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MONTHLY NOTES

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[Note: The views expressed in the following articles are not necessarily endorsed by the British-Israel World Federation (Victorian Headquarters) Inc.]

AT REST

The eternal God *is thy* refuge,
And underneath *are* the everlasting arms.

It is with deep sadness that we inform of the passing of JOHN WALKE, brother of Val, in the St Vincent de Paul Nursing Home, Box Hill on 3rd September. He was mentor to so many of us in Melbourne and was known for his great knowledge of Scripture. He was a stalwart of the Victorian Branch from the early 1960's when he took over as Book Room Manager, a position he retained for 40 years, serving at the Block Arcade in Collins Street and later at Majorca House in Centreway then at 6 Palmerston Street Camberwell, Melbourne. His duties also entailed the organizing of the Easter Conferences which had quite a large attendance in those earlier days. John also served on the BIWF (Victoria Headquarters) Inc. Council.

His great love was teaching from the Bible, and his extensive knowledge of Scripture was used in the service of God, and his knowledge in this area will be greatly missed.

Furthermore it is with great sadness that we inform our friends of the passing of VAL WALKE on 21st October, at the Cabrini Prahran Palliative Care Hospital Melbourne. It is hard for us at the Victorian Headquarters to imagine how we can carry on without Val, such was her contribution. This year she was unable to continue writing her much renowned and loved Monthly Notes due to ill-health. Val has served the BIWF for so many years and she served on the Council from 1970. After Val retired from her salaried position in 1986, her mother's health began to fail, so she then nursed her mother for the next 10 years. Almost immediately after this, her brother John began to show signs of ill health and Val nursed him until he was admitted to the St Vincent de Paul Nursing Home in Box Hill earlier this year. Sadly she survived him by only six weeks. Over many years the Walke family home has been a place of learning, love and encouragement, hospitality at all times, and a venue for prayer service and Bible studies. The home contained a wonderful library. Val was an exceptional person, who has in her lifetime brought many people to a knowledge of the truth.

Malachi 3.16 Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.

3.17 And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

THE PARABLES OF MATTHEW 13

A dictionary definition of a parable is: A simple story told to illustrate a moral truth.

The first parable taught by our Lord in Matthew 13 is the parable of the sower. After He had completed this, He said in verse 9, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Apparently these parables of the kingdom of heaven are for some people to understand but to other people they withhold the truth. As we shall see from reading Christ's words in these parables, He explained them only to His disciples and said to them that they were given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to the others it was not given for them to understand, as we read in Matthew 13.10-11:

Matthew 13.10 And the disciples came, and said unto Him, "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?"

13.11 He 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."

Now let us go back and read the **first parable**:

Matthew 13.1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side, 13. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

In the **1st parable** the sower sows seed in the **field** which we know from the second parable is the **world**. The **seed** in Luke 8.11 is the **word of God**. In the next parable of the wheat and the tares the seed is **people**.

(Verse 19 is even more specific and calls the seed in this parable '**the word of the kingdom**'. This is very important because it is the 'Word of the kingdom' that is not being preached today.

Matthew 13.3 And He spake many things unto them in parables saying, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

13.4 And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the wayside and the fowls came and devoured them up:

13.5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

13.6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

13.7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

13.8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

13.9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

We now see that for a period of time after verse 10, when the question is asked as to why He spoke to them in parables, the Lord was not addressing the multitude but only His disciples and He was alone with them. This is made clear in Mark 4.10 when He was teaching the same parable:

Mark 4.10 And when He was alone, they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parable.

Returning to where we left off in Matthew 13.10 we read in answer to the disciple's question.
"Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?"

Matthew 13.11 He 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.

13.12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

What an amazing concept this is! And, of course, opposed to much of the Marxist philosophy taught today, of taking from those who have, in order to give to those who have not. However, this specious type of benevolence can lead to abuse and requires tyrannical government to force a redistribution, and may remind one of the Proverb:

Proverbs 12.10 A righteous *man* regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel.

It is easy to see the Lord's principle of giving more to those who have more being acted out here, because the disciples who had been favoured with the Lord's company and His wonderful teaching were now singled out to receive the further precious gift— knowledge of the mystery of the kingdom of heaven — explained to them so that they could understand it.

Their understanding came from God as does all understanding. Here it was coming from the Lord's explanation to them into a mind He had made receptive. But this was not the case with the multitude.

Matthew 13.13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not; neither do they understand.

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:**

13.15 *For this Peoples 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.*’

13.16 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears for they hear.

13.17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.’

Daniel at the end of his book in chapter 12 verse 8 wrote:

Daniel 12.8 And I heard, but I understood not: Then said I, “O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*? ”

12.9 And He said, ‘Go thy way Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.’

In Matthew 13.18 the Lord explains the parable of the sower to His disciples. On finishing this He then, in verse 24, began to put forth another parable, *outside* to the *multitude*.

But before this He explained the parable of the sower which was given in the house only to the disciples:

Matthew 13.18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

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 that received seed by the way side.

The birds or fowls in the first parable of the sower were instrumental in snatching away the **word of the kingdom** that was not understood, as we read in verse 19.

The word of God may be preached today. It is the **Word of the kingdom** that is not being preached.

13.20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon (immediately) with joy receiveth it;

13. 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but **dureth (endureth) for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word,*** by and by he is offended.

*Persecuted because of “the word of the kingdom”. Note: The bold type and underlining were, of course, added.

This parable puts away the false doctrine of “once saved always saved” and enables us to see that there are those who **believe for a while**. We also see why Paul was so insistent with his followers to watch lest they should fall away. An example of this is in the touching scene when he was about to leave them to return to Jerusalem and said to them:

Acts 20.25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

20.28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

20.29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

20.30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

20.31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Returning to our Lord's explanation of the parable of the sower:

Matthew 13.22 He 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.

It is interesting here to compare this scriptural passage with the comparable verses in the Gospels of Mark and Luke:

Mark 4.18 And these are they that are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

4. 19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. (i.e. the word)

In Matthew we read that "he that heareth the word" becomes unfruitful, in Mark "it", the word becomes unfruitful.

Luke 8.14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Here they bring no fruit to perfection.

This parable does not say that the people stop hearing the word of God when they are choked with cares etc. The problem is that they bring no fruit to perfection maybe after a lifetime of hearing the word because of the cares and riches and pleasures of this life.

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.

Understand, Gr. *Suniemi* = understand,

(The bold print with underlining used here and subsequently, were added.)

So those who receive seed into the good (or prepared) ground differ in that they understand the "word of the kingdom of heaven" and then they can bare fruit. Often it is false doctrines which impede the understanding of the word in those who do not understand.

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.

In the 2nd parable the kingdom of heaven is likened to good seed sown by the man after which while men slept, tares are sown by his enemy. His field we are later told is the world. Here we are told in the interpretation that the seed represents people, whereas in the parable of the sower the seed was symbolic of the word of the kingdom

Matthew 13.24 Another parable put Him forth unto them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

13.25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

13.26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

13.27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, ‘Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?’

13.28 He said unto them, ‘An enemy hath done this.’ The servants said unto him, ‘Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?’

13.29 But he said, ‘Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

13.30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn.’”

Bullinger in his Companion Bible draws attention to the word “**another**” (Greek *allos*) introducing this parable in verse 24. This word he says, introduces the parables spoken outside to the multitude, whereas those spoken within the house to the disciples alone are introduced by the word “**again**” as we shall see later in those parables only spoken to the disciples (vv. 44, 45, 47).

The reason why these parables are so seldom taught today is dealt with in the next article on the subject of Futurism. The futurist interpretation teaches the righteous are taken away first leaving the wicked with the world.

When our Lord finished putting forth the parable of the wheat and the tares in verse 30, He immediately began with the word “**Another**” telling in verse 31 & 32 the 3rd parable likening the kingdom of heaven to a grain of mustard seed.

After that, in verse 33 we read “**Another**” 4th parable told to the multitude likening the kingdom of heaven to leaven spoken to the multitude.

After this 4th parable on leaven, the Lord sent the multitude away and went into the house:

Matthew 13.36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house: and His disciples came unto Him, saying, “Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.”

Our Lord’s explanation of the “parable of the wheat and the tares” is now told in **Matthew 13.37-43**

13.37 He answered and said unto them, “He that soweth the good seed is the **Son of man;**

13.38 **The field is the world;** the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*;

13.39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

13.40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

13.41 The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

13.42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

13.43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Probably no other passage destroys current false teaching as this parable. Here we have an example of what is meant by Ephesians 5.26 where it says: “That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” We find almost universal teaching today that at the end of this age, the true Christians will be taken away in the Rapture leaving all others on the earth. This parable as well as the parable of the net and the fish, clearly state that it is the unrighteous who will be taken away for judgment first. It appears that this false teaching is necessary in order to support the futurist doctrine of the interpretation of the Book of Revelation.

If the Historical interpretation of this book were to become widely known then the truth of this book and consequently the whole Bible would become undeniable to any thinking person. The futurist doctrine of the Book of Revelation destroys the book. Read more about this in the next article.

In the 3rd parable the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a **tiny mustard seed** which is sown in the field, which is the world, and described in this parable (verse 32) as “the least of all seeds”, and grows, “and becometh a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

Matthew 13.31 Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 13.32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

We are told in the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares that in the kingdom exist side by side the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one. But do we know or are we told or can we find out who the children of the kingdom are?

Deuteronomy 7.7 The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

The Jerusalem Bible says: “you were the least of all peoples.”

Then we read:

Genesis 22.15 And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

22.16 And said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*,

22.17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

22.18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice.

So the small seed has become multiplied as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea shore as promised.

To understand the kingdom of heaven we must realize that the planting is done in the field and the field is the world and in it are planted the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one. If we realize these facts it makes the rest of the Bible more understandable because we begin to realize that the **kingdom of heaven is in the world now, and in it are the righteous and the wicked.**

In verse 24 the Lord puts forward the 4th parable likening the kingdom of heaven to leaven before sending the multitude away in verse 36 after which He went into the house and explained the parable of the wheat and the tares to the disciples. “To those who have will more be given.”

The **4th parable** adds to our knowledge of the kingdom of heaven, for it tells that the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Matthew 13.33 Another parable spake He unto them; "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Leaven is always used in a bad sense, and meal is always used in a good sense in Scripture. Leaven occurs 18 times in the O.T. and 11 times in the N.T.

Meal is always used in a good sense in Scripture, 11 times in the OT; then once in Matthew and once in Luke.

The evil leaven is unpretentious at first but destined to take over the righteous lump of meal. Note that a search of Scripture reveals that leaven is always evil and meal always good in Scripture. Apparently we are being taught the necessity for avoiding contamination of good with evil and how evil can spread with such devastating results. To understand the meaning of this parable it is important to search the Scriptures to find other references to leaven. Relevant references are in Matthew 16, Mark 8 and Luke 12.

Matthew 16.11 How is it that you do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

16.12 Then understood they how that He bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Figures of speech are used so frequently in Scripture as we see in these parables.

We can read in Matthew 21 verse 43 that Christ told the Chief priests and Pharisees that they were to have the kingdom of God taken from them and “given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof”:

There are other references to “leaven” in the New Testament where we are warned of the danger of false doctrine spreading through the righteous. These are to be found in Paul’s epistles

I Corinthians 5.6 . . . Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

5.7 Purge out therefore the old **leaven**, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:

5. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old **leaven**, neither with the **leaven** of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

The remaining verses in this chapter are very important and tell how that the actions of those outside the church, God will judge, but those within it, and commit sins not repented of, such as fornication, we have to judge and take action to stop the sin from spreading like leaven spreads.

Paul also mentions leaven in Galatians:

Galatians 5.9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

All the rest of the parables after this 4th one about the leaven, are reserved for the disciples only.

In the 5th parable, the kingdom of heaven is likened to treasure hidden in a field.

We see the word “again” introducing and linking together the last three parables which are spoken only to the disciples.

Matthew 13.38 in the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares, gives the clue to the symbology of “field”. The field is the world.

Matthew 13.44 Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

The “man” in the previous parable about the Wheat and the Tares is the “Son of man.”

We know that the field is the world, so what is the treasure hidden in the field (hidden in the world)? The clue is in Exodus 19.5

Exodus 19.5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine:

19.6 And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

So putting together the symbols for this parable:

The man, which we now know is the “Son of man” Who found treasure, —His people Israel, hidden in the field, —in the world which having found it, He hid it again and then He gave all that He had —which was His life, and bought the field, —the world.

Paul in I Corinthians confirms that his Christian followers were “bought with a price.”

I Corinthians 6.20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

I Corinthians 7.23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

In the next **6th parable** the kingdom of heaven is likened to a **merchant man** seeking goodly pearls, who when he has found one of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Returning to the parables commencing with “again” and only for the ears of the disciples we read:

Matthew 13.45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

13.46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Pearl is only mentioned once in the Old Testament where it appears in Job in connection with the price of wisdom, however, in Revelation 21.21 we read a connection between “pearl”, “Israel” and the gates of the New Jerusalem:

Revelation 21.21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl:

On these gates of pearl we are told in **Revelation 21.12**, was written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Revelation 21.12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

In the 7th parable the kingdom of heaven is likened to a net, that was cast into the sea:

Matthew 13.47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:
13.48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.
13.49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,
13.50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

This parable confirms again that it is the wicked ones who are removed from the world at the end of the world, not the righteous as so many preachers say.

We have mentioned how that the Lord revealed the mystery of the kingdom to His disciples and not to the multitude. Now in verse 51 we are given the confirmation that they have understood what He has told them.

Matthew 13.51 Jesus saith unto them, “Have ye understood all these things?” They say unto Him, “Yea, Lord.”

Having established this, He can now go on to the 8th parable:

In the 8th parable every scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is a householder who brings forth out of his treasure, things new and old.

13.52 Then said He unto them, “Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

So in addition to teaching out of Moses and the prophets of old, now that they understand it, there is this new teaching from the Lord about the kingdom of heaven. We can say it is new on the basis of what our Lord said in Matthew 13.35:

Matthew 13.35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, “I will open My mouth in parables: I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

(This was quoted by our Lord from Psalm 49.4 & 78.2)

In studying these parables it becomes obvious that the kingdom of heaven is here on earth and that there are in it the children of the kingdom and also the children of the wicked one.

The kingdom of heaven is not “heaven” as preached today because we read of it as being like a seed being planted in the earth. Also the wicked as well as the righteous are in it at present. There is nothing in Scripture to suggest that God has allowed anything wicked in His abode. It is apparently the earth where the kingdom of heaven is planted and where the children of the kingdom have been given to live.

Psalm 115.16 states:

Psalm 115.16 *The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath He given to the children of men.*

115.17 *The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.*

The only reason verse 17 was included here is because it destroys another popular but false doctrine.

Isaiah 60.21 *Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified.*

60.22 *A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his (its) time.*

The gospel of the kingdom of heaven must be very important because it was the gospel preached by John the Baptist, Our Lord, Peter and Paul. The importance of the gospel of the kingdom of God is made very clear from the first words of John the Baptist when it was first proclaimed. It was preached and taught by our Lord and the apostles. Paul is recorded in the last few verses of the Book of Acts as preaching the kingdom of God in Rome.

In first proclaiming it John the Baptist's preaching was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 3.1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

3.2 And saying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Paul preached the **kingdom of God** as we read at the end of the Book of Acts:

Acts 28.23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

28.24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Here we see how important it is to preach Jesus Christ out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, showing how He was the fulfilment of prophecy. Also:

Acts 28.30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

28.31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

The kingdoms of this world in Daniel 2 which made up the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream were reckoned as those kingdoms which ruled over Jerusalem in sequence.

These were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome etc. All these kingdoms came into existence well before the time when they became the world dominating power. For instance Rome was said to have been founded in 753 BC, whereas it became the dominant world power after the Battle of Actium in BC 31. So it is with the kingdom of God. We are told in Daniel 2.44 that the kingdom of God was set up in the days of the kings making up the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and that it shall never be destroyed. Of course, the kingdom of God has not yet reached its supreme power. However, as the Jewish nation centred in Jerusalem was governed by a High Priest ruler and his lackeys at the time of our Lord, these could be said to rule over the kingdom of God. This was confirmed by the words of our Lord when he addressed the chief priests and Pharisees in Matthew 21.

Matthew 21.43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

21.44 And whosoever shall fall on this Stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever It shall fall, It will grind him to powder."

21.45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them.

There appears no doubt that the kingdom of God could not be taken from these chief priests and Pharisees had they not already possessed it.

The story of how these people usurped control is told in Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* Book XIV, chapter XII. Here we are told that Herod bribed the Roman leader Antony who made him king of the Jewish nation.

Herod marched on Jerusalem with the help of the Roman army and had Antigonus, the last of the Maccabean High Priest Rulers of the Jewish nation murdered. Herod, who was an Edomite (a descendant of Esau), now apparently set about putting in place chief priest rulers who would serve his interests.

F W Farrar in his book *The Herods* p.81 writes:

It was now necessary for Herod to appoint a High Priest. . . . Hananeel of Babylon on whom Herod's choice fell, is identified by Derenbourg with the Annas of the Gospels, whose name acquired so sombre a pre-eminence in the Gospel narrative of Christ's condemnation. . . (his) son-in law was Joseph Caiaphas.

The Stone which is referred to in Daniel 2.44 evidently is our Lord Who is the Stone Who will strike the image on the feet bringing it down and ushering in the kingdom of God on earth.

Daniel 2.44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Revelation 11.15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever

Some comments on futurism:

E B Elliott, the writer of the most authoritative work on the Book of Revelation the "*Horae Apocalypticæ*" wrote in the preface of his book the reason for his writing it:

"When first I began to give attention to the subject, some twenty years ago, it was the increasing prevalence among Christian men in our country of the *futurist system of Apocalyptic interpretation*, —a system which involved the abandonment of the opinion held by all the chief fathers and doctors of our Church respecting the Roman Popes and Popedom as the great intended anti-Christian power of Scripture prophecy, —that suggested to me the desirableness, and indeed necessity, of a more thoroughly careful investigation of the whole subject than had been made previously".

Today the Book of Revelation is not often discussed and on the occasions it is, the only interpretation seems to be the futurist interpretation. This Book is one of the most important parts of Scripture where God tells "the end from the beginning" in fulfilment of Isaiah 46.10 which is quoted later.

Surely this Book was not called Revelation to be made into a mystery. Futurism makes it so.

Roy Coad in his book "*A History of the Brethren Movement*" p. 128 writes about the origin of futurism:

“This view had first been suggested by the Jesuit Francisco Ribera in the sixteenth century, and had been popularised in the early years of the nineteenth century by the translation into English of the work of another Jesuit, Manuel Lacunza, who (under the pen-name of Ben Ezra) had written a long treatise, *The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty*. This was the futurist view, according to which the Revelation, except for the first few chapters, predict the events of a closing few years of Divine judgement on the earth. Many of them believed this era to be imminent. It would be inaugurated by the appearance of Antichrist, a violent persecutor of the Church, and would be closed by the Second Advent of Christ, when He would appear in glory to destroy the oppressor and to establish the millennial reign of peace and righteousness.

Into this system both Darby and Irving had injected a further refinement, based upon a detailed attempt to reconcile the different parts of the New Testament which they considered to be relevant. In their view, the Second Advent would take place in two stages: First, there would be a quiet appearance—the “presence”—of Christ, when all true Christians would be removed from the earth. This was the “rapture of the saints.” Only then, when the restraining presence of the Holy Spirit in His own people had been removed from the world scene, would Antichrist arise. His rule would be brought to an end by the second stage of the Advent —the public “appearing” of Christ in glory.

There was plainly a problem in this interpretation. . . . If the Church were to be removed before the persecution of Antichrist started, who then would be the faithful ones who would suffer at his hands?"

In order to overcome this problem Darby came up with the following solution according to Coad p. 129:

"He distinguished sharply between the Old Testament economy and the New Testament economy. Following out this distinction, he taught that the faithful remnant of the tribulation under Antichrist would be, in effect, a restoration of the Old Testament economy: they would be a remnant of Jews remaining faithful to God in the fires of persecution. In the millennial reign of Christ, all the Old Testament promises to the Jewish People would have a literal fulfilment, while the Church, the "saints" of the dispensation of grace, would have no part in that "earthly" reign. In contrast to these "earthly" hopes of the Jewish remnant, the promises to the Church were essentially "heavenly" in character."

All this nonsense is to prevent God's people from realizing that the Book of Revelation is a prophecy now largely fulfilled. The Book of Revelation is written in symbolic language using symbols from the Old Testament. The futurist interpretation has all but destroyed knowledge of the Book of Revelation's precious fulfilled prophecy.

If the historical interpretation were to become widely known it would show many that God has indeed told the end from the beginning.

Now that much of this prophecy in the Book of Revelation has come to pass, prophecy has become history and we are in a strategic position to examine it as E B Elliott has. Gibbon's *"Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"* covers a period similar to that of Revelation chapters 6-9 and is an invaluable help in this study.

Isaiah 46.9 Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; *there is* none like Me,

46.10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure:

It is no small thing for the word of God to be taken away from God's people as it has been! We can read how serious Jeremiah regarded a similar situation in Jeremiah chapter 18. In verse 18 we read:

Jeremiah 18.18 Then said they, "Come let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words."

At the time when Jeremiah wrote this, the Assyrians had already taken the Northern Tribes of Israel into captivity. Jeremiah had been sent to the people of the Southern Tribes of Judah by God and told to warn them of the consequences of refusing to turn back to their God.

Now in chapter 18 we read that some of the people were standing in the way of this warning of God being heard by the people.

Jeremiah knew how seriously God considers those who stop His word being heard by His people. Jeremiah was not just telling the people to fear the Babylonian armies, he was saying that God would send the Babylonians against them if they would not repent. It was not the Babylonians wrath Jeremiah was warning of, it was God's wrath. He said to God in verse 20 of this chapter 18 . . .

Jeremiah 18.20 Remember that I stood before Thee to speak good for them, *and* to turn away Thy wrath from them.

18.21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their *blood* by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and *be* widows; and let their men be put to death; *let* their young men *be* slain by the sword in battle.

Jeremiah does not remit in his condemnation and this serves to remind us of the seriousness of interfering with God's word being heard by His people. So where does that leave those who now stand in the way of God's written word being heard and read by His people! The proper understanding of the already fulfilled prophetic writings in Scripture would prove to God's people that Scripture must, indeed, have been written by God and therefore be true.

A few words on the Important Doctrine of Grace:

One dictionary definition of “Grace” is: help given man by God. Another common definition is: unmerited Divine favour.

It seems that Christianity is unique in that it teaches, or should teach, salvation by the grace of God.

All other religions including Roman Catholicism apparently teach salvation by good works. God’s word teaches that man cannot of himself perform works to the standard required by God. He needs help and that help is called “The Grace of God.” When England came to be dominated by the Church of Rome after the Council of Whitby in AD 664, most of the people of England lost the knowledge of the doctrine of the “Grace of God” because it was no longer preached to them. However, in 1325 there was a proctor at Oxford University named Bradwardine. “He excelled in mathematical knowledge, and was distinguished for his accurate and solid investigations in divinity. Bradwardine eventually gave himself up to the investigation of real gospel truth”. (See Milner’s “History of the Church of Christ” IV p 79)

It would seem that Bradwardine’s teaching became known to Wickliffe and later to Huss. Not much is told of the influence of Bradwardine, and the last thing the enemies of God want is the knowledge of the “Grace of God.” to become widely known.

Here is a quote from Milner's "*History of the Church of Christ*" volume 4 page 95, where Milner quotes from the writings of Bradwardine:

"Whereas my ears were assailed, the day through, with such assertions as: 'We are the masters of our own free actions: it is in our own power to do well or ill, and to have virtues or vices.' And when I heard those parts of Scripture read in the church which extol the grace of God and lower the free-will of man, for example:

"It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy". (Romans 9.16)

And many similar passages, this doctrine of grace was very disagreeable to my ungrateful mind. But afterwards when I reflected on the nature of the Divine character, on the knowledge of God, and His prescience, I began to perceive some few distant rays of light.

My mind had been puffed up with worldly books, worldly wisdom, and worldly knowledge; but after my heart was visited with the influences of DIVINE GRACE, I grasped with the greatest eagerness the sacred writings which were dictated by the Holy Spirit; and above the rest, those of the Apostle Paul. Then fell to the ground all my objections, and all the apparent contradictions in the Scriptures. The Bible spoke to my mind one simple language of pure truth, and with this additional praise of the Divine Grace constantly inculcated..... that no man should glory as though he had not received."

End of Bradwardine's quote from Augustine, as recorded in Milner's "History of the Church of Christ" volume 4 page 95.

St Paul in a peculiar way was a child of grace and wrote much on it. We know from the Biblical description of his conversion that he played no meritorious part in it and was sorry and remorseful. He wrote of two types of sorrow in II Corinthians 7.

II Corinthians 7.10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

If we mention this to the preachers today, some may say, "**But we have free-will, to accept, or reject God.**" If this is not sufficient, then they will say that if we are given a gift, we must at least put out our hand and receive it! All the time it is being suggested that we must do something for our salvation and that God somehow faces an uncertainty as to whether we might reject His free gift. All this fails to comprehend Scripture and the power of God to put in us the desire to want His gift. God is completely sovereign, He hardened Pharaoh's heart when He willed it, and He softened Jeremiah's heart after Jeremiah hesitated in his mission as described in the Book of Jeremiah chapter 20.

Moffatt translation: Jeremiah 20.7-11

7

Eternal One, Thou didst persuade me,
And I let myself be persuaded!
Thou wast too strong for me; I had to yield.
Now all day long I am a laughing stock;
men all deride me.

Whenever I speak, they mock,
and they ill-treat me;
for uttering the Eternal's word
day after day,
I am taunted and insulted.

If I say, "I will not mention it,
I will not speak in His name any more,"
Then I feel within me as it were
a fire that burns my very being.
I am tired of this,
so tired I cannot bear it any longer;
at every turn I am in terror,

for I hear many whispering,
"Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"
My very friends are on the
watch for a false step;
"Perhaps," they whisper,
"he will make a slip;
and then we have him,
then for our revenge!"

Ah, but I have the Eternal on my side,
A dread and doughty champion!
My persecutors shall collapse
And miss their aim;
bitter shall be their shame
over their failure,
a lasting shame to them,
never to be forgotten.

Such was the Grace of God, to put in Jeremiah the desire to continue amid his utter despair at the task ahead of him.

Ephesians 2.8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God.*

2.9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

2.10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.