, given the opportunity to come to, and be received by, Jesus Christ, and to grow up into Him in all things, it is almost more than I can bear. But our concern for such people will abruptly terminate when the door is shut! When Jesus no longer seeks them, we will, no longer weep for them.

Believe me when I say, the coming of the Lord is not the time to begin knocking! Now, in this world, while Jesus is enthroned in glory at the right hand of God, is the time to knock – and you can do it with this promise in mind: *"to him that knocketh it shall be opened"* (Luke 11:10) – but only if one knocks while the door is opened!

### THERE SHALL BE WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TRUTH

*" . . . There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."*

Other versions read *"weeping and cries of sorrow,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"cry and grind your teeth,"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"cry and be in extreme pain,"* <sup>GWN</sup> *"wailing and grinding of teeth."* <sup>NAB</sup>

The word *"gnashing"* comes from a word meaning *used to denote extreme*

anguish and utter despair of men consigned to eternal punishment in hell.ö THAYER

The gnashing of the teeth denotes

great sorrow and pain, over which the condemned have no power. Also, there is no expectancy of ever being relieved of this dreadful situation. In this

teaching, such woe is the result of not availing oneself of salvation. O, that men were aware of the dreadful outcome of not coming to Christ!

## THEY SHALL, COME FROM THE EAST, WEST, NORTH, AND SOUTH

*"<sup>29</sup> And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."*

Jesus knows that His own people – the ones of that generation – would mostly reject Him. At least forty years after Jesus ascended back to glory, John wrote, *"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"* (John 1:11). While Jesus was still ministering to His disciples He said to them, *"the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation"* (Luke 11:50). *"For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation"* (Luke 17:24-25). Again He said, *"And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation"* (Mark 8:12).

That generation was so bad, that the Queen of Sheba and the city of Nineveh would testify against it on the day of judgment: *"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here"* (Mat 12:41-42).

He also pronounced this arresting

judgment against that generation: *"Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation"* (Luke 11:49-51).

In what kind of generation are we living? Most people know it is radically different from previous generations, but how is it regarded in heaven? There are really only two generations. Solomon described the evil generation this way: *"There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men"* (Prov 30:11-14).

David wrote of *"the generation of the righteous"* (Psa 14:5), and *"This is the generation of them that seek Him, that seek Thy face, O Jacob. Selah"* (Psa 24:6). He also wrote of *"the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD"* (Psa 102:18), and *"the generation of the upright"* (Psa 112:2).

Now, the question is, whose generation will be the largest – that of Jesus, or that which is not of Jesus? Speaking of the Messiah, who had no physical generation. Isaiah answers,

and his answer follows the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which speaks of the Lord Jesus bearing the iniquity of us all. *"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."* (Isa 54:1-3).

Our text speaks of this sudden and pervasive expansion: *"And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."*

Paul also speaks of this when he writes of God lifting the veil now over their faces of understanding. When He does, it will have an arresting impact on the Gentile world. The prophets spoke of it, and it is most apparent they were not referring to Christ coming into the world to lay down His life. They spoke of a time when they – Israel – would impact the world.

⇒ *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious"* (Isa 11:10).

⇒ *"Arise, shine; for thy light is come,*

*and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa 60:1-3).*

⇒ *"Thus saith the LORD, The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. Verily Thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols" (Isa 45:14-16).*

⇒ *"And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be My people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me*

*unto thee. And the LORD shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech 2:11-12).*

⇒ *"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:1-2).*

⇒ *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray*

*before the LORD" (Zech 8:20-22).*

⇒ *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech 8:23).*

In The Revelation, John saw the whole house of Israel sealed by God. Final judgment was withheld until; this was done (Rev 7:1-4). The commanded sealing was accomplished (Rev 7:5-8). Immediately after this, John saw a "great multitude which no man could number," and they were singing of salvation (Rev 7:9-10).

This is a summation of the God-ordained spread of the truth through believing and converted Israel. It is also what Jesus is affirming in our text. Israel would not be going to nations, but "they shall COME from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." There is no possibility that this Divine purpose will not be fulfilled!

## THERE ARE LAST WHICH SHALL BE FIRST

<sup>30</sup> *"And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."*

### THERE ARE LAST WHICH SHALL BE FIRST

*"And, behold, there are last which shall be first . . ."*

He does not say all that are last will be first, but "there are [some] last which shall be first." For example, the apostles were first in this world (1 Co 12:28), and are also associated with the foundations of the New Jerusalem there (Rev 21:14).

However, the Jews as a nation were the first to hear the Gospel preached to them, yet, as a nation, will

be believe at the last, when they insightfully embrace it. On the other hand, the Gentiles were the last to hear the Gospel, and the first to embrace it extensively, for the Gospel "is the power of salvation to everyone that believer, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom 1:16).

The first fruits were reaped in Jerusalem (Acts 2-5), but the full harvest will be reaped from the world, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev 5:9).

Only Jesus is "the First AND the Last" (Rev 1:17; 2:8; 22:13).

### THERE ARE FIRST WHICH SHALL BE LAST

*" . . . and there are first which shall be last. "*

Particularly as regards earthly stations, where dignitaries are converted, they will not be dignitaries in heaven. Those designated "kings and priests" will not be those who occupied those offices on the earth. Those who are kings and priests in the glory shall have commenced their work in the world, but it will be seen as full-fledged in the world to come.

Stephen stood before the Jewish council in this world, but in the world to come, the council condemning Him will stand before him. Jesus stood before Pilate, but on the day of judgment, Pilate will stand before Jesus.

When Jesus said *"there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last,"* He is speaking of something that will be perceived. God shall have considered such people *"first"* all along, and those whom are *"last"* were seen as such by the Lord. In the world they did not appear to be those upon whom God's eye rested, and those to whom His ear was opened (Psa 34:15; 1 Pet 3:12). It did not look as though they had access to the throne of grace (Heb 5:15-16), or that angels were their ministers (Heb 1:13-

14), or that Jesus was interceding for them in heaven (Rom 10:34; Heb 7:25), and the Holy Spirit was making intercession for them from within (Rom 8:26-27). They did not look that important – but they were!

To briefly summarize what the Lord said, our hearts and minds must be set on the time when everything will be revealed as it really is. We must live in view of that day – the day when Jesus confesses to God and before angels that we are His.

This is precisely why we are admonished, *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"* (Col 3:1-2). It why Jesus said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matt 6:33). This is also why we are to be in a waiting posture (1 Thess 1:10). It is why we refuse to live to please men, or to receive accolades from them.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 12/23/16. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The FORTY-SEVENTH lesson will cover verses 31 thru 14:6: THE JUDGMENT OF JERUSALEM AND A HEALING ON THE SABBATH." Jesus is warned about the aggression of Herod, and gives a Sovereign answer. He then announces the judgment of Jerusalem, and again heals on the Sabbath day. We will begin our meeting at 6:30, which will be followed by a time of refreshments and fellowship.