

Sunday March 10th 2024
From Time to Time – Part 24

1). Acts 9:1 *Then Saul, [Paul] still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of **the Way**, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

We had seen last time that prior to Paul's conversion on the Road to Damascus, those who we would now think of as Christians were known as those of the Way. And they were called this, we will remember, because they were followers, disciples, of the One who said – Jn 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life...."*

And Jesus had made this statement to His disciples in the context of His going to prepare a place for them with respect to the New Jerusalem and rulership in the Seventh Day, with the promise that if He did go to prepare this place, which He did at His ascension, then He would come again to receive them to Himself. And His disciples then witnessed His ascension, His going away, which guaranteed His return, as we see recorded in – Acts 1:9 *Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

For Peter, James, and John at least, the promise made by the two men who stood by them in white apparel concerning the Lord's return, was something they had already witnessed on the mount of transfiguration - 2 Pe 1:16 *For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart.....*

Peter, James, and John had seen the Lord come again, and would therefore know that because of the event they witnessed, the promised place was prepared. They had seen the appearing of His glory, that which Paul later wrote to Titus about - Mt 17:1 *Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and **He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.** 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.*

Tit 2:11 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for **the blessed hope the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,** 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

Peter, James, and John over two thousand years ago, witnessed in real-time the event that is the blessed hope from Titus. The same

event that we are to constantly look for. And to constantly look for it having the certainty that it must take place, because it already has taken place, as witnessed by the three on the holy mountain and recorded in the Scripture. And when the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ does appear within our own experience, just as it did on the mountain for Peter, James, and John, then, we also know what comes next as the same John who was on the holy mountain was allowed to see first-hand what will take place when it does –

Re 1:9 I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." 12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

John witnessed and recorded, the events that follow the resurrection/rapture of the church, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Events that are certain in every detail because they have already taken place and John recorded them, giving us the absolute assurance, and understanding of what we will experience when our present catches up, so to speak, with that which has already happened. You see we are not asked to have faith to the saving of the soul with respect to something that may happen but to believe that which has happened because that very fact means it must therefore happen.

a). And at the Judgment Seat of Christ at which we must all appear because we have already appeared there, our works will be judged. And these works, as we see from Titus will have to do with,

denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, so that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age. And to do this would make us disciples of the Way, the Truth and the Life, the Lord Jesus Christ- Jn 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

These verses from John Chapter 6 follow on from the Lord’s instructions about eating His flesh and drinking His blood and in them we can see the contrast made between those who would hear His words and have life for the age as the end result of their faith, having eaten His flesh and drunken His blood, and those who would not believe, who would not have that same faith and would have no life for the age, having eaten something else. The words that the Lord has spoken to us that give life are synonymous with that which the grace of God has taught us, seen in Titus.

b). And we have seen through John’s account in the Revelation, that it is at the Judgement Seat that the division between the faithful and unfaithful Christian is made - Mt 25:30 *And cast the unprofitable servant into **the outer darkness**. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*

The division that is made between those who have followed the Way, the Truth, and the Life to a glorious conclusion as an overcomer – 1 Jn 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

And those who have not purified themselves in this hope but have instead gone a different way, being overcome, into the darkness outside. And these two contrasting outcomes we had seen last time described by the Lord in- Mt 7:13 *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide*

is the gate and broad is the way [that seems right to a man] that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult [in the sense of being pressed, as a grape] is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

And interestingly, as we continue with the verses from Matthew Chapter 7, we find that the verses that contrast the broad way, and the narrow Way are immediately followed by a familiar warning –
Mt 7:15 **“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**

We can then make a connection between that spoken by the ‘false prophets’ and the broad way that leads to destruction, to which we can add – Acts 20:29 *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

And this from - 2 Pe 2:1 *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*

The false prophets among the Jews and the false teachers among Christians parallel one another, with the same destructive results. We might remember the events of Kadesh Barnea, and the rejection of

the Kingdom of the heavens and what these point to from a Christian perspective.

c). We will realize then, that the Way that we are to follow leading to life in the age to come can only be revealed through the Truth, the 'epignosis' knowledge brought forth from above. Only through rightly dividing the Word of Truth, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, comparing Scripture with Scripture, beginning with Moses. It will never be found in the letter, as the letter kills. It will never be found in the wisdom of men as they embrace the wisdom of the world. And never in the misuse and abuse of the Scriptures, no matter how well intentioned.

d). And there is another connection we will want to make between the many who will follow the destructive ways of the false teachers and the metaphor of the bad tree used to describe the false prophets in Matthew Chapter 7. And this connection comes from –
Ge 1:12 *And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and **the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind.** And God saw that it was good.*

According to what we see here in the foundation in Genesis Chapter 1, a tree can only produce after its own kind. The bad tree, therefore, the false prophet, could only produce another bad tree –
Mt 23:15 *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves.*

And this same truth holds true for today. 'Many' followed and continue to follow the destructive ways that were taught by the original false teachers, the tares, because the false teachers could not produce fruit except after their own kind. From their false teaching had to come those who were twice as much a son of Gehenna as they were, with their own false teaching. And these also could only produce after their own kind.

e). We can praise the Lord that the corollary of this is also true though, which will help us to better understand what we read in – 1 Jn 3:9 *Whoever has been born of God [brought forth from above - NOT a reference to the salvation we already possess] does not sin, for His seed [which must reproduce after its own kind] remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born [brought forth from above out] of God. [again, NOT a reference to the salvation we already possess]*

The one who is brought forth out of God by the wisdom from above, which can only have to do with the new man, cannot sin because that which is brought forth, the Word of Truth which he receives, can only produce after its own kind. And as this is seen as ‘His seed’, that which has no connection with sin can only produce the same.

f). And this is at the heart of the ‘metamorphosis’. The work of the Spirit to renew our mind through the ‘epignosis’ knowledge, must reproduce that which He is. The good tree must produce another good tree, which is exactly what we see – Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge **according to the image of Him** who created him.....*

And again - 1 Jn 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that **when He is revealed, we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is.*

For those who have embraced the Way, the Truth, and the Life, resulting in the completion of the ‘metamorphosis’, when He is revealed, a reference to the Judgment Seat, they shall be like Him. So, how will He be when He is revealed? Re 1:16 *He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, **and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.***

Mt 17:2 *and He was transfigured [metamorphoo] before them. **His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.***

Ro 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory which shall be revealed in us.***

Mt 13:43 *Then the righteous **will shine forth as the sun** in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

And to shine forth as the sun necessitates a redeemed spirit, a redeemed soul, and a redeemed body. The completion of the 'metamorphosis'. The Word of the Truth of the gospel having reproduced after its own kind – Jas 1:18 *Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

Col 1:3 *We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 **because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,** 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, **and is bringing forth fruit,** as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth.....*

And to these verses from James and Colossians we can add more from James Chapter 1, more familiar verses – Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness **the implanted word,** which is able to save your souls.*

The implanted Word here in James equates with the word of the truth of the gospel from Colossians. In Colossians this implanted word is seen to be bringing forth fruit and in James it makes possible the salvation of the soul. In both instances the implanted Word must

produce according to its kind. And as it does so, then the 'metamorphosis' is being brought to its conclusion and the salvation of the soul will be the end of the faith it produces, resulting in rulership in the Seventh Day – Ro 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

1 Co 3:6 *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.*

And all can be found in the mandate that God gave to Adam and the Woman - Ge 1:28 *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion [rule]**.....*

2). Now, if we might return to Matthew Chapter 7 for a moment, let's look at how the verses we have been looking at continue –

Mt 7:21 *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’*

That seen in these verses take us directly to the Judgment Seat. And what is presented in them is not an exhaustive catalogue of lawless practices done in His name, but what will be common to all is that they are the practice of those things which are contrary to what the Word of Truth teaches, that then, which can only be the wisdom from below through self-imposed religion. Each practice providing a way that seems right to a man but leading only to death for the age. And within the Laodicean context of this present time this specific catalogue of lawless practices may be particularly pertinent, but we should also consider adding to this list any religious practice that is

done purely for its own sake, or according to the traditions of men, that produces only the outward appearance of righteousness, the 'metaschema', as well.

a). And a non-exhaustive catalogue is something we should also keep in mind when considering the works of the flesh itemized for us in– Ga 5:19 *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, **and the like**; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

This catalogue of named works of the flesh, as with the lawless practices from Matthew Chapter 7, will immediately appeal to the old man, the man of the flesh, as it can readily generate a check list that can be kept. And for those with a predisposition towards the 'metaschema', the check list provides an opportunity for self-righteousness. Providing the opportunity for the individual to think, 'I don't do any of these things, therefore, I am walking in the Spirit.' However, there are three words in these verses that demonstrate the deceptiveness of such thinking, which are, 'and the like'. The actions itemized in this list then are examples of what the works of the flesh can look like, they are not all of them. It is not an exhaustive list. And we can find some irony in the fact that the individual who would consider themselves to be righteous through the keeping of the check list of the works of the flesh, is in that very action performing a work of the flesh. And those who consistently practice things like this, according to the Scripture, will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

b). And if we go back to the foundational truth of the tree bearing fruit according to its kind, we will realize that the man of the flesh, the old man, can only produce fruit that replicates his nature. The old man can only produce the old man. He can only produce works that are apart from faith. He can only reproduce that with which he has relationship, the wisdom from below under the direction of the god

of this age. Nothing else is possible and this will help explain why he can only grow more corrupt through the deceitful lusts. And it is because of this that the Scripture says-

Ro 14:23*for whatever is not from faith is sin.*

However, if we continue with the verses from Galatians Chapter 5, we find this – Ga 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

Following the same foundational truth from Genesis Chapter 1, the Holy Spirit can only produce fruit in an individual Christian according to His own kind. And in these verses, we see the fruit that the Spirit produces in us as we are continually filled with the Spirit, as He works the ‘metamorphosis’ in us. It is the Spirit who produces this fruit and the fruit that He produces in us will then be evident in our life as we walk in the Spirit, ‘by their fruits you will know them’. Depending on whether we are walking in the Spirit or in the flesh will determine the kind of fruit we will produce, because each can only produce after its own kind.

c). And these things are particularly significant as we remember what Jesus said to the Jews in – Mt 21:43 *“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

Given all that we have just looked at, what would we conclude about the fruit we are to bring forth so that the Kingdom of the heavens taken from the Jews can be given to us? The answer is pretty obvious but as we consider it, we will inevitably find ourselves drawn once again to – Mt 13:18 *“Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom.....23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”*

Lk 8:11 *“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. [Word of the Kingdom]*

Mt 13:37 *He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.*

This though we will continue with next time if we remain and the Lord is willing, and we have prayed.