

JERUSALEM, JUDAEA, SAMARIA...

*Order for the Proclamation of the Message
But, WHAT Message? WHEN Proclaimed?
A Study About Scriptural Interpretation*

“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is at hand.

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:1-8).

“He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

And he must needs go through Samaria” (John 4:3, 4).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The preceding verses, covering different events occurring during Christ's earthly ministry to Israel and to His disciples following His resurrection, are, in the main, *vastly misunderstood in Christendom today, often resulting in mayhem in Biblical interpretation.*

"Mayhem in Biblical interpretation" may sound a little strong. But, from what has often been done with these sections of Scripture, not so at all!

For example, in the previously quoted verses from Matthew's and John's gospels, when Christ commissioned the twelve disciples, He specifically commanded them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles," or "the Samaritans" (Matt. 10:5). Yet, prior to this, in John 4:3ff, en route to Galilee, *Christ took His disciples through Samaria and had dealings with the Samaritans (remaining two days) — a woman at Jacob's well and others who, after hearing the woman, sought Him out.*

How is this to be understood in relation to Christ's ministry to Israel at this time? *What, if anything, was different in that which Christ did and said during the two days that He spent with the Samaritans?*

What type ministry did Christ have among a people which He would later specifically command His disciples *to have NO DEALINGS WITH* concerning the *message being proclaimed to the Jews?*

If Christ's dealings with the Samaritans had to do with evangelism — the gospel of grace and eternal salvation, as numerous individuals claim and teach — then *He proclaimed a message that He hadn't previously been proclaiming among the Jews.*

But, on the other hand, had Christ proclaimed an evangelistic message to the Samaritans, doing such would not really have run counter to His subsequent command to the disciples in Matt. 10:5, for, again, the message which Christ and His disciples proclaimed to the Jews *had NOTHING to do with eternal salvation.*

The text though, as can easily be seen, and as will be shown in this article, deals with something completely different. The text deals with *something related to His ministry among those in Israel, but NOT the same at all.*

Then, something which the text *DOESN'T* deal with is what almost everyone seems to want to deal with, not only in John 4 but elsewhere in John and the other gospel accounts as well — the gospel of grace and eternal salvation.

Or, viewing the matter in another respect, as previously seen, preceding His crucifixion Christ had sent the disciples to *the Jewish people ALONE*. But following His resurrection, the ministry of the disciples in this respect changed. The Jewish people still held priority, *BUT the message was no longer to them alone*.

The disciples, following Christ's resurrection, were commanded *TO BEGIN by taking the message to the Jewish people; but they were NOT to stop there, as before. They WERE NOW commanded to carry this message to not only the Samaritans but also to the nations worldwide* (Acts 1:8; cf. Rom. 1:16: 2:9, 10).

What made the difference? What is this all about? Why was the proclaimed message restricted to Israel prior to the events surrounding Calvary and Christ's resurrection, then extensively broadened following this time?

And, was the message which had been restricted to Israel in the gospels, preceding the events of Calvary, the same message in Acts which was to be proclaimed not only once again to Israel but also to the Samaritans and the Gentile nations following Christ's resurrection and ascension?

Then, to carry this one step further, was/is this the same message dealt with in the epistles, proclaimed to Christians, bringing matters down to the present day and time?

Properly understanding the preceding questions is the "key" to properly understanding Christ's encounter with not only the Samaritans in John 4 (at a time when *the message was to the Jewish people alone*) but also properly understanding much of the New Testament as a whole.

In fact, apart from possessing at least some understanding of what has been discussed in the preceding paragraphs, a person can only find himself viewing the whole of the New Testament as so many do — salvation by grace seen as the central message throughout, with little understanding of the correct message carried over from the Old Testament and seen throughout the gospels, Acts, the epistles, and climaxed in the Book of Revelation.

And, there is *ONLY ONE WAY* to properly deal with a correct approach to the New Testament — *BEGIN at the base point, the foundational point, and PROCEED from there*.

Thus, Christ's ministry to Israel, preceded by John's ministry as His forerunner, will be dealt with first, drawing from the Old Testament at times to show the "why" of the message being proclaimed to Israel.

Then matters will be carried from there, as Samaria, the nations, and the Church are brought into the picture.

Christ's Birth and Subsequent Appearance to Israel

Preceding Jesus' birth, wise men from the East (evidently Jews from the vicinity of Babylon [generational descendants of Jews taken captive centuries earlier]), following the supernatural appearance of a star, came to Jerusalem looking for that which the star signaled — *the birth of Israel's long-promised Messiah*.

"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth [probably referencing unruly individuals in Moab]" (Num. 24:17).

The appearance of this star in the East clearly had to do with the appearance of *a Messiah Who would hold the sceptre and rule*. And, accordingly, the question asked by those having traveled to Jerusalem from the East, followed by an explanatory statement, was *singular*:

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him" (Matt. 2:2).

Israel (Jews in the diaspora and in the land) was looking for a "King," a reigning Messiah, apart from any thought of a suffering Messiah (something which would precede His reign, though not understood). They wanted a Messiah who would overthrow Gentile world power (Rome, in this case) and restore the kingdom to Israel.

And the preceding, among orthodox Jews, or Jews believing in some form of a Messiah's future appearance at all, has never really changed down through the years, extending into modern times.

And throughout this time, in this respect, there has been somewhat of a paradox between Jews and Christians. *The Jews*

want a Messiah who reigns but doesn't suffer, while Christians want a Messiah who suffers but doesn't reign.

This whole scenario of a suffering/reigning Messiah is what confused John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah. He found himself imprisoned, with things in Christ's ministry not moving in the direction which he thought that they should be going — the forerunner was imprisoned, Messiah was being rejected — and he sent two disciples to Jesus with a question concerning the matter:

“Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” (Matt. 11:3b).

And Jesus answered the question after a manner which would leave *NO question in John's mind about His identity*:

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matt. 11:4, 5).

John would know, from Old Testament revelation (which is all that he had), that the supernatural signs which Christ was manifesting in connection with the message being proclaimed could have to do with *ONLY ONE DUAL SUBJECT — Israel and the kingdom*.

Thus, John, though evidently not understanding the direction things had taken in Christ's ministry, *WOULD THEN HAVE KNOWN that Jesus was the Messiah Whom the Jewish nation had been awaiting, the One Who would rule and reign*.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's article, “Signs, Wonders, Miracles.”)

John didn't understand that the suffering of Israel's Messiah must occur first. And this suffering, resulting from the nation's rejection rather than their acceptance, confused John, prompting his question.

And he would not have been alone in this type thinking. This was something not understood by the Jewish people at all.

(John though, as seen in John 1:29, 35, 36, seemed to have somewhat grasped the suffering part of Christ's complete ministry when "looking upon Jesus" ["intently looking" in v. 36, Greek text].)

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world...

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

And looking ['intently looking'] upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"

The wise men from the East had come to Jerusalem looking for a reigning Messiah. And, accordingly, Israel's Messiah had not only been born in a *regal manner* (born King) but later appeared to the nation in *this same regal respect, proclaiming a message pertaining to the Kingdom, NOT a message pertaining to the Cross.*

John 1:1, 2, 11, 14, would deal with Christ's appearance at the time of His birth, and later during His ministry, after the same fashion. He was the Word (God Himself), made flesh, Who appeared to the Jewish people after the manner seen in verse 11:

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

There is a usage of Greek words in this verse which is not seen in the English text at all. Note the word "own," appearing twice. The first is neuter, the second masculine, both plural. And the verse should be understood in this respect:

"He came unto his own things, and his own people received Him not."

Christ's Own things had to do with the manner in which He was born and conducted His ministry. *EVERYTHING WAS REGAL, having to do with A REIGNING MESSIAH, until things began to move more toward THE CROSS, with A SUFFERING MESSIAH then progressively coming more and more into view.*

His Own things, to which He came, had to do with the Davidic throne and kingdom and His Own throne in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.

And His Own people, who rejected Him, were the Jewish people

— those who, had they received Him, would have been elevated to the head of the nations and would have reigned with Him in the proffered kingdom.

1) *Christ's Ministry to Israel in the Gospels*

John the Baptist appeared as the forerunner of the Messiah, with a singular message:

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand” (Matt. 3:1, 2).

(As previously seen [Ch. I], the expression, “the kingdom of heaven,” appears thirty-two times in Matthew’s gospel and is peculiar to this gospel, with the possible exception of its appearance in some Greek manuscripts of John 3:5. Without exception, both nouns are preceded by the definite article, with “heaven” always plural. Thus, the expression, in all instances, should be translated, “the kingdom of the heavens.”

Then, the expression, “the kingdom of God,” used throughout the four gospels, must be understood *in the same sense* as “the kingdom of the heavens.” Both are used in Matthew [note, for example, the interchangeable use in Matt. 19:23, 24; cf. Matt. 10:7; Luke 10:9], and, with the possible exception of John 3:5, *only* the expression “the kingdom of God” appears in the other three gospels.

The expression, “the kingdom of God,” could refer to God’s complete universal government. But this is not the way that it is used in the gospels, or really anywhere else in Scripture [except possibly a statement such as seen in Ps. 103:19]. Scripture pertains centrally to events as they relate *to man, this earth, and 7,000 years of time — from man’s creation and fall to the end of the Messianic Kingdom*. All of this has been set in an unchangeable manner in the opening thirty-four verses of Scripture [Gen. 1:1-2:3; also in John’s gospel (1:1-2:11), which should begin the N.T.].

Both “the kingdom of the heavens” and “the kingdom of God” relate to that which was offered to, rejected by, and ultimately taken from Israel in the gospel accounts, extending into Acts. In this respect, both expressions would have to reference the same thing.

And this same kingdom, seen in the epistles [e.g., I Cor. 6:18, 19; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; I Thess. 2:12; II Thess. 1:5], is now being offered to the “nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,” seen in Matt. 21:43 and

I Peter 2:9-11 — *the one new man “in Christ,” Christians.*

Then, this kingdom, as the name in Matthew’s gospel implies, is *a heavenly kingdom* [cf. II Tim. 4:1, 18].

There are two facets of the kingdom — *heavenly* and *earthly* — introduced in Genesis in connection with the Melchizedek priesthood, then seen throughout subsequent Scripture [Gen. 14:18-20; cf. Gen. 22:17, 18; 26:3, 4; 28:3, 4, 12-15; Gal. 3:29].

That taken from Israel in Matt. 21:43 is the same thing previously offered to and rejected by Israel. *If the kingdom covenanted to David — the earthly sphere of the kingdom — was the kingdom offered to Israel, then this kingdom has been taken from Israel, with Israel, following that time, having NO national regal future, along with the fact that numerous O.T. prophecies having to do with a regal future for Israel would FAIL of fulfillment.*

But, if *the heavenly sphere of the kingdom* was the facet of the kingdom previously offered to, rejected by, and taken from Israel — exactly as seen beginning in Matthew — *then EVERYTHING falls into place relative to both Israel and the calling into existence of the Church* [“Abraham’s seed” (through positionally being “in Christ”), and “heirs according to the promise” (*heavenly*, not *earthly*, cf. Gal. 3:26-29)], *called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected.*

BOTH Israel and the Church, accordingly, have a prophesied regal future. “Israel’s” future has to do with the Davidic kingdom, the earthly sphere of the kingdom [as the restored wife of Jehovah]. And “the Church’s” future has to do with the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, occupying regal positions as co-heirs with Christ in the heavens over the earth [as His wife].

Note that Christ and His co-heirs [the “called out” from among those being saved (the “called”) during the present dispensation] will replace the earth’s present rulers — Satan and his angels — who rule through the Gentile nations from a place in the heavens [Dan. 10:12-20].

And, in this respect, our present warfare, under Christ, relative to the coming inheritance is *against the incumbent inhabitants, rulers [the incumbent “principalities...powers”], in these heavenly places*, just as the Israelites warfare, under Moses, was *against the nations inhabiting and controlling the land of their inheritance* [cf. Num. 13:26-30; Eph. 6:12ff].

Christ will rule both from His Own throne in the heavens with His co-heirs and on earth from David’s throne in the midst of a converted and restored Jewish nation [Joel 2:27-32; Luke 1:32, 33; Rev. 3:21].

Looking at the matter any other way will result in some form of skewed doctrine concerning Israel, the Church, and the Kingdom.)

With the preceding in view, note that the message seen throughout the four gospels was *a message directed to Israel, and this message concerned THE KINGDOM (the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, NOT the earthly).*

This message began to be proclaimed by John the Baptist, then by Christ, then by the Twelve, and later by the Seventy. *And as previously seen, it was a message for ISRAEL ALONE — NOT for the Samaritans (a mixed race, resulting from intermarriages between Jews and Gentiles [two separate creations]); NOR was it for the Gentiles.*

The message, though a salvation message, *had NOTHING to do with salvation by grace.* It had to do with *salvation, deliverance, in relation to A PROFFERED KINGDOM for a people who were already saved.*

(Something must be clearly understood at this point, else one can only become hopelessly confused concerning what is involved in that proclaimed to Israel by John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy.

Everything in the gospels, save late in this period when the Cross began coming more and more into view, has to do with the subject at hand — *the proffered kingdom and life or non-life therein.*

And even the Cross would have to do with the proffered kingdom, for there are two preachings of the Cross — one for the unsaved, the other for the saved [*ref. the author's article, "The Preaching of the Cross"*].

Salvation [deliverance] and blessings for individuals in the gospels had to do with THE PROFFERED KINGDOM; and the opposite, no salvation [no deliverance] and no blessings for individuals — resulting from rejection — had to do with THE PROFFERED KINGDOM as well.

Eternal verities — eternal salvation, eternal damnation — *ARE NOT, THEY CANNOT BE, in view, at any time, through the proclamation of this message throughout the gospels.*

And any attempt to read eternal verities rather than the proffered kingdom into this message at any time throughout the four gospels, which is quite often attempted, particularly with John's gospel, will only militate against and destroy that which is clearly stated and taught.

Asaved people are being dealt with throughout the gospel accounts, and the salvation or loss in view *HAS TO BE understood in relation to THE SUBJECT AT HAND, which is THE KINGDOM.*

The Jewish people did not reject Christ as their Paschal Lamb. Rather, they rejected Christ as *their King*, claiming before Pilate to have

no king but Caesar.

[Those comprising the Jewish nation *were dealt with (beginning with John, then Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy pertaining to the offer of the kingdom, then the Disciples and others in Acts pertaining to the re-offer of the kingdom) as A PEOPLE WHO HAD ALREADY BEEN SAVED*, though nothing is said about this per se. It is seemingly taken for granted that the reader would KNOW and UNDERSTAND this from the past history of the nation, with the whole matter NOT even being an issue in the subject at hand.

Those comprising the Jewish nation in the gospel accounts and in Acts are simply seen as a people who were continuing to sacrifice the paschal lamb year after year (sacrifices preceding Calvary), as seen 1,500 years prior to this time in the camp of Israel during Moses' day. *And they would have been just as saved — saved on the same basis — as the generation during Moses' day, or generations of Jews continuing to sacrifice the paschal lamb year after year at any other time in between.*

And, again, if one wants a *basis* for God recognizing efficacy in these slain lambs, that can be seen in Rev. 13:8].)

To illustrate the preceding in connection with how it is being completely ignored and erroneously dealt with in Christendom today, *note the account of Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night in John 3:1ff.*

The subject matter had to do with "signs," in connection with the message being proclaimed.

And Christ *remained* with the subject matter which Nicodemus had introduced, dealing with the proffered kingdom and the absolute necessity for an individual, in relation to understanding the message being proclaimed and entering the kingdom being offered, *to be brought forth from above rather than from below.*

NONE of this has anything whatsoever to do with salvation by grace through faith. Rather, ALL of it has to do with the message being proclaimed to Israel in relation to the kingdom. Again, note the reference to "signs" and "the kingdom of God" in John 3:1-5.

Nicodemus *DIDN'T* approach Christ with any type statement or question dealing with eternal salvation. Why should he? *Eternal salvation was already A SETTLED MATTER among those comprising the Jewish nation, to whom Christ came. And, accordingly, in response,*

Christ remained with the subject at hand — *signs, and a message to Israel concerning the proffered kingdom.*

And what the whole of Christendom, over decades of time, has done with this account in John 3:1ff, is nothing short of a tragedy in Biblical interpretation. Scripture has been lifted from its context and made to deal with something which it doesn't deal with at all, *which is NEVER good in Biblical interpretation. Doing so will ALWAYS result in more misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Error simply DOES NOT produce truth. Error CAN ONLY produce more error.*

(For additional information on John 3:1ff, refer to Chapters VII-IX in the author's book, *Signs in John's Gospel.*)

And John 3:1ff is just one of numerous texts in the gospels where things of the preceding nature have been done.

Using a couple of other texts to illustrate what is being done in Christendom to aid in closing the gospel accounts to any proper understanding of the subject matter at hand, note two sections of Scripture, again in John's gospel (for this is the gospel used over and over by individuals, *attempting to make large parts of this gospel relate to the gospel of grace, removing the gospel from its proper place and setting among the other three*):

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever [*lit.*, 'he shall live with respect to the age']: and the bread that I will give is my flesh..."

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life [*lit.*, 'hath age-lasting life']; and I will raise him up at the last day..."

This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever [*lit.*, 'shall live with respect to the age']" (John 6:51a-54, 58).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death [*lit.*, 'he certainly will not see death with respect to the age'].

Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil.

Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death [*lit.*, 'he certainly will not taste of death with respect to the age']" (John 8:51, 52; cf. John 11:26).

The preceding sections of Scripture are similar passages, one from the sixth chapter of John and the other from the eighth chapter. These two sections have been singled out to illustrate, from two standpoints (a general misunderstanding of the gospels, and a mistranslation of the text), what is being done with interpretation in the gospels, which, in turn, extends over into interpretation in the Book of Acts and the epistles.

That is to say, go wrong on interpretation in the gospels, and, with a skewed foundation, you can only go wrong on interpretation in the Book of Acts and in the epistles.

(Or, matters could, and should, be carried back behind the gospels to the Old Testament, particularly to Moses, where the beginning foundational data for any Biblical doctrine can be found.

In short, one doesn't begin in the gospels, but in Moses. That seen in the gospels MUST be understood in the light of that first seen in Moses.)

Note the words "forever," "eternal," and "never" in the preceding sections of Scripture from John's gospel (6:51, 54, 58; 8:51, 52). These words are either translations of or are inseparably connected with the two Greek words translated "forever," "eternal," or "everlasting" throughout the New Testament — *aion* and *aionios*. The former is a noun, and the latter is the adjective form of the noun, both meaning and referring to exactly the same thing.

The translation problem arises from the fact that neither word means "eternal," and both have been indiscriminately translated "forever," "eternal," or "everlasting" throughout the New Testament (*aion* has also been translated "world" a number of times). Both words have to do with *a period of time*, with the length of that time to be determined by its contextual usage, with the words often referencing *an age*, for *a future age* is the "time" which the proclaimed message deals with in the four gospels.

That is to say, "time" comprising *the Messianic Era* — *the coming age* — when the proffered kingdom would be realized, was

inseparably connected with the subject at hand. Thus, *aion* and *aionios*, in this respect, are used over and over in the gospels to reference “time” which will exist during THIS ERA. And both words should be translated accordingly, which is “age,” NOT eternal.

Combining this mistranslation of *aion* and *aionios* with a non-understanding of the subject matter being dealt with throughout the gospels, extending into Acts and the epistles — which is exactly what can be seen throughout much of Christendom today — a PERFECT SCENARIO for disaster in Biblical interpretation CAN ONLY EXIST, starting with the gospels.

(For extensive information on *aion* and *aionios*, refer to the author’s article, “Aion, Aionios.” This six-page article has been taken from Marvin R. Vincent’s work on the subject over 100 years ago [from his four-volume set, titled, *Word Studies in the New Testament*].

On the quoted verses from John 6, 8, the Greek expression, *eis ton aiona* [“with respect to the age” (dealt with in Vincent’s work)], is used in 6:51, 58; 8:51, 52 and *aionios* [“age-lasting”] is used in 6:58.

As well, in the next section of this article, parts of John 4:14-40 will be dealt with. Both *eis ton aiona* and *aionios* appear in v. 14, and *aionios* appears again in v. 36.

[Scripture deals centrally with “TIME,” not with eternity. This is the way matters are set forth at the beginning in Genesis, or at the beginning in John’s gospel, which should begin the New Testament, not Matthew — a foundational, septenary structure seen beginning both Testaments.

That is to say, The WHOLE of Scripture, as revealed in the opening part of each Testament, moves toward a seventh day, a seventh 1,000-year period, NOT toward eternity. Eternity, an endless array of ages — which lies beyond this septenary structure upon which the WHOLE of Scripture rests — comes into view ONLY AFTER the seven days, ONLY AFTER the 7,000 years. Both Testaments BEGIN and CONTINUE in this manner.

And this will provide the evident reason why neither the Hebrew text of the Old Testament nor the Greek text of the New Testament uses a word for “eternal,” “everlasting.” Both Testaments use words which have to do with “TIME” — ages, periods of time, etc.

Olam is the main word used in this manner in the Hebrew Old Testament; and *aión*, with its adjective, *aiónios*, is the main word used in this manner in the Greek New Testament.

Note also, in the preceding respect, that even salvation by grace *CAN ONLY have to do, first and foremost, with this septenary structure, though in its larger scope moves into the ages beyond*].)

The subjects under discussion in the quoted verses from John chapters six and eight are related subjects in perfect keeping with the subject matter seen throughout the gospels, both present and future. They have to do with both *an intake and assimilation of the Word* (6:51-58), and *keeping the Lord's commandments* (8:51, 52).

There is a literal eating of *the living bread, which is His flesh, and a drinking of His blood* (the Word made flesh [John 1:1, 2, 14]), but this is done in a different type literal manner other than partaking of His physical body and blood. It is accomplished through an intake and assimilation of the Word in another form, in written form (ch. 6).

And, of course, keeping the Lord's commandments in this written form of the Word would need no explanation (ch. 8).

And it should also require no explanation to see that none of that seen in these two sections can have anything to do with a person's eternal salvation, a manner in which the verses are often interpreted and used.

Rather, that seen in these verses *has to do with actions undertaken by those who have already been saved, with a view to the kingdom out ahead* (cf. Acts 20:25-32).

Then, as well, as would be self-explanatory, *the preceding CAN ONLY BE SEEN as part and parcel with the message which was being proclaimed to Israel throughout the ministries of John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy, with a view to the coming age, the Messianic Era.*

But note what has been done with these two sections of Scripture by trying to read eternal verities and the gospel of grace into them, which is the same thing seen in John 3:1ff and numerous other places in not only John's gospel but the other three gospels as well, not to mention the Book of Acts and the epistles.

It is little wonder that people are confused and the Churches

of the land have had to resort to the ways of the world to attract individuals or even keep their members.

Any semblance of correct interpretation has been thrown to the winds, with even *a skewed salvation message* often replacing that actually taught in the text (for the salvation message has to draw from that stated in the text, *invariably leaving the proclaimed message out of line with that actually taught in the text*).

2) Christ's Ministry Passing through Samaria in John 4

Now, let's look at something a little different in John's gospel but often mishandled in a similar respect to that seen in the previous material.

Christ, at a time during the course of His ministry, as seen in John 4, took His disciples and traveled from Judaea to Galilee, taking the more direct route, though less traveled, through Samaria.

Many Jews of that day, traveling between Judaea and Galilee, one way or the other, to avoid any contact with the Samaritans, would cross the Jordan River, travel the distance required to bypass Samaria, then re-cross the river once north or south of Samaria.

But Christ chose to take His disciples through Samaria rather than bypass this region on the east side of Jordan.

And since Christ specifically told His disciples at the time He subsequently commissioned them *to NOT go to the Samaritans with the message being proclaimed to Israel*, why did He do this?

And why did He have dealings with the Samaritans en route (the woman at Jacob's well [which surprised His disciples], and later men whom she had told about the encounter)?

And what did these dealings involve?

Note a number of verses from John chapter four, picking up in the middle of Christ's conversation with the woman at Jacob's well:

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst [*lit.*, 'certainly will not thirst with respect to the age']; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life [*lit.*, 'water springing up with respect to age-lasting life'].

The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw...

And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

Then they went out of the city, and came unto him...

And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal [*lit.*, 'gathereth fruit with respect to age-lasting life' (*ref.* v. 14): that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together...

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days" (John 4:14, 15, 27-30, 36, 39, 40).

Christ spent *two days* in Samaria, then left Samaria and went into Galilee.

Or, to state that another way, Christ spent *two days* with those associated more with the Gentiles than with the Jews, then left and went back to a work among the Jews.

Or, to state that another way yet, Christ is presently spending *2,000 years* with the Gentiles, and following these *2,000 years* He will leave the Gentiles and return to a work among the Jews.

The preceding would present one reason why Christ went through Samaria. The same spiritual lessons could not have been taught had He crossed and traveled on the east side of Jordan, bypassing Samaria, though these same truths are seen other places in Scripture.

Then there is another evident reason. Though Christ and His disciples *COULD NOT, at this time, take the same message to the Samaritans that was being proclaimed to Israel*, the day was not far removed when *Jewish evangelists WOULD take this message to not only the Samaritans but the nations worldwide*, which would reflect on the previously discussed type — *two days, THEN, NOT BEFORE, the third day* (for, though a first fruit of this was fulfilled during the Acts period [33 AD to about 62 AD], and will be fulfilled during

the coming Tribulation, the main harvest fulfillment awaits the third day, the Messianic Era [*ref. the next section of this article*]).

And, with the preceding in view, with the subject matter which Christ dealt with in Samaria, He evidently was looking more toward events of a future day than the present. This is something which can easily be seen from that which Christ both dealt with and didn't deal with, that uppermost on the minds of the Samaritans, and the fact that the Samaritans *COULD NOT be dealt with at this time relative to the subject being discussed but WOULD BE in a position to be dealt with after this manner in the immediate future.*

Several things should be noted about Christ's encounter with the woman at Jacob's well and then the men in a nearby city (Sychar) whom she had told.

First, *there is NO proclamation of the same message to the Samaritans which Christ and His disciples had been carrying to Israel — "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand." And insofar as the record is concerned, only Christ, not His disciples, spoke to the Samaritans.*

Second, the Samaritans recognized Christ after the same manner in which He was presenting Himself to the Jewish nation, the manner in which believing Jews recognized Him — *as their Messiah, in a regal respect, as the One Who would rule and reign.* And, *EVERYTHING* which Christ had to say to the Samaritans was in *this same regal respect, with any thoughts of salvation having to be looked upon in this SAME manner — NOT relative to eternal life but life in the kingdom.*

Note verses four and fourteen in the previously quoted text from John 4 where *aion* and *aionios* have been properly translated. Christ, speaking to the Samaritans, told them some of the same basic things about the kingdom which He was telling the Jews, but *there was NOTHING in anything which He had to say while in Samaria about national repentance in relation to a proffered kingdom.*

There COULDN'T BE! This was a message for ISRAEL ALONE at this time.

(In John 4:14, "a well of water springing up into age-lasting life," *EXACTLY* the same thing is being dealt with as seen in John 6:51-58 — *eating of the living bread, which is His flesh, and drinking of His blood, with*

aion and *aionios* used in both sections in connection with the “time” when this would occur — a present eating and drinking [during the present age], with the results to be realized in the coming age.

Note in the preceding respect that “time” dealt with by the Greek word *aionios* in v. 36 has to do with both *wages* [rewards — exact payment for services rendered in the house] and *fruit-bearing*.

If eternal verities are in view, as seen when translating *aionios* as “eternal,” a major, insurmountable problem exists, for *wages* and *fruit bearing* can have *NOTHING* to do with eternal salvation. That would be bringing works over into a realm where works *CANNOT* exist.

But, if *aionios* is understood as “age-lasting” [which could only have been uppermost in the thinking of the Samaritans, in line with Christ’s message to them — *i.e.*, the coming age, the Messianic Era], then *EVERYTHING* falls into place.

[It is widely taught that “rewards” are *eternal* rather than *millennial* in nature (in line with the erroneous English rendering of “eternal” in the preceding texts).

However, rewards are NEVER dealt with in an eternal respect in Scripture. Rewards (or loss) are ALWAYS dealt with in relation to the coming age (the coming aion). And any teaching on rewards MUST be kept in line with the septenary structure which begins both Testaments (with John occupying its proper place, beginning the N.T.), to be realized on the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period, the coming aion.

To carry matters regarding rewards beyond this seventh day, this seventh millennium, is to carry matters beyond the point Scripture takes them.

Comparing Scripture with Scripture, this is clearly seen any place that the subject is dealt with — *e.g.*, note the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds in Matt. 25 and Luke 19, a corrected rendering of the text in John 6, II Thess. 1:7-10 (with *aionios* translated correctly in v. 9), or the seven overcomer’s promises in Rev. 2, 3 (with *ALL* seen to be *MILLENNIAL* in their scope of fulfillment).

Numerous scenes in the preceding Scriptures cannot exist beyond the Millennium during the eternal ages, particularly evident in several of the overcomer’s promises in Rev. 2, 3.

Refer to the author’s article, “Rewards and/or Loss”].)

The Samaritans simply could not be dealt with at this time in the same manner that Christ and the disciples were dealing with

the Jews. Thus, Christ could go no further than that seen in the text in His dealings with the Samaritans.

A continuance of this matter can be seen in the following section of this article.

Christ's Post-Resurrection Ministry and Beyond

After Christ had been raised from the dead He spent forty days with His disciples (a complete period of time), teaching them things pertaining to “the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:1-3).

Then, in verses 4-8, He dealt with what was about to occur ten days later (*another complete period of time*) in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1ff).

Following Christ's final instructions to the disciples, He was taken up from them, into “a cloud” — evidently *the Glory of God*, for up to the time of His ascension *there had been NO indication that any type covering of Glory enswathed His resurrection body; and He, at this time, was “received up into glory”* (Acts 1:9ff; cf. I Tim. 3:16).

(Individuals often talk about Christ being raised in a *glorified body* [*lit.*, “His body of Glory,” Phil. 3:21], with Christians yet future to be raised, or removed without dying, *in bodies of Glory as well*.)

However, that is a completely incorrect way to view the matter. Christ was raised in what Scripture calls “a spiritual body,” as opposed to “a natural [soulical] body,” which He had possessed throughout His earthly ministry, the same body which hung on the Cross (I Cor. 15:43-49). Both were the same physical body of flesh and bones, but the life-giving, animating principle of the “natural body” was *the blood* (Lev. 17:11), and of the “spiritual body” *the Spirit*.

And *the Glory, which is a covering of the body, enswathing the body*, was evidently no more connected with His spiritual body at the time He came out of the tomb than it was with His natural body at the time He had been placed in the tomb.

[There is no indication that anyone, during the forty days of His post-resurrection ministry, saw any difference between His bodily appearance before His crucifixion and following His resurrection. The disciples en route to Emmaus, seeing Him, thought that He was just another Jew. *His appearance was NO different*.

But note His appearance once His body had been enswathed in Glory.

Paul, en route to Damascus was blinded (Acts 9:3ff), later describing *the blinding "light"* that he saw when Christ appeared to him (evidently *Christ's Glory*), as *brighter than the noon-day sun* (Acts 22:6ff; 26:13ff). Or note His appearance in Rev. 1:12-18, showing Christ as Christians at the judgment seat will see Him yet future — "*...his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*"

This covering of Glory is what Adam and Eve lost at the time of the fall, attempting to replace it with fig-leaf aprons (Gen. 3:7). And *this covering of Glory* is what Christ's co-heirs will one day be enswathed in during Christ's coming reign].

Christ's ability to move at will from place to place, as seen following His resurrection, could only have had to do with *the spiritual aspect of His body* which He possessed following His resurrection, not the Glory, for there was evidently *NO Glory connected with His body at this time.*

Then, beyond that, Christians will be raised from the dead or removed from the earth alive in the same manner in which Christ was raised from the dead — *in spiritual bodies, apart from the Glory* [Phil 3:20, 21]. The body being enswathed in Glory comes into the matter later, having to do with Christ and His co-heirs subsequently occupying regal positions in the kingdom.)

During these forty post-resurrection days, Scripture records certain events which occurred as Christ and His disciples traveled about the country, while He taught them.

He was seen in His resurrection body by a great number of individuals, though aside from appearances to women near the tomb, the two disciples en route to Emmaus, and His disciples a number of times, nothing about these appearances is recorded in the gospels. Appearing to numerous other unnamed individuals (*e.g.*, above 500 at one time) was recorded some years later by Paul in I Cor. 15:5-7.

In what has been recorded, time during Christ's post-resurrection ministry was spent on *ONE major thing* — on that which is often called "the Great Commission," though little understood.

This commission has to do with that which began on the day of Pentecost and lasted throughout the Acts period, during the time when the kingdom was being re-offered to Israel.

The commission has NOTHING to do with the Church per se throughout the dispensation. But that seen in the commission will

once again be in effect and realized *yet future during the Tribulation (the 144,000 Jewish evangelists) and through a restored Jewish nation during the Messianic Era.*

Parts of this commission can be seen toward or at the end of the three synoptic gospels and in the first chapter of Acts (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:47, 48; Acts 1:8). Each of the four parts is worded in a different manner, given at different times during Christ's forty-day, post-resurrection ministry to His disciples; and the four together can only form the different parts of one commission, similar to the gospel writers recording four different parts to the statement which Pilate placed (or had placed, though he wrote or dictated the words) above Christ's head at the time of His crucifixion, together forming the complete statement (Matt. 27:37; Mark. 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19).

This commission, in the Acts period, was inseparably connected with the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, portending Israel's acceptance, with Messianic conditions following.

Then, once the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel ceased, the fulfillment of this commission, as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, which began to be fulfilled in Acts 2 and continued throughout the Acts period, was set aside for the remainder of the dispensation.

The fulfillment of this commission, as previously stated, *has NOTHING to do with the Church.* Rather, *it has to do with the kingdom, Joel's prophecy, Israel, and the nations.*

It is only within the scope of Joel's prophecy and this commission that the message can be carried beyond Jerusalem and Judaea to Samaria and the nations, which is the reason for Christ's command to His disciples concerning the Samaritans in Matt. 10 and that seen concerning the manner in which Christ dealt with the Samaritans in John 4.

(The whole of the preceding matter regarding *the kingdom, Pentecost, Israel, and the nations* has been dealt with at length in the author's book, *The Acts Period*

Also, see the author's book, *O Sleeper! Arise, Call!* The place which the Church occupies during and following the Acts period is dealt with in this material in the book as well.

Refer particularly to Chapters IX-XI, pp. 127-186, in this book. Other related things are discussed in these three chapters, but they deal mainly with the subject at hand, presenting matters from the standpoint of Jewish history seen 2,000 years ago and typology from Jewish history seen 2,800 years ago, all drawn from the Word.)