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a *Grace Notes* course

## **Life of Christ 300**

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### **Lesson 303**

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### **Contents**

<b>Jesus' Mother and Brothers .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Parables, An Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Parable of the Sower .....</b>	<b>5</b>

## Jesus' Mother and Brothers

Matthew 12:46-50

“(46) While He is still speaking to the crowd, behold His mother and His brothers were standing outside seeking to speak to Him. (47) And someone said to Him, ‘Behold your mother and your brothers stand outside seeking to speak to you.’ (48) And after formulating an answer, He said to the one speaking to Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ (49) And extending His hand upon His mother He said, ‘Behold my mother and my brothers. (50) For whoever might do the will of My Father Who is in heaven, He is my brother and sister and mother.’”

Mark 3:31-35

“(31) And His mother and His brothers came, and standing outside they sent to Him calling Him. (32) And a crowd was sitting down around Him, and they said to Him, ‘Behold your mother and your brothers are outside seeking You.’ (33) And after formulating an answer He says to them, ‘Who are my mother and brothers?’ (34) And looking around at those sitting around Him in a circle, He says, ‘Behold, my mother and my brothers. (35) Whoever does the will of God, this one is my brother and sister and mother.’

Luke 8:19-21

“(19) And His mother and brothers appeared to His side and they were unable to meet because of the crowd. (20) But he announced to Him, ‘Your mother and Your brothers stand outside, wishing to see You. (21) After formulating an answer He said to them, ‘My mother and my brothers: they are hearing and doing the Word of God.’”

Exposition.

The historical record benefits in a few ways from a harmony. You can see where it was the intent of the Holy Spirit to produce a version with complete details, and indeed the task was done.

This little passage easily breaks down into two parts: the situation and reply.

The situation is this: “While He was still speaking to the crowd, behold His mother and His brothers were standing outside seeking to speak to Him, and they were unable to meet because of the

crowd. And the crowd sat down around Him. His mother and brothers sent to Him, and someone announced to Him, ‘Behold your mother and brothers are outside seeking to speak to you.’”

This is a continuation of the last passage.

Christ went into a house, Mark 3:20.

Many people left, famished, Mark 3:21.

Christ debated with the Scribes and Pharisees over the nature of the exorcism He had performed through the power of the Spirit.

And now He is still there in that same house.

While He is still speaking, telling the Scribes and Pharisees the illustration of the demon-possessed man, Christ’s mother and His brothers came up to the house.

But the crowd was around the house, and in the house, and so they were quite unable to reach Him.

For what reason they wanted to see Him, it is not clear; but they have traveled to see their most famous family member.

Perhaps just a friendly family visit.

Perhaps to see for themselves what miracles He was doing.

The crowd was sitting down around Him. You can see in a large room of the house, Christ standing in the middle, and a crowd sitting down around Him. Most are Scribes and Pharisees.

So His mother and brothers send to Him. A messenger comes into the house from outside, and announces to Him, “Behold, your mother and brothers are outside seeking to speak to you.’

The last reference to Christ’s family occurred in Luke 4:16-31, or so it is assumed. In that passage, Christ returned to Nazareth and was rejected. It was His hometown, and so He certainly would have seen His family then. That was Autumn of 27 AD It is now likely mid to late 28 AD, so approximately a year has passed.

But Christ did indeed think about His mother. This is in evidence when He heals the widow’s son at Nain, Luke 7:11-17.

Of course these people of Christ’s family are no slouches.

Mary is a really wonderful believer; of her we already have some history.

Mark 6:3 names four brothers of Christ - James and Joses and Judas and Simon.

John 7:1-13 portrays Jesus going to the feast of booths; this would be about one year from the time of our own passage, because the feast of booths is an October feast.

(1) Verse three of that chapter has Jesus' brothers attempting to persuade Him to do something against the will of God.

(2) Verse five comes out and says that not even His brothers were believing in Him.

But Acts 1:14 has Mary and the brothers of Jesus praying together immediately after the ascension.

And indeed it was appropriate for James the brother of Jesus to write the very first book of the New Testament.

But at this time, it seems likely that Christ's family shares the unbelief of the town of Nazareth. Indeed Christ would say so in just a few short weeks.

Mark 6:4, "And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his home town and among his own relatives and in his own household.'

The reply is this: "And after formulating an answer He said to them, 'Who is My mother, and who are my brothers? And looking around at those sitting around Him in a circle while extending His hand upon His mother He said, 'Behold, My mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of My Father Who is in heaven, this one is my brother and sister and mother. My mother and my brothers: they are hearing and doing the Word of God.'"

Christ thought about this; He formulated an answer. Even with so mundane an event as a family visit.

But this was a difficult family visit, because they did not believe in Him. It is quite possible within the context of Mark 6:4 that even His own mother had strayed from belief in Him under the peer pressure of her fellow townsmen and women.

Many of you may also come from families that do not believe; from having spouses and children and parents and brothers and sisters who do not believe as you do.

Our Lord confronted this same challenge in life.

(1) Indeed, Hebrews 2:17-18 says, "(17) Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to propitiation for the sins of the people. (18) For since He himself was tempted in that which he has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."

(2) Hebrews 4:15-16 follows up with this, "(15) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. (16) Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Many people find that the unbelief of their families and loved ones is one of the most heartbreaking challenges in life. Christ went through this, and in the end, some at least remained faithful.

There are certain things that you can do to remain faithful to God and give the best possible witness to your family.

(1) Fulfill God's plan for your life by keeping your priorities straight. An unbelieving family is one of the greatest distractions that this life might offer.

(a) For Christ to see His brothers and maybe even His mother in an unbelieving state must have been emotional and distracting for Him. He did right by stating what He is about to state in our study.

(b) And you will at least receive vindication for your right priorities; if not now, then certainly before the throne of grace in eternity.

(2) Pray for your family; ask God to intervene in their lives in dynamic ways so that they understand His presence in their lives. And do not give up in these prayers. The timing may not be right for years and years.

(3) Remind yourself again and again that attitude is the greatest argument.

(a) As a wife you must apply 1 Peter 3:1-6: “(1) Likewise, you women, obey your own husbands, in order that also if any [of them] disobey the word, through the conduct of their wives they might be won without a word, (2) after observing in respect your pure behavior - (3) concerning which: do not let your adornment be external, the braiding of hair and the wearing of gold or wearing of clothes, (4) but [let it be] the hidden person of the heart in the imperishable quality of a humble and relaxing spirit, who is of great value in the presence of God. (5) For so [it was] also when the holy women who hoped unto God were adorning themselves by remaining under the authority of their own husbands - (6) like Sarah submitted to Abraham, calling Him Lord, whose children you become by doing good and not fearing a single fear.”

- You can easily perceive that Peter is preaching attitude.

- This is especially emphasized by the exhortation of verse one, ‘they might be won without a word.’ This is Peter’s objective for husbands through the Holy Spirit.

- Winning someone without saying a word is a fantastic accomplishment indeed. It is done through observation; the man observes the pure behavior of his wife, her inner beauty, and is convinced of the virtues of the Christian way of life.

- So the woman’s inner beauty is that she has a humble and relaxing spirit, that is, mental attitude. She is a great person for her husband to be around.

(b) As a husband you must apply 1 Peter 3:7: “You husbands likewise, live together [with your wives] according to a fact: pay honor as with a female weaker vessel, so also with a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers might not be hindered.”

- The husband’s winning attitude is described by Peter as paying honor.

- You believing husbands are to honor your wives (believing or unbelieving) as the gift from God that she is.

- The woman is the first gift to man chronologically; she precedes even Christ according to a time-reckoning.

- She is the second most important gift according to importance. Therefore she is to be honored!

(c) As children you must apply Ephesians 6:1-3: “(1) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), (3) so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.”

(d) As parents you must apply Ephesians 6:4: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

(4) Look for the right time and the right words to speak, if the opportunity should present itself.

(a) The Holy Spirit will guide you in what to say, according to what truth you have accumulated and inculcated in your life.

(b) But whatever is spoken must stay within the guidelines of attitude!

Therefore Christ asks a question to get the ball rolling: “Who are my mother and my brothers?”

This question is rhetorical by nature; Christ does not expect to hear an answer from anyone in the crowd.

But you see, neither does Christ expect anyone to have an answer. It is really the kind of question that is designed to stimulate thought. It is designed so that the crowd will say, ‘Huh? Whaddya mean?’

When you ask a question that has no clear answer, and even would seem like a really weird question, it catches the attention of the audience, and makes them think about where you are going with the true answer.

Matthew 12:49 contains an important detail: Christ extended His hand upon His mother. She at least has entered the room, if not His brothers as well.

By performing this small gesture, our Lord includes Mary in the circle of those who are spiritually nominated into His family.

But not his brothers. And the other passages about His brothers are not good. They at least for now are not a part of His spiritual family. They would certainly be later.

And then Christ opens up His family to a much wider interpretation - all who do the will of His Father, all who hear the word of God and do it.

Look at how Christ interprets doing the will of God; it is hearing the word of God and doing it.

Let's turn to Romans 12 and see how the first two verses of this chapter corroborate Christ's take on the will of God.

This wider interpretation is interesting and inspiring.

- (1) Christ communicates the principle that Spirit and truth are thicker than blood.
- (2) That our true and lasting and eternal family has to do with spiritual matters.
- (3) There is the family of all believers, and then there is even the immediate family of mature believers.
- (4) The writers of the New Testament stayed faithful to this definition, and the 'brethren' became a designation for Christians. It was common for believers of the first century to address one another as 'brother' and 'sister.'
- (5) Although the concept is often abused, and commonly comes across as false and silly, at least the idea that we are spiritually related to Christ should remain.
  - (a) And remember, this is not just about being a Christian; the will of God covers so much more than that.
  - (b) The will of God has more to do with maturity than just simple belief in Jesus Christ, although that has its part in God's will, too.
- (6) Understanding yourself as spiritually related to Christ should create a sense of esprit de corps in you.
  - (a) It should stand as motivation to continue your momentum, since spiritual momentum unto maturity is the real standard for being a brother and sister of Christ's.

(b) It should give you confidence, because Christ successfully completely His battery of tests. He was the prototype, and His testing was severe. If He did it, you can do it too.

(c) It should build up a sense of self-esteem inside of you.

### Parables, An Introduction

Matthew 13:1-3a; Mark 4:1-2; Luke 8:4

Matthew 13:1-3a, "(1) At that time, Jesus, after leaving the house, was sitting by the sea; (2) And many crowds were gathered to Him, so that after embarking into a boat He sat down, and all the crowd had sat upon the shore. (3) And He spoke many things to them in parables.

Mark 4:1-2, "(1) And He began to teach again beside the sea; and a large crowd gathered to him, so that after embarking into a boat He sat on the sea, and all the crowd was on the land next to the sea. (2) And He taught them many things in parables and He said to them in His teaching..."

Luke 8:4, "And when a large crowd was coming together and going around to each city with Him, He said through a parable..."

Exposition.

The description is so simple that little commentary is necessary.

Even after the incident with the Pharisees over demon possession, and their attempt to slander His ministry, Christ apparently has more crowds than ever.

He is still in the region of the Sea of Galilee, and indeed this incident takes place near the shore of that sea.

But there is a significant switch in teaching style here that deserves comment. He begins to teach in parables.

A parable is a simple story used to illustrate a principle of doctrine. It represents a simplification of that principle for the sake of communication. As such, it is certainly a compromise.

A parable is a compromise because it increases the time allotted to teach the doctrine; it focuses on a single principle within that doctrine. It is not

nearly as time efficient as teaching a number of principles point by point.

A parable is a compromise because it is seldom a perfect fit. Analogies always have their limits.

This is not the first time that Christ has employed parables, but He does so somewhat sparingly.

It is apparent that Christ employs rhetoric all the time. "Rhetoric is the art of oratory, especially the persuasive use of language to influence the thoughts and actions of listeners." - The American Heritage Dictionary.

The parable may be a sub-category of rhetoric, but it is generally 'dumbed down' so that it is a device that can communicate to everyone.

And there is nothing wrong with such a strategy in evangelization and in teaching Christian basics.

But in the pursuit of spiritual maturity, illustrating everything is quite inefficient, and slows the advance of those who do not need the illustrations in the first place.

You will observe that Christ employs the parable often, and it is appropriate to His audience. But observe also how less common it is for the writers of the epistles to do so. And Luke's history in Acts has the parable even less often.

The parable was a very popular mode of communication among the Jewish scholars of Christ's day.

Now in the modern science of homiletics, that is, the public speaking of sermons, there is generally more emphasis on the parable than is necessary.

There should be a strong emphasis on rhetoric and effective public speaking.

But taking the time to illustrate every principle in every sermon almost makes certain their immaturity.

Imagine forty minutes a week of Bible teaching, and perhaps fifteen or twenty or more minutes of that in the illustration!

There is no possibility of producing a mature believer at such a slow pace.

There is no possibility, because the intake from the cosmic system will overwhelm such a pitiful effort.

Many people get emotional about illustrations, because illustrations quite often are most effective when they play to the emotions. To remove the emotional from a person's life is a difficult and chancy surgery indeed, and yet that surgery can be spiritual life-saving.

But Jesus Christ used the parable for those who had yet to establish a spiritual autonomy.

But this would be the first time that Christ used the parable to teach kingdom information. It represents a striking departure for Him, and a recognition by Him that the people were not listening.

### **Parable of the Sower**

Matthew 13:3b-23

Mark 4:3-25

Luke 8:5-18.

The Outline.

The parable of the sower.

The seed on the road.

The seed on the rocks.

The seed on the thorns.

The seed on the good earth.

Christ's repeated proclamation.

The interrogation concerning the parables.

The identity of the inquisitors.

The big question.

The answer:

Distinctions among souls and the necessity of parables for some.

The explanation of the consequences of rejection.

The prophecy of the negative volition of Israel.

The judgment of the disciples by Christ, they are categorized in the worst way.

The blessing of sight and hearing for some.

The explanation of the parable:

The seed sown on the road.

The seed sown into the rocks.

The seed sown into the thorns.

The seed sown into good earth.

A general explanation concerning communication from God.

The consequences of hearing the word.

## II. The Exposition.

The parable of the sower.

The seed on the road: “Behold, the sower went out to sow. And while he is sowing some [seed] fell beside the road and was trampled, the birds after coming devoured them.”

We are going to save the interpretation of this parable until the end, where it receives clarity through the mind of Christ. Here, we will concentrate on the image alone.

It begins with the verb IDOU, which aims to gain the attention of the listeners. It is an imperative verb that means ‘Look.’

Now the sower goes out to sow. This is his profession, and this was a common sight in Israel. Everyone knows what Christ is talking about. It would be as though we said: “The gardener went out to mow.”

You will have to impute an ancient concept to this narrative: a man with a bag or vessel of seed, walking along and casting the seed as he goes.

For the sake of efficiency, the seed is scattered by hand with no great scientific precision.

It is not that this poor sower is particularly sloppy in what he does; it was the practice to be inexact, and even sometimes to an extreme.

EN TO SPEIREIN, is ‘while sowing.’ It is like saying, right in the middle of what he was doing... some seed fell on the road.

Luke adds the idea that the seed on the road gets trampled. An obvious inclusion that was left out by the other two chroniclers of this speech. We will see how trampling fits into the interpretation later.

But nonetheless the birds come and devour the seed.

(1) It is not just that the birds eat the seed; they devour it. The verb KATEPHAGEN makes this description.

(2) The aorist tense of this verb fits the meaning very well. The tense describes an action that occurs in a moment’s time. The bird fly onto the road and devour the seed.

(3) The verb itself means to ‘eat down.’ It has in mind an eating without the act of chewing. ‘Gobble down’ is a really good translation of the concept.

(4) So the birds come and in a moment’s time the seed is gobbled down.

(5) And notice also the modern practice of the scavenger birds to eat what is left on the road. The road is open, and with the eyesight of a bird is a really easy place to find food. The birds know to come there for that very reason.

The seed on the rocky places: “And other [seed] fell upon the rocky places where it did not have much earth, and it sprouted for a short time because it did not have depth or moisture. But after the rising of the sun it was scorched and withered because it had no root.”

On the rocky places there is a different challenge for the seed. Here there is OUK GEN POLLEN, ‘not much soil.’

The adverb EUTHEOS depicts the very temporary nature of this plant. It is the adverb ‘immediately.’ But here it is really ‘for just a moment.’ Notice the cause of the action - it did not have much earth.

So the plant does not spring up quickly because it has so little soil; rather it springs up for a very short time. Its span of life is brief indeed.

Two accounts add reasons of a different kind; depth and moisture. Well really it is this: the lack of soil does not allow the root to grow and expand, so that there is an absence of moisture. The one results in the other.

The rising of the sun scorches and then withers the new plant. It is destroyed.

This happens every spring when I bring out all the flowers that I have nursed along in my basement through the winter. After investing months of work to produce seedlings, the sun hits them, and poof! They are gone in a few hours’ time.

The seed in the thorns: “And others fell upon the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them.”



This is a little more straightforward, and all of the accounts are in complete agreement as to the nature of the hazard.

The thorns choke the new plant; they steal its soil, they steal its water, they steal its sun. Because it is a young plant, it cannot compete.

“And still others fell upon the good earth and bore fruit, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty.”

But of course the sower is bound to hit the right soil eventually, especially since that is his intent.

And the seed that falls on the good earth, the earth with the right amount of sunlight, rich with nutrients and the right amount of water - that seed is going to produce a healthy plant.

And the healthy plant always bears fruit.

Christ says that the plants produce varying amounts of fruit, but they do indeed produce fruit.

Christ’s repeated proclamation: “And while saying these things, He was calling out, ‘The one who has ears let him hear.’”

At the same time that He is stating the parable, Christ is calling out. This comes from Luke 8:8.

The present participle LEGON has its action occurring at the same time as the main verb EPHONEI. So the saying and the calling out happen simultaneously.

The content of Christ’s call is simple, ‘The one who has ears, let him hear.’

(1) So if you are able to hear, then you are politely commanded to listen.

(2) The polite command comes from AKOUETO; this is the Greek imperative of entreaty.

(3) Christ is telling anyone within earshot that they really need to hear this parable - that it is something of surpassing importance for them.

The interrogation concerning the parables.

The identity of the inquisitors. “And when He became somewhat alone, after the disciples came, those around Him and twelve interrogated him.”

Now isn’t this strange? Our Lord has finally found a way to get rid of the crowds. He tells one parable, and He becomes somewhat alone.

Mark 4:10 contains the reference: KATA MONAS. This prepositional phrase gives the idea that Christ has become somewhat alone; it is literally ‘according to alone,’ or ‘after the pattern of aloneness.’

Even the disciples have wandered off during this brief parable - nobody at all thought it of surpassing profundity.

Remember that Christ has decided to employ the mode of communication that was popular among the Pharisees of the day.

Indeed, He may have done this in response to their accusations about His ministry. Because they accused Him of working from the authority of the prince of demons, He then adopted their method of teaching.

And this in turn caused the crowds to filter away! It was as if Christ had used tear gas instead of a parable!

Well, the smoke has cleared, and there are now just a few folks left; and his disciples thought that the parable was a good intermission, and so they went away too. But now they are back.

And they are said to interrogate Him; the participle EPEROTON comes from Luke 8:9. It means to ‘question intensely.’

The big question. ‘For what reason do You speak to them in parables?’

Yep, here it is. The big profound question from the disciples and those few who remained around Him.

And our understanding of this question should be tempered by the fact that Jesus gave this parable and everyone seemed to go away.

This is not so much a question of curiosity as one of accusation. You can perhaps see the scowls on their faces as they ask: “Why did you just do that?”

And you see how hard it is for us to fathom this situation, because in a historical irony, we are in love with parables. Since we love parables so much (indeed, perhaps too much), it is difficult for us to see the reason for the question.

But the disciples had a reason; they were now alone, and the crowds had dispersed, and they wanted to know exactly why Christ had shifted to the condescending teaching style of the Pharisees.

The Answer:

Distinctions among souls and the necessity of parables for some. “And formulating an answer, He said to them, ‘Because has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to those outside it has not been given and so everything comes in parables.’”

(1) Christ first formulates an answer; the aorist tense of the participle APOKRITHEIS does this. It shows that He gives at least a passing thought to the answer before He speaks it.

(2) The perfect passive indicative of the verb DIDOMI indicates a very strong action on the part of God. Together with the dative of advantage of the personal pronoun HUMIN, it is translated ‘to you it has been given.’

(a) Now God is the one who produces this action; He has given the disciples the ability to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

(b) The perfect tense shows that this is a past action with lasting results. And this makes a great amount of sense, because anytime that you can perceive the plan of God for your life, it is going to have a wonderful result. So the perfect tense is important here.

(c) Now it is just to the disciples that this has been given... Well to the disciples and anyone like them.

· It is not that Christ chose them to be disciples and so God gave them some special perceptive ability.

· It is that because they chose to believe, God gave them certain spiritual assets for the perception of the kingdom plan.

(d) A further clue about this perceptive ability is in the phrase ‘but to those outside.’

· This must be those outside of the direct will of God - those who are not believers, or, who if they are believers are also out of fellowship from God.

· The idea of fellowship was not foreign at all to the Jews. It was a part of their temple worship. If we could take a walk through the tabernacle today, its symbolism of the plan of God for mankind would be striking to those of us who understand it.

- The tabernacle is entered through a wide gate, 30 ft. across. Immediately to the front as one enters is the copper altar, which, together with its sacrifices, makes a striking depiction of salvation.

- Just 10 or 20 feet past this altar is the copper laver, which stands at the entrance to a smaller tent. The copper altar is the portrayal of confession, and it is necessary to confess one's sins before going any further in the plan of God.

- The smaller tent contains all of the elements which represent the post-salvation plan of God. Only the Levitical priests were allowed in this tent, and this in itself portrays an important observation on the plan of God: that though many are saved, not very many of those continue on in the plan of God.

- We have seen the word of God represented in the table of showbread. We have seen the work of the Spirit depicted in the golden lampstand. We have studied the portrayal of the works of righteousness in the incense altar. All of these are the elements in the Holy place, which represent the advance to spiritual maturity.

- The most holy place, or holy of holies and the holy place are separated by a thick veil, which conceals the indwelling presence of the Shekinah Glory. The most holy place is smaller still than the holy place. In fact, only one man, the high priest, was allowed into the holy of holies, and that man only once a year on the day of atonement. This place alone is reserved for Jesus Christ. The veil which separates the inner tent was split when Christ died on the cross, which was a sign to the Jews of the suspension of the dispensation of Israel.

- The writer of Hebrews states that the body of Christ (His life and death) forms a bridge into the most Holy Place, so that all might enter the plan of God, and advance to maturity, Heb 10:20-21.

- The furniture in the Holy place is arranged so that it complements the most holy place. All

believers are a reflection of what Christ Himself has accomplished. All believers depend on Him.

- Through the tabernacle the Jews had a wonderful portrayal of God's plan for their lives. This portrayal was a clear and accurate depiction of God's will for their lives. They were to come to know Him, and enjoy a relation with Him through understanding the Symbology of the tabernacle and its furniture. This Symbology was designed first and foremost for them in their time. Even though we may look at these things and know them even better because of our perspective through the completed canon of Scripture, they had plenty of information to understand and through it to know God and advance in His plan.

(e) Just to make this concept clear:

- People outside the plan of God have scar tissue on their souls.

- Because of this, they experience spiritual blindness; their repeated cycles in the cosmic system blind them to spiritual truths from the Bible.

- The cycle goes like this: they reject the person of God, and then they reject His word; the rejection of God's word demands a replacement, so they accept the cosmic counterfeits and lies provided by the devil.

- People inside the plan of God have certain spiritual assets that help them to perceive the spiritual information from God. The ministry of God the Holy Spirit is an example.

- The parable is designed to penetrate the armor of the cosmic counterfeits and lies.

(3) The reason for the parables is that some have at hand what they need to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, while others do not.

(4) If you do not have what you need, then you need a parable.

The explanation of the consequences of rejection. "For whoever has, it will be given to him, and he will have in abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

(1) Let's begin by defining the haves and the have nots in this passage.

(a) The haves are those who have the spiritual assets related to the perception and intake of the word.

(b) The have nots are those who reside outside of fellowship with God, and are lacking what they need to process the word of God.

(2) The one who has will receive more, and in abundance. This is truly the blessings which are received on account of the fulfillment of the plan of God.

(a) Spiritual blessings, especially knowing God.

(b) Earthly blessings, like intellectual, business, professional, romantic and many other categories of prosperity.

(c) Eternal blessings, a multitude of ways in which God can bless you forever.

(3) The one who does not have will lose everything.

(a) The very fact that you are alive represents a fantastic opportunity to fulfill God's plan and experience the destiny that He has for you.

(b) And even greater opportunity exists for every believer in Jesus Christ.

(c) At the moment you are saved, your blessings for eternity are placed on reserve for you.

(d) If you fail to reach spiritual maturity, then you lose those blessings. What you have is taken away from you.

(e) You can never lose your salvation.

The prophecy of the negative volition of Israel.

"For this reason I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear nor do they understand, and for them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, the one saying, 'In listening, you hear and definitely do not understand; and seeing you see and do not comprehend. For the heart of the people has become dull, and with the ears they barely hear, and they closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes and hear with the ears and understand with the heart and return and I would heal them.'"

(1) Christ begins by reiterating the reason for the parables. He talks about those who have

accumulated scar tissue on their hearts so that they are spiritually blind and hard of hearing.

(2) So they actually listen to what Christ has to say; the sound waves of His voice enter their ears, and their ears work; their eyes receive the information from observing His miracles.

(3) But even with a great bombardment of information, they have no comprehension of what it really mean. They do not understand at all that this information could have a great impact on their lives.

(4) The quote comes from Isaiah 6:9-10.

(a) The translation of this passage is descriptive:

- In the first line there is a double negative OU ME, which is very emphatic in the Greek. “Hearing you hear and definitely do not understand.”

- The same applies in the second line. It is not like they are just not paying attention; the malfunction goes much deeper than that. There is in fact no understanding whatsoever, either through the hearing or the seeing.

- The aorist tense verb EPACHUNTHE shows the past action of the heart of the people becoming dull. But it is not in the perfect tense. This indicates that the situation is not irreversible.

- Their hearing has become BAREOS, which is weighty, burdensome, or difficult. It is such a burden to listen!

- These are the lazy thinkers - people who hate to listen to doctrine because it requires work. And boy is the world ever full of these.

- And this lets us know immediately that thinking about truth really does take work, and that God requires from us this work of thinking.

- This contains the aorist tense of AKOUO, ‘to hear.’ Again the aorist tense simply notes a past fact, but does say that this is an irreversible state. The grace of God is adequate to reverse this laziness.

- Their eyes closed, EKAMMUSAN. The aorist tense once again.

- You close your eyes when you do not want to see something. Closing your eyes is portrayed here as a voluntary action.

- People who do not want the truth close their eyes to it. Perhaps it will hurt too much; perhaps they need the cover so that they can participate in their favorite category of sin.

- And notice now the order of things in verse fifteen:

- See with your eyes or hear with your ears;

- Understand in your heart;

- Turn;

- God does the healing.

- Now this is the true pattern of grace.

- Academic understanding of a concept;

- Application wisdom of the same concept;

- Repentance, or changing of the mind;

- God responds in grace.

(b) The context of the quote comes from the commissioning of Isaiah.

(c) But it has some shadowy overtones for anyone who might be listening closely and checking their Isaiah scrolls during the time of Christ.

(d) Go on to verses eleven and twelve in that sixth chapter of Isaiah, and you will see what I mean: “(11) Then I said, ‘Lord, how long?’ And he answered, ‘Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate. (12) The Lord has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.’”

(e) In other words, this is the commission of Isaiah that is to last until the fifth cycle of discipline comes upon the southern kingdom of Judah.

(f) And Christ adopts the commission of Isaiah for His own, and in the same moment identifies His generation with Isaiah’s. Isaiah’s generation was not a good generation at all.

(g) Isaiah 28:1-2 testifies to this: “(1) Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is at the head of the fertile valley of those who are overcome with wine! (2) Behold, the Lord has a

strong and mighty agent; as a storm of hail, a tempest of destruction, like a storm of mighty overflowing waters, He has cast it down to the earth with His hand.”

(h) Or verses seven and eight of that same chapter: “(7) And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink: the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are confused by wine, they stagger from strong drink; they reel while having visions, they totter when rendering judgment. (8) For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a single clean place.”

(i) And in the end the northern kingdom of Ephraim was utterly destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah nearly so.

(5) Your heart becomes dull through repeated cycles of cosmic involvement:

(a) Rejection of God’s person, like denying that He is a loving or omnipotent God.

(b) Rejection of God’s truth, which is a necessity after rejecting His person.

(c) Substitution of counterfeits and lies, to fill the vacuum left by rejecting the truth.

(d) The participation in the cycle of lust and unhappiness, leading to the weakening and destruction of the will.

(e) Each cycle of cosmic involvement dulls the heart even further, so that the condition worsens.

(f) It is most common for people in this category to identify that they have ‘tried religion (or Christianity) and it did not work for them.’ This is the motto of the dull of heart.

(6) It is worthwhile to take notice of the objective, which is stated in the end: “otherwise they would return and I would heal them.”

The judgment of the disciples by Christ, they are categorized in the worst way. “And He says to them, ‘you do not understand this parable, and how will you comprehend all the parables?’”

(1) This was a parable that was so easy to understand. Well, Christ thought so. Notice that He did not interpret the parable the first time around; He does not do so because He thinks it is elementary in interpretation.

(2) But this was only the first of many parables. And if the disciples do not understand this easy and obvious one, how will they ever understand others which are potentially harder to understand?

(3) Furthermore, this is an entry-level parable; it is about comprehension of spiritual truth in the kingdom of God. If you do not have a grasp of grace perception mechanics, then it is moot to move on to other things.

(a) The two tenses of the verbs in this sentence (in Mark 4:13) work together to demonstrate the entry-level nature of this parable.

(b) The first verb is the perfect indicative OIDATE, which because of its meaning is translated as a present tense - ‘You do not know...’ So this is the present condition of the disciples’ comprehensive ability.

(c) The second is the future active indicative of GINOSKO. These two, when taken together, show a necessary sequence. This parable must be comprehended first before going on to the others.

(4) This represents a hard rebuke of the disciples.

The blessing of sight and hearing for some. “But blessed are your eyes that see and your ears that hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see and they did not see, and to hear what you hear and did not hear.” (From Matthew 13:16-17)

(1) Here is a grand dispensational distinction; here is a great advantage to those who live during the incarnation.

(2) The exclamatory adjective MAKARIOI proclaims a state of blessedness on the eyes and ears of the incarnation generation.

(3) But the blessing is a counterpoint to Isaiah 6:9-10. It is only the eyes that see and the ears that actually hear which are blessed. There certainly must be perceptive comprehension in order the blessing to come.

(4) This is really the nature of much if not all blessing in the plan of God. Blessing requires comprehension.

(5) In order to receive your appropriate prosperity for time and eternity, you must comprehend the plan of God in all of its elements. You must have

that impact comprehension that brings change to your life and especially your mental attitude.

(6) The rationale is given in verse seventeen - many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see and they did not see, and to hear what you hear and did not hear.

(a) Christ begins it with a formula: 'Truly I say to you.' The first word is AMEN. The source for our English 'Amen,' the concluding word to our prayers. He does this get their attention - to tell them that what He is about to say is of transcending importance.

(b) This is an irony; for the prophets of the Old Testament did not see Christ with their eyes - they had no opportunity to take it to the point of impact comprehension.

(c) But they longed to see it. The verb is EPETHUMESAN - this means not only desire, but beyond desire. They had an inner fire to see the face of the Messiah, and to hear His voice. THUMEIO means to burn like incense. When you add the preposition EPI to the equation, it comes out even stronger. This is an unquenchable and fiercely hot inner fire.

(d) And Christ does this in order to restore a proper sense of importance to the day and especially to the content of the parables.

(e) Because the disciples had taken the first parable lightly. There is evidence to conclude that they left right in the middle of it!

(f) So Christ rocks them a little bit here. What the prophets and righteous men of old would have given to be here now! Isaiah - Jeremiah - Hosea - David - Moses - what they would have given!

· When Isaiah prophesies in his eleventh chapter, how he urgently wished to see Him every day, functioning under wisdom... "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear..."

· When Jeremiah in his thirty first chapter predicted a new covenant for Israel, how he earnestly desired to be there on the day that Christ gave the details in His sermon on the mount. Jeremiah would have paid attention on that day!!!

· When David wrote the twenty second Psalm - he longed to be where the disciples would not tread - at the cross. How he longed to hear his Savior say the all important words... "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

· When Job in the nineteenth chapter utters his reply to Bildad's accusation, you can feel the heat of his inner fire to be at the tomb with Maria of Magdala on the morning of the third day... "I know that my redeemer lives, and at the last He will take his stand on the earth."

Christ's Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower. "Therefore you yourselves listen to the parable of the sower. The sower sows the word. Everyone who hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches what has been planted in his heart, in order that they might not be saved after believing. This is the seed sown beside the road. And the seed sown upon the rocky places, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, believing for a while, but he has no root in himself but is short-lived, and after tribulation comes or persecution because of the word, immediately he stumbles. And the one sown into the thorns, this is the one who hears the word, and the care of the world and the distraction of wealth or the lust concerning the rest chokes the word and he becomes unfruitful. And the seed sown upon the good earth, this is the one who hears the word and understands, who indeed bears fruit and makes a hundred, and sixty, and thirty.' And He was saying to them, 'The lamp does not come in order to be placed under a bushel, or under a bed, is it? Isn't it [brought out] in order to be placed on a lampstand? For it is not a secret unless in order to be revealed, nor does a secret exist, but to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!' And He was saying to them, 'See that you hear. In what measure you measure it will be measured to you and it will be increased to you. For who has, it

will be given to him; and who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”

The introduction.

Our Lord begins with an exhortation to listen. Again, He wants them to pay attention to what He has to say.

He employs the intensive use of the personal pronoun, adding HUMEIS to the built-in pronoun of the verb, translated ‘You yourselves.’

- (1) Here is an exhortation to take personal responsibility for what is heard.
- (2) No one can advance to spiritual maturity for you. Only you can take yourself there.
- (3) God requires you to become autonomous in the spiritual realm, passing your own tests with the truth that is in your own soul.
- (4) This represents the second admonishment against laziness in this passage.
- (5) This is the truth of the matter: we all stand alone at the judgment seat of Christ; we will each of us be responsible for our own spiritual journeys.

The sower sows the word; this is the key that unlocks the parable. Seed the gospel.

The seed on the road. “Everyone who hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches what has been planted in his heart, in order that they might not be saved after believing. This is the seed sown beside the road.”

This sort of rings a bell... ‘hearing and not understanding.’ This comes right from the quote in Isaiah.

The reason for the lack of understanding lies with the scar tissue on the heart of the hearer. It is not the fault of the evangelist that the gospel has not been understood.

This tells us that the gospel has a limited shelf life in the heart; that the devil will snatch away what is left on the road.

And it tells us that the seed of the gospel is not implanted and cannot grow until there is understanding.

It is certain that the devil has various ways of devouring the word, so that it is taken away from the attention of the hearer.

Now this is prevention on the part of Satan; at no time is this person saved, even though there is an attempt at evangelism here.

Luke 8:12 contains the phrase HINA ME PISTEUSANTES SOTHOSIN.

- (1) HINA is a particle which introduces a purpose clause. This indicates the purpose of the snatching away.
- (2) The aorist participle PISTEUSANTES depicts an action which occurs prior to the main verb SOTHOSIN. So the believing occurs before the not being saved.
- (3) By placing the negative adverb ME before the participle, the negation is intended to govern the entire phrase, so that it is really ‘after not believing, they might not be saved.’
- (4) The point is that Satan does not want this person to believe and as a result be saved.

In the original telling of the parable, Luke also included the idea of trampling with the snatching away. In no gospel is this specifically explained.

- (1) But we can impute a good idea to it, if we are careful. Trampling is an action of disrespect.
- (2) If your nice coat falls from the coat rack, and people tread on it, they are not respectful of your property, especially if the action is intentional.
- (3) The devil tramples the seed on the road; it maligned by him before it can be understood.

The seed on the rocks. “And the seed sown upon the rocky places, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, believing for a while, but he has no root in himself but is short-lived, and after tribulation comes or persecution because of the word, immediately he stumbles.”

Now this person believes. They are said to EUTHUS META CHARAS LAMBANON AUTON - ‘immediately receiving it with joy.’

The participle LAMBANON portrays an action simultaneous with AKOUON, ‘hearing.’ So this

one hears the word and immediately, right at the same time, believes.

The prepositional phrase META CHARAS AUTON tells us that the individual in question accompanies his decision to believe in Christ with joy. He is glad to have salvation.

Just to make things really clear, Luke includes the phrase PROS KAIRON PISTEUOUSIN ‘they believe for a short while.’

- (1) This is the sustaining of belief beyond salvation; they continue in grace orientation.
- (2) Salvation is no longer an issue. It is sealed and secure forever at the moment of initial belief in Jesus Christ.
- (3) We can define post-salvation belief here as the continuation of positive volition.

The development of root is analogous to the intake of Bible truth. Metabolized truth in the soul is the root system of the new believer.

Persecution and tribulation are the scorching suns of any believer’s life. It takes deep roots indeed to endure them.

Notice especially the phrase in Mark 4:17, DIA TON LOGON - ‘because of the word.’

- (1) This is an ironclad guarantee; when the word is implanted, persecution is sure to follow.
- (2) It is Satan’s plan to persecute new believers. He wants their new faith destroyed, so that they will not advance to the witness stand of maturity and give a testimony of love for God against him.
- (3) If you are a new believer, you had better prepare yourself, because people are going to come out of nowhere and test you. Every time that someone makes a good decision to follow God, Satan immediately makes plans to shine a scorching sun on that person’s faith.
- (4) God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be persecuted or tested in any way beyond your capability. But you must use your time in order to take hold of the grace that God has provided for that day.
- (5) Look: if God provides the grace, and you decide against it, then God is not responsible for your spiritual demise. You are.

(6) The grace is provided from the very beginning, but you must take hold of it, and be persistent in its pursuit.

The seed in the thorns.

This the straightforward one. The believer becomes distracted by the things of this world.

(1) There is the MERIMNAI of this world. These are worries and anxieties. There are two ways to take care of the details of life.

(a) By responsibly tending to them with a relaxed mental attitude about the outcome.

(b) By excessive worry, even when you are not working toward the objective.

(c) The worries of life are the details of life: logistics, what people think of you or did to you, how you look, how well you are aging, how well your car is running. Anything that is tied to this world - what Mark’s gospel (4:19) calls TOU AIONAS.

(2) There is also the PLOUTOU. These are the riches - things above and beyond salvation.

(a) Getting rich is a pursuit that is certainly tied to this world, since none of the worldly riches that you accumulate will go to eternity with you.

(b) Accumulating wealth in this world is one of the all-time emptiest of pursuits. That is, if it is accumulated for the purpose of wealth itself. God is not impressed with your accumulation of wealth or material goods. None of it can possibly add up to heavenly good.

(c) The accumulation of wealth and the pursuit of materialism takes time, and it adds up to nothing at all.

(d) But there is nothing wrong with being rich... as long as there is no compromise whatsoever in the spiritual realm.

(e) God actually blesses people with wealth and material gain, and others come by it through hard work without compromising their relationship with God. These blessings are meant to be enjoyed.

(f) Sometimes God gives material and monetary prosperity as a responsibility in giving. He usually



makes it clear when there is a match between what He has given and a special ministry need.

(3) Finally there is the remaining EPITHUMIAI. These are lusts.

(a) This compound word designates the idea of illicit lust. The preceding categories may have legitimacy in moderation, but this is when you want something that you cannot morally have.

(b) Of course the pursuit of illicit and immoral gain is not only a distraction but it keeps you from fellowship with God for the duration of the pursuit.

No matter what the category, all of these things add up to distraction; the time spent in pursuit of these things is not worth it, and takes away from concentration on God.

This all adds up to loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ. And really, it doesn't matter what distracts you, because whether it is cares of this life, the pursuit of riches, or even illicit lust, it is not worth it.

The riches to be gained in your heavenly reward so exceed what you can accumulate in this life, that there is no point of comparison. The rewards of the next life are exceedingly and abundantly beyond what we could ask or imagine.

A summary of the bad earth.

You need to understand that each of these conditions add up to bad decisions on the part of the individual who loses out.

On the part of the road-seed, there is the bad decision not to understand what is heard, and the devil takes advantage of that bad decision.

On the part of the rocky-place seed, there is the bad decision to neglect the development of the root system, so that devil can scorch them with persecution.

On the part of the thorn-seed, there is the bad decision to become distracted.

Therefore understand that the analogy compares soil with bad decisions. You make your own soil by your own decisions in life.

It is never just bad luck that someone's faith is devoured or scorched or choked out. It is their bad

decision to allow the enemy to take advantage of them to the point where their faith is destroyed.

The seed on good earth.

The good earth therefore is the believer who makes good decisions and sets his or her priorities straight.

This good earth produces fruit. This is a picture of plant reproduction. Christians with their priorities straight reproduce themselves; that is, they are productive in the Christian realm because of their great success.

These people are happy, and God has blessed them with blessings appropriate to their lives. They are beacons of light to the world because of their success in fulfilling the plan of God.

But there is even greater production in the realm of blessing for time and eternity.

Some Applications of the Parable to Evangelism.

There is in reality one evangelism strategy here, and two transition strategies.

People get fouled up in three ways:

- (1) They listen to the gospel, but refuse to understand it.
- (2) They believe in the gospel, but refuse to grow and develop their newfound faith.
- (3) They believe in the gospel and grow some, but then they become distracted by the world.

With regard to the first category, the one thing you must do is persist in the giving of the gospel, and especially pray that God might intervene in that person's life to bring their attention to the truth again and again. Of course, you must always respect their free will, and if they do not want to listen to the gospel and are tired of the subject, then leave it until God works in their lives.

With regard to the second category:

- (1) You must be prepared to answer their transitional questions, such as:
  - (a) What happened when I believed?
  - (b) What should I do if I sin?
  - (c) What is required of me now that I am a believer?

(d) Can I lose what I have gained through belief in Christ?

(2) You should be prepared to motivate them by developing in them a personal love for God.

With regard to the third category:

(1) This is less transitional, because the distraction syndrome may not manifest itself for years into a person's Christian walk.

(2) If they will not come to Bible class (and they know they should), then there is a challenge there.

(3) The best thing that you can do is be a personal demonstration of the benefits of the life dedicated to the truth. Let them see by the fruit of your Christian life that living day by day in the truth is a really wonderful thing.

(4) If they see the difference between your mental attitude and theirs, and understand the difference between your quality of life and theirs, then it is easy to mark the reasons for them.

(5) Never do this in a self-righteous or 'I told you so' attitude.

A general explanation concerning communication from God.

"And He was saying to them, 'The lamp does not come in order to be placed under a bushel, or under a bed, does it? Isn't it [brought out] in order to be placed on a lampstand? For it is not a secret unless in order to be revealed, nor does a secret exist, but to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!' And He was saying to them, 'See that you hear. In what measure you measure it will be measured to you and it will be increased to you.'"

Mark 4:21 describes Christ as speaking this last part constantly; this is the force of the imperfect tense verb ELEGEN. This was not just a one time saying of Christ; He spoke this often.

So Christ often reminded His disciples of the principle of the lamp and the lampstand.

This reminder is put into action by means of two questions and then the principle that answers the questions.

(1) The questions work together as a team; the first question expects a 'no' answer, while the

second expects a 'yes'. The combination is effective because it allows Christ's listeners to walk through the conclusion with Him.

(2) The principles are twins, two principles stating the same things twice.

(a) The first is a silly question, designed to catch attention by its silliness: "The lamp does not come in order to be placed under a bushel, or under a bed, does it?" This creates a need for correction.

(b) The second is a reality question, designed to fill the void created by the first: "Isn't it [brought out] in order to be placed on a lampstand?"

(3) The principle applies the metaphor of the lamp and lampstand to the truth, and especially to kingdom mystery doctrine.

In this metaphor, the lamp is the kingdom mystery doctrines that Christ has just recently revealed, starting with the Sermon on the Mount. So He has lit the lamp and it is now out.

How silly to light a lamp and place it under a bushel, or under a bed. The purpose of the lamp is to give light, and so it is always placed to best advantage to fulfill the purpose.

For many long ages the mystery doctrine of the kingdom was a hidden secret. It existed so as to come to light, but at the proper time. God never has a secret unless He intends to reveal it.

Although God the Father knew the content of the kingdom mystery doctrine a long time before it was revealed, He let Old Testament saints know of its existence in order to motivate them.

This is the proper follow on to the principle of the prophet's longing. That so many prophets longed to see the Messiah reinforces this principle.

Then Christ gives his standard phrase, the one He had been shouting throughout the parable of the sower: "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Because He picks this up again here, and because this was iterated throughout the Parable of the Sower, you can understand this pretty well as a device to point attention backward to that body of information.

Because the prophets longed to see what you have seen, and because God has now placed this

kingdom mystery doctrine on a lampstand, pay special attention to these parables.

Christ is no longer shouting this phrase out to the crowd, but rather to His disciples and just a few others only. It is exclamatory by nature, providing the final emphasis to the necessity of the parable.

The consequences of hearing the word. "For who has, it will be given to him; and who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."

And here He makes a final point: that understanding and applying kingdom mystery doctrine certainly will have eternal consequences.

If a believer from Christ's time entered eternity with his soul full of kingdom mystery doctrine and his life full of a testimony for Him, then reward would be given.

If anyone from Christ's time entered eternity without it, then there would be loss.

For the unbeliever, a permanent loss of opportunity and potential relationship with God.

For the believer, the loss of reward.

2 Timothy 2:4-5. "(4) No soldier on active duty entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. (5) Furthermore, if anyone competes in the athletic games, he does not receive a winner's crown unless he trains according to the rules."

Romans 8:18, "For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

The Order of the Morning Star is an example of that future glory, and why we must train like we are in the military now:

The order of the morning star is given to the believers who undergo evidence testing under the personal supervision of Satan, and who persevere even unto the end.

Our lord's testing in the desert is the pattern after which we follow. The royal title of Jesus Christ for the church age is "bright morning star", given for his perfect performance in the desert.

(1) Revelation 22:16, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the [spiritual] root and the

[physical] offspring of David, the bright morning star."

(2) Numbers 24:17, "A star shall come forth from Jacob." (from Balaam's prophecy).

(3) Matthew 2:2, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

(4) 2 Peter 1:19, "And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts."

By following in the footsteps of Christ all the way through evidence testing, you receive the same reward, under the title of Jesus Christ. This reward includes the following.

(1) A uniform of glory, Revelation 3:4,5, "But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments... and I will not erase his name from the book of life,"

(2) Presentation to God the Father and the elect angels in a heavenly honors ceremony during the tribulation.

(a) Revelation 3:5. "...and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."

(b) Colossians 3:4, "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with Him in glory."

(3) A royal title, Revelation 2:17, "To Him who overcomes... I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."

(4) The provision of hidden manna, Revelation 2:17, "to him I will give some of the hidden manna."

(a) The original manna was the logistical provision to Israel for the wilderness journey.

(b) Since that time, manna came to represent spiritual as well as logistical provision. Psalm 105:40 does this, as well as Ezra in Nehemiah 9:20.

(c) It is most likely that the hidden manna depicts a category of truth that has remained hidden throughout human history.

- It is a category not necessary to the spiritual function of any human being in any time in human history.

- And yet, it is an astounding category of truth that is a unique privilege to know.

(d) This is fantastic indeed, since it is a part of the blessings for eternity.

(5) Co-rulership with Jesus Christ in the millennial state:

(a) Romans 5:17, “For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

(b) 1 Corinthians 4:8, “You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and I would indeed that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you.”

(c) 2 Timothy 2:12, “If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.”

(d) Revelation 3:21, “He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

(e) Revelation 2:26-27, “And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father.”

(6) Special privileges in the millennial and eternal state.

(a) Revelation 2:7, “To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.”

- The Paradise of God is the Garden of Eden, which still exists today. It is the Garden in which Adam and Eve resided, and is now guarded by the cherubs with the flaming swords.

- In this garden is the tree of life, which was forbidden to the man and woman after the fall, because it causes eternal life, Genesis 3:22. Sinful man plus eternal physical life would equal an eternity of sinfulness. God prevented this from His mercy!

(b) Revelation 3:12, “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and it will definitely not go out from it [the temple] anymore; and I will write upon it the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.”

- In the new temple of God, there will be pillars as monuments to those who are a part of the order of the morning star.

- The pillars will be permanent - they will stand forever.

- On the pillar will be an inscription of God’s name, the name of the New Jerusalem (which is not yet revealed), and the new name of Jesus Christ.

- Since the Greek says I will make him a pillar, with a double accusative, it indicates that the pillar will be a stature in the likeness of that believer.

- So whenever people and angels come to worship in the eternal state at the eternal temple, they will be reminded of the church age believers who made it all the way to maturity and gave a fantastic testimony to God.