

Chapter 7

THE LITERAL AND SPIRITUAL WORD

*God is a Spirit and man is a physical being.
God, who is represented by His word, spoke.
Can man understand what God is saying?*

God speaks the language of people depending on their nationalities: Spanish, English, German, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, etc., and the different dialects of which the Holy Bible is translated. Christ spoke Hebrew in His time for that was the language of the Jews. Jesus Christ spoke and referred to the laws preached by the religious leaders. They could not understand Him because He was speaking the “spiritual language” of God. The Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and the Jews in general could only understand the literal meaning of the laws. Do we not see the same thing today? This is the subject under discussion.

WARNING

“Galatians 1:8 “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that, which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹as we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

This is the gospel of the original Apostles:

2 Corinthians 3:6 “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

Perhaps many people would say, the “letter” refers to the Law handed down to Moses, citing the following:

Romans 10:4 "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Galatians 3:13 "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law..."

Galatians 3:10 "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse..."

How many have noticed this?

Ezekiel 20:49 "Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?"

Psalms 78:2 "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old."

Who would believe this?

Mark 4:34 "But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."

Who are alluded to in the following?

Mark 4:11 "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: ¹²That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

Matthew 13:14 "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: ¹⁵For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Man's understanding of the "letter" of the word, exposes his "spiritual blindness" as proven in the following deliberations:

1. "BORN AGAIN"

Jesus Christ gave the first step to salvation:

Matthew 18:3 "...Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The reason our Lord gave is in order to be endowed with divine knowledge and wisdom:

Matthew 11:25 "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

This is not only true in the New but in the Old Testament as well:

Isaiah 28:9 [KJV] "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts."

For how can one understand "born again" unless given divine wisdom?

John 3:1 "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ²The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus, a prominent teacher of the word of God in Israel¹, did not understand it.

¹ John 3:10 "Jesus answered and said to him, Are you the teacher of Israel and do not know these things?"

John 3:4 "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

Nicodemus erred in taking the word *literally*. Many people therefore, *spiritualizing* the word, say, " 'We need to accept our Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and savior' that our life of worldliness and sin would be changed to a life of righteousness and piety." Then, we become "new creatures." Different denominations preach the same thing, but they cannot be one in belief and doctrines.

Unwittingly, preachers ignore the explanation of our Lord preferring instead to explain what the Natural Man easily understands, but forgetting that our Lord's explanation is again expressed in parable. Let us be reminded of Mark 4:34 where Jesus needs to expound on His words.

John 3:5 "... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

God's explanation of "born again":

As in "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it," let God speak through His word, and like the Disciples, we will just wait for His explanation. It is revealed that "water" symbolizes the "letter" of the word in:

Ephesians 5:26 "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

Our Lord emphasized "born of water and of Spirit" where *Spirit* refers to the Holy Ghost in the following:

John 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given....)

To the chosen is endowed "spiritual discernment," the equivalent of Jesus' explanation of His words. Thus:

1 Corinthians 2:13 "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

From the foregoing symbolism for the “letter” of the word coupled with the revelation of the Holy Spirit, “born again” therefore means to be “born of the Truth.” Jesus, the *Truth*, is pictured as a Lamb², so is the newly “born again” person now transformed from a “spiritual goat” to a “spiritual sheep.”³

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Christ revealed the “two witnesses” to the truth. The physical Jesus, represented by the “letter” of the word, and the Father, representing the Holy Ghost, are the “two witnesses:

John 8:17 “It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bearth witness of me.”

John 5:31 “If I bear witness of myself, my witness (“letter”) is not true. ³²There is another (Father) that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.”

First Witness – Jesus represents the “letter” of the word. Just as the physical Jesus was seen and heard, but not truly identified; so is the “letter” understood and memorized with man’s own language or dialect, but does not yet give the real spiritual message.

Second Witness – The Father, as the inheritance⁴ in His testament, has to take the characteristics of a dove, revealed to be the Holy Ghost, teaches the spiritual meaning of the “letter.”

Thus, “*born of water and of Spirit*” means to be “born of the *Truth*” as testified by the “two witnesses.” With the truth revealed about “*Born Again*,” only a

² John 1:29 “...John sees Jesus coming to him and says, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

³ Matthew 25:32 “...And He shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. ³³ And indeed He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats off the left.”

⁴ Ezekiel 44:28 “And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I am their inheritance...”

Psalms 16:5 “The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance...”

few now can claim this great “miracle” of God. This is the transformation of the Natural Man into a Spiritual Man:

The Natural Man

1 Corinthians 2:14 “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The Spiritual Man

1 Corinthians 2:15 “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. ¹⁶For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

How can a person claiming to have been “born again” and “having the mind of Christ,” profess to know Jesus Christ but at the same time declaring the Father is a mystery?

John 8:19 “...Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.”

“Born again” can be traced from the creation of man. When “God created man in His own image,”⁵ He was referring to Jesus Christ.⁶ Jesus Christ was pictured as a “Lamb.”

John 1:29 “...John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

It follows therefore, man upon creation was also pictured as “lamb or sheep.” After the Fall however, man no longer is in the image of a sheep, but that of a “goat,” indicating damnation. Salvation signifies restoration to the “sheep” image:

⁵ Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in his own image...”

⁶ Colossians 1:14 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: ¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God...”

Matthew 25:31-33 "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³²And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: ³³And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

"Born again" is a great "miracle" signifying sonship of God from sonship of Satan⁷. It is only then that the chosen can say:

Romans 8:15 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Proof for being truly "born again" is to understand the words of the Father, or could "hear the voice of the Shepherd."

John 10:3-5 "...the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴...and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. ⁵And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

"Born again" as passport to the kingdom of heaven therefore is not as easy as many people are made to believe.

Matthew 20:16 "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."

2. "WOMEN NOT ALLOWED TO TALK"

Look how the Natural Man considers the following:

1 Corinthians 14:34 "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law."

⁷ John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

People may present conjectures like, “women in Corinth at that time were talkative that they were barred from talking in the churches.” This is just like when Jesus spoke of “building the temple in three days” and the Jews ridiculed him saying, “Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?” But Jesus is speaking in parables. Look if physical gender is considered in the following:

Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek... there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Who is the *Man* or *Husband*, and who is the *Woman* or wife in the spiritual language of God?

Isaiah 54:5 “For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name...”

Who can comprehend that *Man*, the spiritual husband, is *God*; and the *Woman* or spiritual wife are the people, both physical female and male? Therefore only *God*, the *man*, is authorized to speak in the churches. The *Woman* or people, both physical male and female, are commanded to keep silent in the churches.

This confirms that only *God* who speaks in parable⁸ is the only one authorized to expound on His words.⁹ God’s prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers act only as “speaker system” and He is the one “speaking over the microphone.” That is why honorific titles are never sanctioned to be appropriated by the servants.

Matthew 23:8 “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. ⁹And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. ¹⁰Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.”

“Women speaking in churches” is the cause of division of Christianity into sects. Therefore, is there still a need for chapels, churches, and cathedrals?

⁸ Ezekiel 20:49 “Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?”

Psalms 78:2 “I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:”

⁹ Mark 4:34 “But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, *he expounded all things to his disciples.*” (Not Peter, not John, not Paul, nor anybody)

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Now it is understandable why the Apostles never construct chapels and churches. The real Christians are easily distinguished from the rest in the Christian world. They gather in any place where they can talk about God's revelation of His words with *gusto* and gladness. It is not farfetched to hear them talking about the word of God in social and other gatherings, that people call them "circles in square pegs." To them has the warning of the Lord:

John 16:2 "They shall put you out of the synagogues..."

1 John 3:13 "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you..."

However, they are not offended at all. In fact, they are happy for this is the sign of being "sheep" among the "goats."

Luke 6:22 "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake."

3. "HATE PARENTS, WIFE, CHILDREN, BRETHREN, SISTERS"

How could we hate our parents, children, wife, brothers and sisters? Yet this is what our Lord told the multitudes:

Luke 14:25 "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, ²⁶If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Do we not hear this from preachers? "Of course we cannot hate our parents and kinfolks." Our Lord simply means that we have to love Him more than these."

Our Lord's explanation:

Jesus Christ emphasized hatred for these "kinfolks." How could man explain this without contradicting the truth on love?

Exodus 20:12 "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."

Matthew 15:4 "For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death."

Ephesians 6:1 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ²Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise.)"

Clearly, the "letter" would render the word full of contradictions. That is why we often here some people say, "If we try to understand the word of God, we would go crazy." Therefore, instead of relying on God for His explanation, many depend on the wisdom of man for comfort.

Now look how far man's understanding is from God's explanation of "kinsfolk." As in the case of the "temple," let alone our Lord reveal the spiritual meaning of these relatives.

Deuteronomy 13:6 "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known..."

Here these "relatives" symbolizes the *Soul*." The attributes of the soul are the intellect and feeling. This jibes perfectly well, with what intellect is in the eyes of God. The soul (spiritual kinsfolk) leads a man to serve "God" remaining a mystery.

1 Corinthians 1:19-21 "...I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. ²⁰Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?²¹For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God..."

1 Corinthians 2:5 "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Isaiah 29:14 "...behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a

wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

Look how deceitful our feeling is in the eyes of God:

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Proverbs 28:26 "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool..."

God hates human wisdom and the folly of emotion in spiritual matters. Truly, we have to "hate" the dictate of our feeling and intellect in order to please God. These are they that make us reject the truth.

Further proof that our Lord is speaking the "language of God" or the spiritual language, note how He considers His physical mother and brothers in the following:

Matthew 12:46 "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. ⁴⁷Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee."

Matthew 12:48-50 "But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? ⁴⁹And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! ⁵⁰For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

4. "PLUCK OUT THE RIGHT EYE"

How could the following be followed to the "letter?"

Matthew 5:29 "And if your right eye offends you, pluck it out and throw it from you. For it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be thrown into hell."

Knowing that this cannot be followed literally, we hear preachers spiritualizing it: "Of course our Lord does not mean this literally. Rather if our

eyes lead us to temptation, remove our sight from it that we will not fall into sin."

As "little children," we profess to know nothing before God. Therefore we just depend on Him for the meaning of the parable. Our Lord emphasizes "right" eye indicating power as "right" hand in Exodus 15:6.¹⁰ Therefore, "right eye" to man is the "light in his spiritual walk."

Proverbs 16:2 "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes..."

"Right eye" to man therefore is his "spiritual walk," man's standard of "good and evil." Christianity is divided because people with their "right eye" see different standards of holiness.

Proverbs 12:15 "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Are all people listening to the counsel the wisdom of God?

Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Our Lord would not have referred to the "wise and the prudent" in the following if He does not see this?

Matthew 11:25 "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

People looking up or exalting others in spiritual matters is inherent in man. Real believers not excepted, unwittingly committing sin of spiritual idolatry:

James 2:9 "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

¹⁰ Exodus 15:6 "Thy *right* hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy."

The Christians in Galatia looked up Paul, a true servant of God. They did not see his faults with their "eyes." He rebuked them for not telling him his weakness.

Galatians 4:14 "And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me."

Many people cannot see this kind of sin. "Plucking out the right eye," therefore, should focus the sight to our Lord only, the "light," the *Truth*.

Matthew 6:22 "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

5. "CUT OFF THY RIGHT HAND"

How the following could be followed to the "letter?"

Matthew 5:30 "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

Knowing that this cannot be followed literally, we hear people say, "Of course our Lord does not mean this literally. Rather, if our hands cause us to sin by taking something that does not belong to us, or using the hand to hurt or commit murder, refrain from using it."

Jesus Christ, by example, showed that He cannot do anything on His own:

John 5:30 "I can of mine own self do nothing..."

"Right hand" that means power and capability (Exodus 15:6) is the opposite of what our Lord said of the powerlessness of a "babe." If "plucking out the right eye" will make us see the right way in our "spiritual walk," "cutting off the right hand" would make us truly dependent and fully submissive to the "will of our Lord."

Can we carry the cross, the symbol for *Truth*, which is too heavy for us? Then this must be the real message of our Lord in:

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

This is contrary to the general perception for the problems in life. Truth is the heavy burden. If it were not so, then "many" would have been "carrying it." But "only a few" do. Our Lord showed us the way by example:

John 5:19 "...Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do..."

6. FASTING

Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. This is the "letter" of the word:

Matthew 4:1 "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. ²And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred."

Many people follow the "letter" by not eating several meals or days. However it is written God is speaking in parables (Ezekiel 20:49), as our Lord was also prophesied to speak parables and dark sayings of old (Psalms 78:2). What is written in the Holy Bible is the "letter of the word," the *First Witness* to the truth.

The Natural Man (1 Corinthians 2:14) could only comprehend the "letter" or the literal meaning. Thus, the empty stomach of our Lord is all for not eating for 40 days and 40 nights. This is exactly what Satan saw in Jesus. That is why he told Him to turn the "stone into bread" for our Lord to eat and fill His empty stomach.

Matthew 4:3 "And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

Does not the understanding of the Natural Man have something to do with what our Lord told His listeners?

John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil...and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he

speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

To God, the "letter" or the *Literal* understanding does not yet present the truth. That is why it is written in 2 Corinthians 3:6 "the letter killeth." It is the "spirit of the word" that gives life and this refers to the *spiritual meaning* as explained by our Lord by "demonstration." In His fasting, Jesus emphasized hunger for the word, more than hunger for literal bread.

Matthew 4:4 "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

God confirmed this in the following:

Jeremiah 15:16 "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..."

How many people realized the following in relation to hunger?

Amos 8:11 "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: ¹²And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it."

Is there really no "famine for the spiritual word" in our time? What do we see on Television, hear over the radio, in religious fellowships? Further explanation of fasting is found in the following:

Isaiah 58:6 "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free (John 8:32), and that ye break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor (Matthew 5:3) that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him (Isaiah 61:10)..."

The spiritual message of *Fasting* is to hunger for the *Truth* in the word. This is where we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." God is liberal enough to supply our "spiritual food" and expects us:

1. To share this to the “oppressed or in bondage to go free.”

John 8:32 “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

2. To share our “spiritual bread” to the hungry:

Matthew 25:35 “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat.”

3. To pity the “poor in spirit” (the spiritual babes in Christ) who are not yet in the household of God:

Matthew 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Ephesians 2:19 “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

4. To clothe the “naked,” *not* with literal clothes or pants but with the garment of salvation:

Isaiah 61:10 “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation...”

Very clear is the distinct “lingo” of the Lamb that the chosen will not follow a “stranger.” Jesus Christ spoke to His Disciples:

John 10:1-5 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep...⁴...he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”

7. THE TEMPLE

One day Jesus Christ together with His Disciples went to the temple:

John 2:14-17 "And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; ¹⁵And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; ¹⁶And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. ¹⁷And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

The Jews questioned Jesus' authority in driving the merchants from the temple.

John 2:18 "...the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?"

John 2:19 "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

The Jews taking the "letter" or literal meaning of what our Lord said:

John 2:20 "Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

To them their understanding of the word became a snare to convict our Lord:

Matthew 26:59-61 "Now the chief priests, and elders...sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; ⁶⁰...though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, ⁶¹And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days."

THE TEMPLE ACCORDING TO OUR LORD

There are two classes of people who heard our Lord speak about the "destruction of the temple."

1. The Jews under the leadership of the Scribes and Pharisees
2. The Jews who became Disciples of our Lord

The first, "leaning unto their own understanding"¹¹ said:

¹¹ Proverbs 3:5 "...lean not unto thine own understanding."

John 2:20 "Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

The prophecy regarding the words of our Lord was fulfilled.¹² They thought just because our Lord spoke their Hebrew language, they could understand what He was saying. They even used their perception of what the temple is, to mock our Lord.¹³ The Disciples, on the other hand, simply waited and kept silent knowing that they could not understand what our Lord was saying.

Mark 4:34 "But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."

A. *Temple* is not the edifice:

Christ's explanation was by demonstration!

John 2:22 "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."

John 2:21 "But he spake of the temple of his body."

Perhaps many people reading the Holy Bible may claim to have already understood the "spirit" in the word *Temple*, that it symbolizes the body of Jesus Christ. Further reading about the *temple* never referred to the edifice or the dwelling place of God:

Acts 7:47-49 "But Solomon built him an house. ⁴⁸Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, ⁴⁹Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?"

¹² Psalms 78:2 "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old."

¹³ Matthew 26:59-61 "Now the chief priests, and elders... sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; ⁶⁰...though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, ⁶¹ And said, *This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.*"

Since Satan has access to the Sacred Scriptures, even quoting from it (Matthew 4:6)¹⁴. Therefore it necessitates that God endows "spiritual discernment" to His chosen. Thus:

1 Corinthians 2:13 "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

"Spiritual discernment" is divine revelation by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," which Satan cannot do. The following are revealed to the "ministers of the new testament."¹⁵

B. The *Temple* or the *body* of Christ, is the *Word*

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..."

Just as the "temple had to be destroyed," or the "body of Christ to be nailed on the cross," so is the "word" or the "handwriting of ordinances that are contrary to us" should also be nailed to the cross:

Colossians 2:14 "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailling it to his cross."

Does the "handwriting of ordinances" refer to the Law of Moses or the "letter" (literal meaning) of the word? The Scribes and Pharisees who could only comprehend the literal meaning of the word were called hypocrites by our Lord¹⁶. The "letter" merely cleanses the "outside of the cup."

¹⁴ Matthew 4:6 "And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Satan quoting:

Psalms 91:11 "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. ¹² They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:6 "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; *not of the letter*, but of the spirit: *for the letter killeth*, but the spirit giveth life."

¹⁶ Matthew 23:26 "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

Example 1:

Claiming faithfulness to the spouse for the commandment “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” is only half of the truth. The “other half” is the “spirit” in the word as demonstrated in the following. God is married to His chosen¹⁷. The chosen therefore are the “wife” both physical male and female gender¹⁸:

Isaiah 54:5 “For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name...”

The husband’s “seeds” is the *Truth* which should not be adulterated with half truth such as religious tradition¹⁹ and human precepts²⁰. These are considered “strange seeds” not coming from God.

Example 2:

Claiming honesty for not stealing anything of value for the commandment “Thou shalt not steal,” is only half of the truth. The “other half” is the “spirit” in the word as revealed by Christ in the following:

John 10:1 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.”

This is the “door into the sheepfold.”

John 10:7 “Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.”

Simply following the “letter” by not stealing anything of value “kills” constitutes only half of the truth. The other half to be followed is the “spirit”

¹⁷ Jeremiah 3:14 “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you...”

¹⁸ Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, *there is neither male nor female*: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

¹⁹ Colossians 2:8 “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy, ...after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

²⁰ Isaiah 29:13 “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: ¹⁴ Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.”

in the word. This refers to the whole *Truth* both literal and spiritual honesty by submitting totally to the "will of the Father."

Example 3:

Claiming to have followed the First Commandment on idolatry²¹ by getting rid of images and statues, but ignoring the following attests to spiritual blindness of even higher degree of idolatry:

Matthew 23:8 "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. ⁹And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

Jesus is speaking "spiritual things" (not political, social, or scientific). Rabbi means teacher, pastor, leader, or shepherd and Christ alone deserves those titles. Only God is worthy to be called Father, Holy, and Reverend:

Psalms 111:9 "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name."

How could professing apostles of Christ today appropriate these honorific titles citing Ephesians 4:11 where "apostles, evangelists, prophets, pastors, and teachers" pertain to the *function* (as speaker system only)? Nowhere in the Bible can we read Paul and other apostles being addressed Pastor, or Peter addressed Father. Much more was Peter addressed "Holy" for not even Jesus Christ, by way of example, did not accept this accolade:

Luke 18:18 "And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ¹⁹And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, that is, God."

Would God share to anybody the honor and glory that is exclusive to Him? Is not God called Jealous²²? Therefore, for any person to appropriate these titles will promote idolatry of even higher order than the inanimate statues and

²¹ Exodus 20:2-5 "I am the LORD thy God...³ Thou shalt have no other gods before me. ⁴ Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: ⁵ Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God..."

²² Exodus 34:14 "...for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

images. Now we can identify who of the two classes of listeners are alluded to by our Lord in the following:

Luke 6:39 "And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

C. The *Temple* is the *glorified body* – not recognizable

Jesus with His glorified body was not recognized by Mary Magdalene:

John 20:12-16 "And seeth two angels in white sitting... where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? ...Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. ¹⁴And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. ¹⁶Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."

Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus until He revealed Himself to her through His "voice" (word). Definitely this has something to do with the current discussion of "understanding the word of our Lord." Let us be reminded of the "voice" of the Lamb and the "voice" of the Dragon. Did not Jesus tell His Disciples about this?

John 10:3 "...the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴And... the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."

Jesus was not recognized by His two Disciples on the way to Emmaus:

Luke 24:13-20 "And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus... ¹⁵And it came to pass, that, while they communed together... Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. ¹⁷And he said unto them, what manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? ¹⁸And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art

thou a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?¹⁹ And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:²⁰ And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him."

Luke 24:30 "And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight."

The two Disciples did not recognize Jesus until He took bread, broke it, and gave it to them. Jesus is the "bread" of life. He is the Word. Just as the resurrected Christ is not recognizable, so is the "spiritual word" not comprehensible until it is "broken" by our Lord. Breaking of bread" is "rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Does "study" come from man's effort?²³ Was it not Jesus who "broke the bread" for the two Disciples? Thus:

1 Corinthians 2:13 "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

The different topics discussed cannot be comprehended until our Lord Himself, through His word, "breaks" (rightly divide) and "gives" them to us as He did to His Disciples. Mark 4:34 clearly reveals this.²⁴ Did Jesus speak except in parables? Was the explanation of the parables entrusted to Peter, John, James or to any one else?

²³ James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. ⁷ For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. ⁸ A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

²⁴ Mark 4:34 "But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."

God is demonstrating in our discussion how the “letter” or the literal meaning is being nailed to the cross, giving rise to the “resurrected word.” This becomes comprehensible only after the “word is rightly divided.” Let us take note that it was Jesus who “broke the bread” and not His Disciples. So also it is with the guidance of the Holy Spirit that the “word is rightly divided,” sans human wisdom.

D. The *Temple*, the “body of Christ,” is the *church*:

First, our Lord nullified the perception that the *Temple* refers to the structure or edifice but to His *Body*. Now the *Body* of Christ further conveys the meaning of a “body or group” of His chosen or the Church.

Romans 12:5 “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

Ephesians 5:30 “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.”

Great revelations are therefore given in this parable of the *Temple*. If the *Temple* further symbolizes the Church, how does God reveal the great message of the following?

John 2:14 “And found in the temple those that sold... sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: ¹⁵And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables.”

Look how limited the understanding of the Natural Man²⁵ perceiving only at the “letter” or the literal *Temple*. But with the “breaking of bread,” or “rightly dividing the word of truth,” the objects in the *Temple* entirely present different perspectives. Consider the following:

1. Does not *Temple* symbolize the Church? Does not the general perception of the Church refer to the sect?

Romans 12:5 “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

2. Is not the Holy Spirit symbolized by a dove?

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:14 “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Luke 3:22 "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

3. Did not God in the Old Testament require His chosen to offer the blood of lambs and oxen?²⁶

Exodus 20:24 "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

4. Does not the shedding of blood of a lamb and oxen symbolize Christ dying on the cross?
5. Does not "buying and selling, and money changing" indicate commerce, and profit?
6. Were not the Scribes and Pharisees provoked by Christ's speaking the truth?
7. Is not Jesus Christ the *Truth*?
8. Can we not equally see the persecution and "crucifixion" of *Truth* by people affected by this 'grand expose'?
9. Are not "ministers of the New Testament" identified by the preaching of the "spirit" and the "ministers of the Old Testament" by the "letter" of the word?
10. How many people truly accept:

Matthew 22:14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Matthew 7:13 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. ¹⁵Beware of false prophets, which

come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

Is it worth asking?

Religious leaders interpret, "*the letter killeth,*" (2 Corinthians 3:6) and "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances... nailing it to his cross,*" (Colossians 2:14) solely referring to Laws given to Moses. *Tithes and offering* is one of these laws. Then why is the "letter" taken instead of the "spirit" of the ordinance? Is this not interpreting the word of God for personal benefit and profit?

8. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Who have not read or heard the Parable of the Sower where our Lord Himself explained the meaning?

Matthew 13:3-8 "...Behold, a sower went forth to sow; ⁴...some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: ⁵Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ⁶And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: ⁸But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold."

Our Lord's explanation:

Matthew 13:18-23 "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. ²⁰But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; ²¹Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. ²²He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. ²³But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and

understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Matthew 13:9 "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Matthew 13:10-15 "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? ¹¹He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given... ¹³Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand ¹⁴And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: ¹⁵For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

People may claim, "Lord did you not preach the word to us?" as in:

"Luke 13:26 "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets."

Luke 13:27 "But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me..." [Is not knowing supposed to be mutual?]

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT BY DIVINE REVELATION²⁷

As stated, the Holy Bible is accessible to all including Satan. Therefore, could Satan know the truth? Of course not, for the "letter" of the word is but one component of the truth. Truth requires "spiritual discernment" that Satan does not have. In like manner Satan did not recognize Jesus Christ. Otherwise, he would not have tempted the Scribes, Pharisees, the priests, the Jews, and Judas Iscariot to plan Jesus' death on the cross. If Satan truly recognized Jesus, he would have prevented His death for this is Christ's victory and His chosen few.

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:12 "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

Spiritual discernment is available only to those who have the Holy Spirit!

1 Corinthians 2:13 "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

As in the parable of the *Temple*, there are many more messages that only God conveys by divine revelation. This is the distinct privilege of His chosen people:

Mark 4:34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

It is not Peter, John, or Paul who is authorized to expound or interpret the parables, much more modern "apostles," but Christ alone. From the parable are revealed the following characters and objects:

The "sower" is God (Mark 4:14), our Lord (Luke 13:26), and His servants acting as "speaker system" sharing the truth to the people. The "seeds" is the truth in the word (Luke 8:11). The different places where the seeds fell are the people hearing the word. God will reveal the "fruits" later. How the "seeds" are spread to the different locations may be gleaned from the following:

Luke 13:26 "...We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets."

It should be underscored that *Truth* is distinguished from the *Word* as the former is exclusive to *Christ*, while the *Word* is accessible to all, including Satan.

Matthew 4:6 (Satan speaking) "...If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Satan is seen quoting the following:

Psalms 91:11 "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. ¹²They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Denominations of which Christianity is composed preach the *Word. Truth* is heard only from the “chosen few” (Matthew 22:14) who act as “speaker system” where Christ is the sole authority “speaking over the microphone.” This is gleaned from, “*And Jesus expounded all things to His Disciples.*” Only the chosen can pass the two tests for spirits:

TEST 1 – ON THE IDENTITY OF JESUS

1 John 4:1-3 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. ²Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: ³And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

Question:

Who is “Jesus Christ come in the flesh?” The Father, or the Son?

The answer is taken up in Chapter 5: GOD IS IDENTIFYING HIMSELF!

TEST 2 – ON THE “VOICE” OF THE LAMB

Revelation 13:11 “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.”

Question:

Here the “beast” is a look-alike as the Lamb of God. Satan is a look-alike of Jesus Christ. What is the “voice of the Lamb” as distinguished from the “voice of the dragon?”

The subject discussed in this book, more particularly in this Chapter.

A. “SEEDS BY THE WAY SIDE DEVoured BY FOWLS”

“And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.”

Jesus' explanation:

Matthew 13:19 "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side."

This is what every sect preaches as explanation of the "seeds by the way side devoured by fowls" of which Satan also has access to the explanation of our Lord Jesus. The doctrines of each sect are claimed as the "seeds." This is how Satan through his ministers²⁸ deceives the whole world.²⁹

Spiritual discernment by divine revelation:

The "way side" refers to people who want to hear the *Truth*. "Fowls" are also people in the following:

Job 12:7 "...they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee."

Look how the Scribes and Pharisees match the role of the "fowls of the air that devoured the seeds" in the following:

Matthew 23:13 "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

God's words never pass away. Who are the "spiritual fowls" in our time preventing people from hearing the *Truth*? They may be zealous and have worthy of purpose, but it is written:

Romans 10:2 "For Me bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. ³For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to

²⁸ 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness..."

²⁹ Revelation 12:9 "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

As a result, the "seeds of truth cannot germinate" on people who are not given the chance to hear it.

B. "SEED INTO STONY PLACES"

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away."

Jesus' explanation:

Matthew 13:20 "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."

This is what every sect preaches as explanation of the "seed into stony places." The "seed" are their respective doctrines. Again let us be reminded that Satan having access to the word of God can use it to deceive. Definitely, he can quote the explanation of our Lord about the "seed into stony places." Could there be more than one truth if different denominations claim the truth? Satan is never expected to know the truth. Does not our Lord refer to "spiritual discernment" as the "secret opened to His chosen?"

Colossians 1:26 "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."

1 Corinthians 2:13 "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

Spiritual discernment by divine revelation:

"Stony place" refers to the hardened or "stony heart."

Job 41:24 "His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone."

In the parable, a person understands and gets excited with the great message of the word. However, the “heat of the “sun” scorched this enthusiasm and withered away. These are references of the things “under the sun” that Solomon found may scorch passion for the truth:

Ecclesiastes 1:14 “I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

Ecclesiastes 2:11 “Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.”

Ecclesiastes 2:20 “ Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.”

Ecclesiastes 6:1 “There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men.”

Ecclesiastes 2:22 “For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?”

The things “under the sun” therefore are those that simply boost up one’s ego; this may be in the fields of politics, business, social, and other activities in life.

C. “SEED AMONG THE THORNS”

“Seed fell among thorn” and the thorns sprung up, and choked them”

Jesus’ explanation:

Matthew 13:22 “He that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

Spiritual discernment by divine revelation:

Here the "soil" or person heard, accepted the truth, and became a chosen of God. This great privilege is lost for the following reasons:

1. One reference for "thorns" is slothfulness or indolence:

Proverbs 15:19 "The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns..."

Esau lost his blessings and birthright because of indolence. Instead of working, he exchanged his birthright for a piece of bread and a cup of soup:

Genesis 25:29-34 "And Jacob sod pottage... ³⁰And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint...³¹And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. ³²And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? ³³And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright."

Hebrews 12:16 "...Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. ¹⁷For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

2. The other reference for "thorns" is emotionalism:

King Saul who is a chosen of God clearly showed this trait when the people looked up at David more than he.

1 Samuel 18:6 "...when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick. ⁷...Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. ⁸And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? ⁹And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. ¹⁰...and

David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand. ¹¹And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice."

Saul was "intoxicated" with envy.

Proverbs 26:9 "As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools."

Psalms 69:12 "They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards."

Saul was already "at the gate" of truth³⁰, but extreme envy for David caused his downfall. He committed suicide and going with it is his spiritual death:

1 Samuel 31:4 "Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith... But his armourbearer would not... Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. ⁵And his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead..."

Judas Iscariot, one of the 12 chosen Apostles showed this characteristic of slothfulness when he wanted to get rich by 30 pieces of silver. Why did he not just work for it? "*Deceitfulness of riches, choke the word*" was aptly seen in Judas.

Matthew 26:15 "And said unto them, what will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."

Judas was likewise "drunk" with self-image when he dipped his finger in the platter of our Lord.

Matthew 26:23 "And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. ²⁴The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."

³⁰ John 10:9 "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

Clearly, Judas felt he was above his fellow apostles in relation to Jesus. Where now is, *"all ye are brethren"* (Matthew 23:8), and the prohibition of respect to persons in spiritual matters?

James 2:9 "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

Matthew 23:12 "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased..."

"Deceitfulness of riches, choke the word" also applies to being "rich in spirit," the opposite of "poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). "Rich in spirit" means fertile in human reasoning and emotionalism in spiritual matters. This is a fertile ground for pride. Non-fruitfulness of "seeds smothered with thorns" is revealed to Paul in:

Hebrews 6:4 "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, ⁵And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

2 Peter 2:22 "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

D. "SEED ON GOOD GROUND"

Jesus' explanation:

Matthew 13:23 "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Spiritual discernment by divine revelation:

To God how good is "good ground" where it symbolizes His chosen? Does "hundredfold, sixty, and thirty" indicate quantity, or spiritual maturity according to the degree of humility? Simon Peter is compared with Paul in spiritual maturity

Galatians 2:14 (Paul speaking) "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

Brothers John and James and the rest of the Apostles:

Mark 10:35-41 "And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. ³⁶And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? ³⁷They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. ³⁸But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask... ⁴⁰...to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give... ⁴¹And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John."

John the Baptist compared with Mary Magdalene:

John 1:29 "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Where is John's announcement of knowing Jesus Christ even introducing Him to the people?³¹

Matthew 11:2-5 "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, ³And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? ⁴Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: ⁵The 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."

How could John doubt Jesus Christ is the Messiah? Now for Mary Magdalene:

³¹ John 1:29 "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Luke 7:37-39 "...a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,³⁸ And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment."³⁹ "Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."

Mark 16:9 "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."

Matthew 26:13 "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

Since God is more concerned with the *degree of humility*, "fruits of hundredfold, sixty, and thirty" is not quantitative but the *degree of spiritual maturity*. God's thoughts and ways are not men's thoughts and ways.

Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."

