

# **GOD'S CODED LANGUAGE**

is all about

# **TRANSPARENCY**



## PROLOGUE

Unlike secret societies and corrupt political and religious leaders, God Almighty is transparent. He has provided all of mankind with evidence of His existence and power. To His people, He has given them all what they need to know about His plan for them and the nations of the world. At the end of the age, God will judge all people; they will be without excuse.

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

The transparency of God is unveiled through His use of imagery, mirroring, parables, parallels, numbers, stories, and foreshadows, not to mention creation all around us on earth.

God is consistent in His use of His coded language. The imagery in the scriptures can be easily decoded when you understand how to use the key. Unlock the mysteries and enter into the world of Almighty God. You will find treasures never seen before and riveting prophecies lying on our near horizon.

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## THE GARDEN

*“The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing”*  
(Isaiah 51:3).

When Adam and Eve were created, they lived in the garden of Eden. “The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed” (Genesis 2:8).

God planted His garden in the same direction as His temple. This garden, where mankind was planted, is God’s penmanship at work, painting a picture of beauty and peace. It is an immediate visual for every man, woman, and child on earth of God’s language of His God family in the making. They are a reflection of cultivated parks, reserved forests, and natural wonders that triggers an awe-inspiring gasp.



God’s is seeding and growing His family. They will become a holy, royal, ruling family both in heaven and on earth. Located in Eden, God reveals His family home. He is at work, molding many different people who, when He is finished, will exhibit exceptional qualities and skills. They will be people with great strength: resilient, compassionate, patient, creative, resourceful,



law-keeping people. From out of darkness into glorious light, the members of God's family from earth will all be transformed into eternal bodies.

Creation on earth was not the first. Spirit beings were created and given an abode in heaven. These beings were created with essential upon their creation. They can distinguish right from wrong. Unfortunately, not all has gone well in heaven. Many have turned against their Creator, the Great God. His family in heaven has been darkened and His heavenly court corrupted. Mankind, God's second creation, will fill all of the positions once held by the fallen angels and sons of God. God is going to rebuild His fallen holy, heavenly court with repentant, righteous people. Satan is working hard to keep these plans from mankind. King David caught a glimpse of something very big and asked God, "What is man that you are mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:4)

### **TROUBLE IN HEAVEN**

A painful image is recorded by Ezekiel of the fall of the sons of God in His court in heaven. They were great leaders who once held critical positions that required an expert understanding of God's law. God uses the image of trees to describe them because on earth, trees are the tallest living creation. Man is small by comparison. God wants mankind to understand the spiritual growth of these once-great leaders. They had grown to great heights in understanding and knowledge of God's ways and His law, and yet, succumbed to Satan's wizardry; they turned against their Creator of whom, they once humbly loved and served.

The son of God holding the highest position in God's holy heavenly court was given rulership at the time of Babel, over Assyria on earth. God blessed this son with an outpouring of His Holy Spirit and he matured beyond the heights of the other members who could not rival it. "I made it beautiful with the multitude of its branches, and all the trees [leaders] of Eden [God's home], which were in the garden [family] of God, were jealous of it" (Ezekiel 31:9).

This son of God became proud of the height he reached and that pride festered into arrogance, corrupting his thinking. In grief, God held back His Holy Spirit and watched this once-great, heavenly leader become filled with rage and anger. "*It was proud of its height*, I [God] handed it over to the ruler of the nations, for him to deal with according to its wickedness. I cast it aside" (Ezekiel 31:10b). His fall triggered a series of battles by other fallen sons of God in heaven to rise and challenge his position. The Old Testament is a record of the fall of Babylon and Egypt, preserving the history of the rebel heavenly rulers, as they engaged with the kingdom of Israel.

One by one, the heavenly rulers over the nations failed to rule righteously. In God's deepest sorrow, He sentenced all of the fallen members of His holy court to the lowest and darkest prison, located inside the earth. God said, "*Then all the trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, all the trees that were well-watered, were consoled in the earth below*" (Ezekiel 31:16). These leaders were all esteemed members of God's family serving in high positions. They were the best in Lebanon, the location of God's court in heaven. It is not by coincidence that there exists on earth a place called Lebanon where the finest cedar trees grow.

These fallen angels listened and acted on the wizardry of Satan, the highly decorated guardian angel who was once perfect and blameless. When Lucifer was created, he was placed in God's

family in Eden and awarded one of the highest positions in all creation. “You [Lucifer] were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created, they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones” (Ezekiel 28:13-14).

Lucifer became proud of his beauty and that pride grew into arrogance causing him to fall out of light, deep into darkness. These fallen spiritual beings can be destroyed. They may deceive themselves and think they are invincible, but they are wrong. God is very clear on the fate of wicked, spiritual beings.

“God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgement among the ‘gods.’ “I said, ‘You are gods; you are all sons of the Most High. But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler’” (Psalm 82:1, 6).

Satan was once an angel of light who by choice, turned away from truth and adopted crafty thoughts that twisted and turned truth into confusion. He despises God’s second creation on earth. Though not briefed by God, he suspected that God would fill the positions once held by him and his followers with the second creation from earth. The angels are eager to know the details of God’s plan for mankind (I Peter 1:12). Satan wasted no time. He knew that mankind was created by God to grow into spiritual knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, as a baby grows into an adult. Before Eve matured to know better, he needed to lure her into his direction before she could see through his trickery. His plan was to capture both of them: Adam and Eve. Adam was created first and was more knowledgeable. Satan would have to formulate a clever narrative, one coated in the appearance of doing the right thing, while appealing to his ego.

He saw Adam and Eve in the garden that day and he approached Eve, while Adam stood by listening quietly. He presented a picture of the importance of having the knowledge of good and evil. This seems like a perfectly good statement and logical when deciding on options and the actions that follow.

The Apostle Paul understood God’s processes of spiritual growth. Disappointed in the spiritual growth of some, he said, “Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to reteach you the basic principles of God’s word. You need milk, not solid food! For everyone who lives on milk is still an infant, inexperienced in the message of righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained their senses to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Unfortunately, mankind is not spiritually mature enough to distinguish between good and evil. Eve was still an infant, still learning God’s word. She was vulnerable and Satan knew it. She listened to Satan and acted on his instructions; Adam followed. He knew better, but Satan won his loyalty in the same way that he caused the heavenly angels to turn from God. Adam and Eve

realized they sinned when immediately, they lost their shining covering. Their mistakes threw mankind into a six-thousand-year spiral into darkness.

The fate of God's second creation, who were to become members of God's holy, royal, ruling family, was the death sentence. Satan was delighted, thinking he had thwarted God's plan to extend His eternal family. Satan's delight and claim as a win for him, is a delusion. The fallen angels are excluded from the knowledge of God's plan for mankind; believers are not excluded. Believers have been given the key to understanding God's plan precisely and clearly. Satan reveled in the acquisition of his rulership over earth. The great flood was another win for him, he believed. Satan's confidence has ballooned as he roars, lurking in the shadows seeking who he can devour (I Peter 5:8).

God foresees events and choices eons into time. His plan was designed knowing the outcome, before creation began. The king ruling over ancient Assyria bragged to the king of Judah of his many conquests and the expected victory over the Jews. King Hezekiah prayed to God and He responded directly to the heavenly ruler over Assyria.

"Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it; in days of old I planned it. Now I have brought it to pass, that you should crush fortified cities into piles of rubble. Therefore, their inhabitants, devoid of power, are dismayed and ashamed. They are like plants in the field, tender green shoots, grass on the rooftops, scorched before it is grown. But I know your sitting down, your going out and coming in, and your raging against Me. Because your rage and arrogance against Me have reached My ears, I will put My hook in your nose and My bit in your mouth; I will send you back the way you came'" (II Kings 19:25-28).

While the heavenly ruler over Assyria trumpeted his victories and conquests over weaker nations ruled by other fallen heavenly rulers, the God of Israel said that He knew it would happen long ago. He used the aggression of the fallen ruler over Assyria to punish God's people and overthrow the weaker, rebel god-serving nations. The God of Israel has ultimate control. He turned the king of Assyria away from attacking Jerusalem and the heavenly ruler left without a fight.

The story of gods ruling over the nations is forgotten and what remains is mythicized. God gave the members of His court in heaven an inheritance—rulership over the nations. He wanted them to teach the nations, His law and His ways. God, himself, participated in this project and chose the descendants of Jacob as His subjects.

"When the Most High assigned lands to the nations, when he divided up the human race, he established the boundaries of the peoples according to the number in his heavenly court. But the LORD's portion is His people, Jacob His allotted inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:8-9).

The descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob became God's inheritance—King over them. He became their King when the rest of the nations received heavenly rulers. Ancient Israel rejected their God for a time. They could not see or value God's plan for them. Instead, they wanted to be like the nations around them. They wanted superpower status and all the glory wrapped in



having great power. God foreknew the journey His people would choose. “So, the last will be first, and the first will be last” (Matthew 20: 16).

The end-time Judeo-Christians will be first to receive eternal life in God’s holy, royal kingdom.

God foresaw the repentance of the children of ancient Israel and their eternal commitment to serving Him in the latter days—all the way into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. God described these repentant and faithful people of Israel in spiritual terms. They are cedars in Lebanon [God’s heavenly court] and olive trees—His righteous priests.

“I [God] will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like the lily, and he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. His shoots will sprout, and his beauty will be like the olive tree and his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon” (Hosea 14:5-6).

God continued His imagery describing His children as plants in a cultivated garden. “How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel! ‘Like valleys that stretch out, like *gardens* beside the river, like *aloes* planted by the LORD, like *cedars* beside the waters” (Numbers 24:5-6).

He foresaw the repentance of mankind as well and their destiny to serve Him and fill the highest positions in His government. “The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree; he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. *Planted in the house of the LORD*, they will flourish in the *courts of our God*. They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green” (Psalm 92:12-15).

God is clear in His use of imagery. The cedar trees in Lebanon image the great heavenly members of God’s court in heaven. Their spiritual height is awesome. They are deeply rooted in God’s word; their strength is timeless. They are warriors and guardians of God’s law and preservers of peace. In addition to cedars, God described other trees of equal importance. He loves the oak, the plain, the palm, the olive, the fig, the flowering myrtle, the pine, the acacia, the fir, the cypress, and the poplar trees.

God’s plan for mankind is not a secret. It is written in the Bible for all to read, but understanding the depth and breadth of God’s engineering of mankind’s salvation plan requires the key and how to apply it. Journeying into the deep things of God will take you to where He hides His treasures: depth of meaning and understanding, spiritual truths and wonders, and the secrets saved only for the relentless explorers.

## THE TREES, VINES and FLOWERS

*“Open your doors, O LEBANON, that the fire may devour your cedars! Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen, because the glorious trees have been destroyed; Wail, O oaks of Bashan, for the impenetrable forest has come down”*  
(Zechariah 11:2).

What was at one time so glorious, so impenetrable and great is being destroyed. Where is the Lebanon referred to in Zechariah? Who are the cedars, the cypress, the oaks and the glorious trees?



Scriptures reveal God’s use of imagery. The fallen cedar trees described in Zechariah 11 are the once-great and highly honoured heavenly rulers in God’s government and holy court. They have turned against Him; they are rebels. Many are already overthrown and imprisoned in Sheol. The remaining rebels will come to an end on the Day of God’s wrath. God has a plan for mankind. He will fill the positions once held by the “glorious trees” with new members—transformed righteous mortals.

Satan has his puppets busy at work: hiding truth, distorting history, and keeping mankind ignorant of their calling. The thoughts of carnal mankind demand sight before belief. God is asking for faith. The unseen world is closed to mankind at this time. Satan uses this barrier to keep people from questioning God’s wonderful and miraculous creation all around them. Battles have been fought and tensions in heaven are on-going. Mankind is ignorant of the vast dominions controlled by fallen sons of God in heaven, yet to be overthrown. They cannot

fathom the hatred these heavenly rebels have towards mortals on earth, especially those who will be awarded their most-high offices. Regardless, in time, it will all be revealed.

“See, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will lop off the boughs with great power. The lofty trees will be felled; the tall ones will be brought low. He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax; *Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One*” (Isaiah 10:33-34).

God is assembling a new government of faithful and loyal children who are humble, God-fearing and God-serving. God sees into the future the birth of a different people—a transformed people who will eternally stand strong, loyal, and faithful.

“In a very short time, will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field and the fertile field seem like a forest?” (Isaiah 29:17)

Indeed, very soon God’s holy court will be comprised of new, eternally faithful and true leaders; there will be so many that a forest will appear overnight.

God’s use of imagery was understood by the ancient Israelites. It is evident in the conversation between King Amaziah of Judah and King Jehoash of Israel. On a side point, this conversation is a reminder that God’s people today comprise of two kingdoms: Judah—the Jews and Israel—the ten tribes, the West and Western Europe.

Amaziah, a young king of Judah defeated ten-thousand men of Edom in the Valley of Salt; he was proud of his conquest. In his pride, he sent a message to the king of Israel with an invitation. The king of Israel declined his offer and responded with a comparison of their rulership. The king of Israel viewed his own rulership as strong and accomplished compared to the young Jewish king who he considered to be rough-around-the-edges and inexperienced.

“So, King Jehoash of Israel sent this message to King Amaziah of Judah: ‘The thornbush in Lebanon sent this message to the cedar in Lebanon: “Give your daughter to my son in marriage.” But just then a wild beast from Lebanon wandered by and trampled down the thornbush. You have indeed defeated Edom and now you are arrogant. Glory in your victory, but stay at home. Why ask for trouble and cause your own downfall and that of Judah also?’” (II Kings 14:9-10)

Notice, both houses were considered by the king of Israel to be in Lebanon—in God’s government—His courts. The king of Israel declared himself to be a cedar, that is, a great well-seasoned leader and the king of Judah was described as a thornbush—a prickly, despised weed of a leader with no hope of achieving any fame or glory.

The use of trees imaged as different leaders was also described by Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon. It was in his declaration to the people of Shechem and Beth Millo before they were to declare Abimelech their king after the death of Gideon. This thornbush of a man killed all of his brothers except for Jotham who escaped, in order to be anointed king over these people. The



towns people gathered beside the “great tree.” This was their practice as the “great tree” symbolized Almighty God.

Jotham declared, “Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, so that God may listen to you. One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, ‘Be our king.’ But the olive tree answered, ‘Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and humans are honored, to hold sway over the trees?’ Next, the trees said to the fig tree, ‘Come and be our king.’ But the fig tree replied, ‘Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?’ Then the trees said to the vine, ‘Come and be our king.’ But the vine answered, ‘Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and humans, to hold sway over the trees?’ Finally, all the trees said to the thornbush, ‘Come and be our king.’ The thornbush said to the trees, ‘If you really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!’” (Judges 9:7b-15)

The people listening understood Jotham and the imagery he used. Understanding the imagery is critical to recognizing the importance of the roles each tree represents and the impact of choosing a thornbush-type of leader. The roles of the leaders who imaged the “olive trees,” “fig trees,” and “vines” were considered more honourable than national leadership.

### **THE CEDAR**

Imagery of the great cedars bring an immediate rich visual of the most spectacular trees on earth. They have the unique qualities that mirror the great leaders in God’s headquarters and His holy court. These tall, grand trees are dimensionally stable with a built-in thermal insulator. With oils that act as natural preservatives, these trees are resistant to bacteria and fungus. To top it off, they release a fresh aroma that deters pests. God created sons in heaven with all of these eternal qualities and superior strength to lead His kingdom having expertise of God’s law and ordinances. God created a place on earth that grows the finest cedar trees to mirror His headquarters in heaven—Lebanon, His centre filled with stately and regal leaders—His pride and joy.

### **THE OLIVE TREE**

The fruit from the olive tree is well-known for the production of oil used in ancient times in lanterns to shed light, for cooking, and for its medicinal properties. Through a process of grinding and crushing, the olives were pressed into a paste and then crushed again through a woven bag, until the oil was extracted. This process mirrors the journey of a special group of people who are prepared by God to work in His ministry. They are crushed and tried, tested and separated, purified and perfected. God’s special servants have all been persecuted, hated, and attacked by those serving Wickedness.

The oldest olive tree on earth is in Greece with an age of around two-thousand years. These trees live a long time, producing fruit well into their old age. The wood from the tree is resistant to decay. All of these characteristics resemble the resilient ministry in God’s family.

When Jotham was speaking to the people of Shechem using God’s coded language, he knew that the theological leaders were imaged as olive trees who understandably replied, “Should I

give up my oil, by which both gods and humans are honored, to hold sway over the trees?" The leadership of those specializing in God's word is of greater value than those ruling over people on a national or civic level.

Oil is used in the practice of anointing rulers and priests. These positions are held in high regard and separated from ordinary, leadership positions. The oil from the olive tree is reflective of that leader's ability to live righteously. They are a shining witness of the application of God's law of peace, living God's way of love.

God referred to His ministry in ancient times as an olive tree. The whole kingdom of Israel is destined to become a humble and holy kingdom of royal priests. Ancient Israel defiled themselves by worshipping Baal many times. Jeremiah recorded God's vengeance, "*The LORD once called you a flourishing olive tree, beautiful with well-formed fruit. But with a mighty roar He will set it on fire, and its branches will be consumed. The LORD of Hosts, who planted you, has decreed disaster against you on account of the evil that the house of Israel and the house of Judah have brought upon themselves, provoking Me to anger by burning incense to Baal*" (Jeremiah 11:16-17).

Revelation 14:10 describes two witnesses as two olive trees. These two priests will teach God's pure word to the world during the Great Tribulation. They will witness to all people in all of the nations. They will invite them to repent and accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and receive God's Holy Spirit, so that they can live. God will conquer Wickedness by offering grace to all of mankind and inviting them into His eternal, holy, royal, ruling God-family. God said that this battle will not be won through military strength but by His Holy Spirit.

Zechariah recorded this incredible revelation.

"What do you see?" asked the angel.

Zerubbabel responded, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven spouts to the lamps. There are also two olive trees beside it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left. What are these, my lord?" I asked the angel who was speaking with me.

"Do you not know what they are?" replied the angel.

"No, my lord," I answered.

"So he said to me, 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of Hosts. 'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain.' Then he will bring forth the capstone accompanied by shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"' (Zechariah 4:2-7)

God's coded language described the destruction of a great mountain—a world-ruling government that will be overthrown, flattened into a plain—dust under the feet of the saints.

During ancient times, when the sentenced time of the house of Judah's captivity was complete, Zerubbabel was free to lead the rebuilding of the temple of God. His job remains unfinished. Zerubbabel will be resurrected to complete the building of God's temple comprised of people filled with God's Holy Spirit. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," God said. This different temple will be built; the world's governments will be overthrown and flattened into a plain.

In addition, Zerubbabel will bring forth the "capstone"—the final stone of the temple to be laid at the top. This capstone is Jesus Christ. Shouts of "Grace, grace to it" will be heard. It will be an exuberant time of ceremony and victory.

### **THE FIG TREE**

The early fruit of a fig tree is the imagery God specifically uses to describe Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants. "When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert and *when I saw your fathers*, it was like seeing the *early fruit on the fig tree*" (Hosea 9:10). "Of all the families of the earth, only Israel have I chosen" (Amos 3:2).

So many lessons are wrapped up in the growth of the fig tree. "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it [return of Christ] is near, right at the door" (Matthew 24:32).

The fig tree images the people of Israel—all twelve tribes who are today, twelve nations. A significant characteristic of the fig tree is the flower, which is hidden within a fleshly structure known as the syconium. The flower eventually develops into fruit. This is a spiritual image of humble people growing in God's word and developing into righteous leaders who are not seeking self-glory. Inner beauty is what God is forming in His people.

Fig trees produce twice in a year. The first fruits appear in spring and are produced from the old branches, the Breba crop. The second growth of fruit appears in summer and is produced from the new growth, the Higos crop.

In Matthew 24, Jesus is describing the crop from the new growth—the tender twigs that will produce the Higos crop. This summer crop mirrors the repentance and spiritual growth of people who come into God's word not having a background of the scriptures. Their learning is new and young.

People from the twelve nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel will repent. They will acknowledge the God of Israel, desire to obey His commandments and strive to live His way. This move to obey God and live His way is the picture of the flower of the fig tree. The flower is the fruit inside. This is the beauty of repentant people. Their inner being blossoms into beautiful character.



The lesson from the fig tree in the book of Matthew and the sign just before the return of Christ is the humble, repentance of God's people. This will be an exceptional time when millions turn to God sincerely and completely during a time of intense distress.

The unrepentant people from the twelve tribes of Israel will be judged and destroyed by Jesus Christ. It is seen in the story of the cursed fig tree. "And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, Jesus went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs" (Matthew 11:13).

This tree symbolizes people covered in leaves, that is, opportunities and resources to mature in God's ways, but they do not bear the fruit of living righteously. The fig tree in Matthew 11, images the person who has gone *beyond* their fruit bearing season without any sign of fruit. That is why Jesus cursed the fig tree. He prophesied the fate of people who do not bear the fruit of righteousness when they were given all they need to repent and change.

Jotham reminded the people of the importance of bearing good works by living God's way. "But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?'"

Fruit, that is, good works, strong character, loving one another is the behaviour that is good and sweet and is valued higher than rulership over people. Most often rulers abuse their power and become thornbushes. Eternal life will be given to those who soften their hardened heart and live righteously.

Prophesied in Micah is the future where nations on earth are released from the oppressive control of Wickedness. Each family will be free to lead and reap the full benefits of their own labour. It is described as "sitting under your own vine, your own fig tree" (Micah 4:4).

Peace is coming. "Then He will judge between many peoples and arbitrate for strong nations far and wide. Then they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer take up the sword against nation, nor will they train anymore for war. Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken. Though each of the peoples may walk in the name of his god, yet we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever" (Micah 4:3-5).

The futuristic verse foretells of a time when all twelve tribes of Israel—all of God's covenant people will be committed to living God's way of love, forever and ever.

## **THE GRAPE VINE**

From the grape vine, wine is made. The imagery in this low growing plant reveals a humble people willing to die for their faith and service to Almighty God. It also images a different group of people; a people who are unfit for God's kingdom are destined to be destroyed.

Recorded in Revelation is a warning to the unrepentant of their destruction. "Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who

had the sharp sickle, 'Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe'" (Revelation 14:18).

"Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full; the wine vats overflow because their wickedness is great" (Joel 3:13).

Two different groups of people are imaged in the grapes from a vine.

Determining who is good and bad is clear by their behaviour, which results in how they are harvested. The grapes that are trodden down by foot outside of the winepress are the wicked who are destroyed. The juice from grapes crushed in the winepress are those who are prepared to die standing strong against Evil, remaining loyal to Almighty God.

Jesus Christ is imaged as a vine. It was the spilt blood of Jesus Christ that has given mankind an opportunity for eternal life. The Passover service of the eating of bread and drinking of wine is the eating of the God's word symbolized in bread and drinking the wine symbolized in accepting Christ's redemptive sacrifice in payment of sin. Jesus' great love for mankind was demonstrated in his death on the cross. "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

For centuries, the saints endured persecution, trials, and tribulation and in some cases death by those warring against God. These people triumphed over their persecutors by holding fast to their belief in their salvation through the blood of the Lamb and by living the word. They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (Revelation 12:11).

Humble people are mirrored in a low growing vine, producing fruit that after being crushed and processed, ferments into wine—an image of their blood covenant with Almighty God.

The righteous angels rejoice when mankind repents. It gives the Great Potter joy to witness the work of His hands as the righteous rise up against Wickedness, fearing nothing because they fully trust in their Creator, God Almighty.

God's enemies are the ruthless, fallen angels who are powerful rulers, powers, and principalities (Ephesians 6:12). At the time of Babel, God gave the members of His court in heaven rulership over the nations (Deuteronomy 32:8), but not long after they received their inheritance, they turned against Him. The worship of these enemies is treason.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego understood the war in heaven. Certain Chaldeans noticed that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow down and worship the statue at the sound of the music. They told King Nebuchadnezzar.

"There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

“Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said unto them, ‘Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?’”

“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves on this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

“Therefore, because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flames of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.”

“Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spoke, and said unto his counsellors, ‘did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?’”

“They answered and said unto the king, ‘True, O king.’”

“He answered and said, ‘Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God’” (Daniel 3:12-18, 22-25).

During ancient times, the people on earth were engaging with the ruling gods over the nations. They were able to see them. King Nebuchadnezzar recognized the fourth individual in the furnace from the other three. He identified him as a heavenly being.

From the house of Judah: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were imaged as fine grapes on that vine. “The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in” (Isaiah 5:7a). God delights in the faithful who trust Him.

Isaiah recorded God’s delight in His people sometime still in the future. “In that day: ‘Sing about a fruitful vineyard. I, the LORD, am its keeper; I water it continually. I guard it night and day so no one can disturb it’” (Isaiah 27:2-3).

The first miracle Jesus performed was to turn water into wine. “Jesus said to the servants, ‘Fill the jars with water’; so, they filled them to the brim... the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, ‘Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now’” (John 2:7, 9-10).



This first miracle pointed to believers in the latter days who are crushed and repentant. Their sincerity, loyalty, and faithfulness will rate higher than that of ancient Israel who were given the first opportunity into God's eternal kingdom, but they rejected it.

### **THE PALM TREE**

The Palm tree is a survivor in harsh environments storing water in its roots, trunk and fruit.

It is a picture of leaders who remain strong and upright living in godless places. God's Holy Spirit fills these leaders with His knowledge, which provides understanding that leads to wisdom. They remain spiritually alive living among in a world that is lost and deep in trouble.

As ancient Israel began their journey in the wilderness, God was already teaching them about their spiritual journey during this difficult, evil age. Their spiritual story was preserved in all of the surroundings of every camp and the details of every event along the way.

"Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water" (Exodus 15:27).

The twelve springs are representative of the twelve tribes of Israel and the seventy palm trees are the umbrella of God's perfect council of seventy. God was expecting ancient Israel to respond to His instruction. It was a struggle with many ups and downs, ebbs and flows. God's plan will not be thwarted. He will establish a kingdom of holy, royal priests.

### **THE MYRTLE TREE**

The Myrtle tree is an evergreen, flowering shrub. Its aromatic branches are used in ancient times in celebrations and festivals. This tree has healing properties. The leaves contain essential oils used for antibacterial and antiseptic products.

Zechariah begins his writing with a man standing among the Myrtle trees in a ravine. The Myrtle tree is a beautiful ornamental tree. The ravine is figurative, describing a time when God's people—all twelve tribes are in a low point, but beautiful and full of blossoms, imaging repentance and goodness.

Three times Zechariah records the man among the Myrtles trees. This is indicative of a significant marker in events by God. The man among the Myrtle trees received the reports from the riders on horses. God's people are described as beautiful Myrtle trees. The world is at peace, but God's people are in great distress. It is a time still in our future. They will be invaded and scattered. Jerusalem will be in great distress. Rebel rulers will scatter God's people: Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. God will declare his anger towards the nations. He prophesied, "I am angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry but they added to the calamity" (Zechariah 1:15). The nations will feel the wrath of God because they add to the suffering of God's people.

Pictured as beautiful Myrtle trees with healing properties, is the warming image God uses when His people will humbly return to Him with priest-like healing properties. God's commandments

and His word are the properties that heal people from spiritual decay. Many righteous leaders will rise up among God's people and cover them with truth, justice and peace.

God foresees the beautiful changes to come. "Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and *instead of briers the myrtle will grow*" (Isaiah 55:13).

"And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded through Moses, that the Israelites were to dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month. So, they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, 'Go out to the hills, and bring *olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of other leafy trees*, to make booths, as it is written'" (Nehemiah 8:15).

Nehemiah recorded the celebration of God's final Holy Day, the Feast of Tabernacles, picturing the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on earth. Tents are set up during this celebration that lasts seven days. In times past, the roofs of the temporary dwellings were leafy branches of the myrtle and palm trees. This is an image that declares their home to be a protected haven of spiritual healing, strength and resilience.

### **THE POPLAR TREE**

The Poplar tree is a fast-growing tall tree that quickly provides shade and a haven for undergrowth. Just one tree has a vast root system forming a web of underground roots.

These trees image the many people who will quickly mature spiritually into leadership roles providing immediate stable governance with resources and provisions for people to come to know God and learn to live His way. A vast network of resources will be developed and established through these leaders. Quickly, the health and strength of organizations will be established and vitalized.

The Millennium will be a time ripe for spiritual growth and a full display of leadership styles.

### **THE CYPRESS TREE**

The evergreen Cypress tree is a fast-growing tree that loves water and is often planted in wet areas.

The Cypress wood is weather-resistant and needs no treatment to protect it from the environment. The wood from the Cypress tree can be used in making musical instruments. Singing and praising God will be a talent admired and cherished in the millennial rule of Christ.

King David was blessed with musical talent. "Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating and dancing before the LORD with all kinds of instruments made of fir or cypress wood, with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals" (II Samuel 6:5).

This tree images leaders receiving generous portions of God's Holy Spirit, allowing them to grow rapidly, and mature to come into the full measure of Jesus Christ. This leader will be especially strong and devoted to God's law and His ways. Temptations of any type that cause a

fall, back into sin will be instantly resisted. They will be tested leaders who will not deviate from God's way.

Isaiah recorded God's vision of the future. "I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. I will put in the desert the *cedar* and the *acacia*, the *myrtle* and the *olive*. I will set pines in the wasteland, the *fir* and the *cypress* together, so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it" (Isaiah 41:19-20).

God will place each leader in an office and location where they shine the brightest.

### THE ALMOND TREE

The Almond tree images a very special group of people. It was the almond branch that God used to settle a grievance among the twelve tribes of Israel over which tribe God had chosen to be the tribe dedicated as His priests.

"So, Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him a staff—one for each of the leaders of their tribes, twelve staffs in all. And Aaron's staff was among them. Then Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in the Tent of the Testimony. The next day Moses entered the tent and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the tribe of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds" (Numbers 17:8).

The almond tree is the first of all fruit trees to showcase a beautiful display of gentle pink and white blossoms after the winter dormancy.

To add detail to God's coded language, Keil and Delitzsch offer their insight. The complete life cycle of an almond branch appears on Aaron's staff overnight, "is a symbol of the swift fulfilment of His word."<sup>1</sup> Aaron's staff sprouted, budded, blossomed and produced almonds overnight confirming the absolute decision of God's choice that the tribe of Levi would work to lead His ministry on earth. They did exactly that: initiate the word of God, demonstrate it, and teach all of Israel God's law and ways so that God's people were equipped to live righteously.

We can see God's use of the almond branch in Jeremiah's commission made absolute by God. When God chooses people, miracles happen. He chose Jeremiah before he was conceived to do an important work for Him. He was appointed "over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jeremiah 1:10).

Jeremiah was young at the time this commission was given to him and he questioned his ability. God Almighty assured him and touched his mouth. The symbolism of God's touch is provided by Keil and Delitzsch.

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<sup>1</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, Comment. *Biblehub*, Jeremiah 1:11, 2004-2025, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/jeremiah/1-9.htm>. Accessed April 10, 2022.

“The hand is the instrument of making and doing; the touching of Jeremiah's mouth by the hand of God is consequently an emblematical token that God frames in his mouth what he is to speak.”<sup>2</sup>

God confirmed his action by giving Jeremiah a vision. He saw the branch of an almond tree. This should not be a mystery for Jeremiah. God confirmed what he likely already knew. He said, “You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled” (Jeremiah 1:12).

“Jeremiah sees in spirit a rod or twig of an almond tree. God calls his attention to this vision, and interprets it to him as a symbol of the swift fulfilment of His word. The choice of this symbol for the purpose given is suggested by the Hebrew name for the almond tree, *דקל*, the wakeful, the vigilant; because this tree begins to blossom and expand its leaves in January, when the other trees are still in their winter's sleep and so of all trees awakes earliest to new life... The figure of the almond rod was meant only to afford to the prophet surety for the speedy and certain fulfilment of the word of God proclaimed by him,” adds Keil and Delitzsch to their interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus understood His Father's plan; working with people takes time and He will succeed. “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man planted in his field. Although it is the smallest of all seeds, yet it grows into the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches” (Matthew 13:31-32). God's kingdom will grow to cover the whole earth.

### **THE POMEGRANATE TREE**

The fruit from the Pomegranate tree is large and filled with juice encapsulated seeds. The image of the pomegranate on the hem of the robe of the ancient Israelite priest was an intentional design by God to remind His people that keeping His commandments produces good behaviour (fruit) that is rich and bountiful like the many seeds inside the pomegranate.

It is also symbolic of virility. When national leaders keep God's commandments, they seed through the church, produce, that is, many righteous people maturing spiritually and fit for God's kingdom.

God said, “Multiply and replenish the earth” (Genesis 1:28). This is all about producing righteous God-fearing and God-serving people within a structure that promotes spiritual maturity and strength.

The juice from the pomegranate is known to reduce inflammation, improve memory and brain cognition because it is filled with powerful antioxidants. Magnesium in the juice relaxes muscles, protects them from stress, lowers cholesterol, and blood pressure classifying it as a

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<sup>2</sup> Keil and Delitzsch. Comment. *Biblehub*, Jeremiah 1:9, 2004-2025, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/jeremiah/1-9.htm>. Accessed April 10, 2022.

potent cardiovascular protector. It is no surprise that Solomon's temple had two columns, one on each side of the entrance, with a huge bronze pomegranate on top. God designed and created the pomegranate before creation to be a fruit with a message.

### **THE FOREST OF THE CEDARS OF GOD**

"The Cedars of God, located in the Kadisha Valley of Bsharre, Lebanon, are one of the last vestiges of the extensive forests of the Lebanon cedar that anciently thrived across Mount Lebanon. All early modern travelers' accounts of the wild cedars appear to refer to the ones in Bsharri; the Christian monks of the monasteries in the Kadisha Valley venerated the trees for centuries. The earliest documented references of the Cedars of God are found in Tablets 4-6 of the great Epic of Gilgamesh, six days walk from Uruk." (Wikipedia)<sup>3</sup>

King David recorded, "The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, *the cedars of Lebanon that he planted*" (Psalm 104:16).

The great trees today are few; the grandeur of this wonder in Lebanon is forgotten along with the spiritual connection that King David understood. The cedars of Lebanon, those great heavenly leaders that God planted, have fallen.

Cedar trees in ancient times were used for the most prestigious buildings. King Solomon understood their great value and he ordered the finest cedar timber from Lebanon to be used in the construction of God's temple. This was understood by Solomon to be a mirror of the heavenly structure comprising of eternally strong leadership. Through King Hiram of Tyre, Solomon obtained the cedar from the location on earth that has the same name as the location of God's courts in heaven, Lebanon.

King Hiram said, "I will do what you desire concerning the cedar and cypress timber. My servants will bring them down from Lebanon to the sea; and I will make them into rafts to go by sea to the place where you direct me, and I will have them broken up there, and you shall carry them away" (I Kings 5:8-9).

God's great cedars in His heavenly court in Lebanon are leaders holding the highest, most prestigious positions. They serve in God's centre of law, providing instruction and judgement.

Among the cedars, God declares a splendid cedar. Few details of the battles in heaven are recorded. What is known is the fall of God's heavenly court, and the leader that God, Himself, has chosen to end the race of contenders for kingship of His kingdom. God's desire for a family kingdom was always for His Son. Deciding on who would hold the highest offices with the Son of God, involves stringent testing and perfecting. Only the Son of God, who created through the power of the Father, was successful among the "cedar" trees who entered the race.

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<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia. "The Cedars of God." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cedars\\_of\\_God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cedars_of_God). Accessed April 10, 2022.



The book of Ezekiel records the judgements of all in heaven and on earth who are sentenced for destruction. God continues to use His imagery when addressing creation in heaven. He chose a splendid cedar and that leader will rule as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The most revered in God's heavenly courts all entered the race for kingship in God's kingdom, but they all failed. Enough God said, "I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from the topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the *mountain heights of Israel*, I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar."

God the Father has placed "a tender sprig from the topmost shoots" and planted it on "the mountain heights of Israel." The "tender sprig" is Jesus Christ and the "mountain heights" is the highest government of Israel. The race is over. No more attempts, by the leading sons of God in heaven, will have the opportunity to rule with Christ because they fail.

God turned and spoke to His creation in heaven and said, "All the trees of the field will know that I the Lord bring down the tall tree [those leaders in the heavenly creation] and make the low tree [mortal man to be transformed into immortality] grow tall. I dry up the green tree [the eternal rebel leaders] and make the dry tree [transformed mortals] flourish" (Ezekiel 17:22-24).

God's discussion of bringing down the tall tree and raising up the dry tree refers to the replacement of the rebel sons of God with the transformed/resurrected saints. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the splendid tree among the dry trees who will be raised up and flourish as great leaders in God's *new Lebanon* in the making.

God chose His trusted Son through whom heaven and earth was created. That Son of God did not fail. He proved to be again and again the trusted and sure leader. "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a *firm and tested stone*. It is a *precious cornerstone* that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken'" (Isaiah 28:16).

God's plan cannot be thwarted. What He says, will happen. He has not briefed creation in heaven with all the details of His plan. "None of the rulers of this age [the principalities and power in high places] understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Corinthians 2:8).

Christ is the shoot that God took from the very top of a cedar in His garden [family] and planted it; it became a splendid cedar. He does the will of his Father in heaven and he will restore all things to how they were before iniquity was found.

Christ is a humble servant, God's beloved Son and himself—a God. "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:6-8)

Christ does not speak his own words, but directs mankind to listen to the words of his Father. “I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it” (John 12:49).

Christ is loved by God. “After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!’” (Matthew 3:16-17)

Christ is a *unique* Son of God. “For to which of the angels did God ever say: ‘You are my Son; today I have become Your Father’? Or again: ‘I will be His Father, and He will be My Son’? And again, when he brings His firstborn Son into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him’” (Hebrews 1:5-6).

Christ has been given all authority to overthrow wickedness. Matthew recorded Jesus’ declaration of supremacy. “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’” (Matthew 28:18).

The upcoming battle will be the cutting away of dark lies to release truth and freedom. The image of a sword—a double-edged sword, illustrates how the battle will be won. Jesus Christ will use God’s law to convict the lawless rebels. “And from His mouth proceeds a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God, the Almighty. On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords” (Revelation 19:15-16).

Christ will reign until all enemies are destroyed. Living in sin will end; righteousness will reign, resulting in no more death. “For He [Christ] must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death” (I Corinthians 15:26).

“He [Christ] will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken” (Isaiah 25:8).

The final task for Christ will be to hand back supreme authority and become subject to his Father in heaven who will rule over all and through all. “When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all” (I Corinthians 15:25).

Christ, the splendid cedar tree [the greatest leader in God’s holy council] who does not seek self-glory or crave power. He is the humble, tested stone, Son of the Mighty One of Jacob, the Rock of Israel, the servant angel of God, and loyal Co-creator of heaven and earth, and all things in them. He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

## THE TWO TREES IN GOD'S GARDEN

The tree [leader] who specializes in the knowledge that brings eternal life is Jesus Christ; he is the Word—the tree of life. Jesus Christ is well tested. He has never failed—never sinned. What he says is the pure word of God. Listening and acting on what Jesus Christ has said is eating from the tree of life. Bread is food that symbolizes Christ's body. Listening and acting of his teachings brings perfection into eternal life because Christ has a complete and full understanding of God's word, hence his title of being the Word.

“While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take it; this is My body’” (Mark 14:22).

Jesus said, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:54).

God the Father wants to save everyone. “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9).

When Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their eyes were opened to see the face of Wickedness. Eating from a tree is imagery for acting on what is heard. Listening to Satan and acting on what he says is eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan knew that creation on earth was engineered to grow in knowledge, like children growing into adulthood. Adam and Eve were not able to wisely differentiate between right and wrong. Both were still spiritual babes. He tricked them into believing that they were spiritually mature and able to distinguish between right and wrong. They acted on his advice and sinned. He led them onto a foggy path where they continued to struggle between right and wrong choices.

This spiritual teaching is all about taking in the knowledge of God's truth—eating the bread and drinking his blood, which is the acceptance of the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus and their commitment in their blood covenant with God. Reigning Wickedness in this evil age will persecute and test the commitment of believers.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil may seem like a logical choice, but the problem fully known to Satan, is that mankind *grows* in grace and knowledge. Only through continued growth and discipline can mankind learn to distinguish between good and evil. Satan always saw mankind as an easy target. Satan may have thought that he won the battle with the fall of man, but he is not included in all of God's briefings. The fall of man is part of their spiritual training. God is showcasing His love in *grace* for His creation in heaven and on earth. Repentant mankind will reach perfection. They are destined to fill every highly-valued position lost by Satan and his rebel coalition.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is rapidly dying. People are waking up. The great witness will be completed by: the faithful saints, the two witnesses of Revelation, and the whole kingdom of Israel—all twelve nations into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, then this evil age will end.

The people of the nations will come to understand that God Almighty is offering grace to everyone.

### **GOD IS CONSISTENT IN HIS USE OF IMAGERY**

King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a tree. This is a clear example of God's coded language applying the use of a tree to represent a leader—a ruler—a king.

"Here is my dream; interpret it for me," King Nebuchadnezzar said to Daniel (Daniel 4:9). "I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth... a holy one, coming down from heaven called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches. But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field'" (Daniel 4:10-11,13b-14).

Daniel replied, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth... you, O king, are that tree!" (Daniel 4:19b-20, 22a)

King Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom had grown to reach a world-ruling empire because the God of Israel had given it to him. Unfortunately, King Nebuchadnezzar forgot who blessed him and Almighty God had to humble him to remind him. In a single moment, King Nebuchadnezzar was reduced to living in the wild as a beast, naked for seven years.

At the end of his sentence, King Nebuchadnezzar was reinstated as king because he gave glory to the One, true Great God praising the Most High and trumpeted, "His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'" (Daniel 4:34-35)

Indeed, God does what He pleases. The fallen angels—rebel sons of God in heaven, will be brought down from their lofty thrones.

God's heavenly court is falling and He will take it down completely. The members of God's heavenly court were once the greatest and finest leaders ruling in heaven, but they all rebelled. God will judge and sentence them.

"Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars! Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen, because the glorious trees have been destroyed; Wail, O oaks of Bashan, for the impenetrable forest has come down" (Zechariah 11:2).

"See, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will lop off the boughs with great power. The lofty trees will be felled; the tall ones will be brought low. He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax; *Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One*" (Isaiah 10:33-34).

God is replanting His garden—His family. “I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. I will put in the desert the *cedar* and the *acacia*, the *myrtle* and the *olive*. I will set *pin*es in the wasteland, the *fir* and the *cypress* together, so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it” (Isaiah 41:19-20).

God’s new government will be comprised of all the ancient prophets and prophetesses and the saints throughout all generations. Mortal mankind will be made immortal; they will fill the highest positions in God’s new government.

### **THE DELICATE, STUNNING, EYE-CATCHING FLOWERS**

In contrast to robust trees, God has created delicate flowers to showcase something gentle and sweet that pleases Him. The variety of perfumes from the delicate flowers image all the different prayers offered up to God by people. Some are short, some long, some filled with sadness, and many longing for a better country—a heavenly one, whose architect and builder is God.

Walking through a garden, the perfume is like incense. “And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people” (Revelation 5:8).

Flowers are faces of dazzling colours. They image the exquisite splendour of individuals and their expressions of love, one for another. God sees the heart of each person. The righteous actions of goodness and kindness do not go unnoticed. He sees His repentant people like the regal blossom of the lily.

Hosea record God’s promise to His people. “I [God] will be like the dew to Israel; *he will blossom like the lily*, and he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. His shoots will sprout, and his beauty will be like the olive tree and his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon” (Hosea 14:5-6).

God is growing His garden—His family and when He is finished, it will be glorious! God’s coded language is consistent and transparent. Trees are leaders. From the characteristics of the different trees different roles are identified. Fruit-bearing and flowering trees describe the eye-catching qualities of repentant, righteous, loving people living God’s way and keeping His commandments. The low-growing gentle flowers image the humble prayers of the saints that release a fragrance that brings the eyes of our gracious LORD to look down and remember His special creation on earth.

## FORCES OF NATURE

*“They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, ‘Master, Master, we are perishing!’ And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. And He said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’ They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, ‘Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?’”*

*(Luke 8:24-25)*

So many scriptures recorded in the Bible reveal the deeper picture that is so often missed. The disciples shook Jesus awakening him, terrified that they would die in the storm. Jesus rebuked the wind and the surging waves, silencing them. Then, he turned to his disciples and asked, “Where is your faith?”



What forces did the wind and surging waves mirror that would enable the disciples to silence them? The disciples responded to each other now referring to the winds and water as “they,” entities who obey. Awestruck, they were amazed at the power Jesus wielded. If they only knew what Jesus knew, they would have known the forces attacking them that Jesus silenced with a single command.

The forces of nature on earth exist because God created them for a purpose and a mirror of the unseen forces in heaven.



## THE RAIN

The great flood was necessary to cleanse the earth of wickedness that had become layers deep, far and wide. Water is God's symbol for cleansing, so too, God's Holy Spirit imaged as water which subdues the carnal spirit and fills them with a holy spirit—the special and unique essence of Almighty God. Water brings growth to life on earth; God's Holy Spirit brings spiritual growth for mortals.

Packaged with sunshine, rain causes all plants on earth to grow, blossom, and produce fruit. God is the great provider of all things essential to mankind. The engineering of mankind was planned before creation. All things fundamental to their physical and spiritual life are provided by Him and used to teach mankind all about spiritual matters.

“Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy” (Acts 14:17).

God uses everyday life to mirror the process of growing in knowledge and righteousness. Morning showers cleanse the old night away and rejuvenate feelings of renewal and strength. This is the same experience of the faithful when God showers His righteousness on them.

The prophets recorded God's instructions for His people and these are peppered with imagery of farming the land. “Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you” (Hosea 10:12).

God is teaching mankind that they need His Holy Spirit to mature spiritually. Almighty God is the Great Teacher, Designer, Engineer and Architect of mankind's journey into spiritual maturity. He has the power to give life. Jesus Christ provided the mechanism for mankind to access the Father in heaven. He is energy: stable and sure. The apostles warned believers not to be tempted and fall, like ancient Israel, who craved the self-glory of greatness offered by the fallen rulers over the nations.

Jeremiah preached to ancient Israel beseeching them to put away the idols that were used to call on the fallen sons of God for help and favours. “Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, LORD our God. Therefore, our hope is in you, for you are the one who does all this” (Jeremiah 14:22).

Though the rebel heavenly rulers, in ancient times, could cause severe weather changes, they were all powerless before the Almighty God, the God of Israel. God will provide for mankind on earth. God is mindful of them; they are a very special creation. He will not step back until His work is done.

“Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before” (Joel 2:23). These rains mirror seasonal spiritual cleansing that occurs in maturing believers.

## THE WIND

God's Holy Spirit is imaged as water because it cleanses. It is also described as wind because it is a powerful force. Recorded in Acts, it has the sound like a violent, rushing wind.

On Pentecost, the day people received God's Holy Spirit, they experienced and witnessed a riveting act of God. "And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2).

On that most memorable day, at the birth of a different type of church, all present were given God's Holy Spirit. They heard a loud and powerful noise of wind filling the room. God's Holy Spirit mirrors a great wind, something unseen and yet, felt with all its power and drive.

God Almighty is in charge. He calls; He chooses. Spiritual birth is a born-again phenomenon. When we receive God's Holy Spirit after baptism, God as the Great Potter, begins molding. He presses and pushes; He crushes and creates; He purifies and perfects.

Like the wind, He works. Mankind cannot see from where it came and where it will go. "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Finally, those with God's Holy Spirit become pliable and God is free as the wind to complete His great work.

The wind remains an image of God's great power. His Holy Spirit is a unique Spirit and only Spirit that can open the mind of creation made in His image, into the world of Almighty God to learn and understand His deep things. His word is a revelation of His eternal plans for expansion, future creations and dominions. His glory will be replicated in every God-fearing and God-serving soul.

## THE EAST WIND

The story of the east wind is an awe-filled picture of great power and supremacy. The east wind is well renown in the deserts of the Middle East.

Hosea recorded God's warning to arrogant and proud ancient Israel. "Though he flourishes among the reeds, an *east wind* will come, the wind of the Lord coming up from the wilderness" (Hosea 13:15).

The wind from the north, the south or the west cannot compare to the power of the east wind. Only the east wind can totally destroy because only it is imaged as the all-powerful hand of Almighty God, our Creator. God chose the east wind because His temple is in the east, pointing to the release of His power in righteousness judgement.

In Pharaoh's dream, he saw the east wind scorch seven heads of grain. "Then behold, seven ears, thin and scorched by the *east wind*, sprouted up after them" (Genesis 41:6, 23).

The seven thin and scorched heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. This is the action of Almighty God who gave Joseph the interpretation, “God has revealed to Pharaoh what He is about to do... the worthless heads of *grain scorched by the east wind*; they are seven years of famine” (Genesis 41:27b). It is the act and will of God Almighty who brought the severe seven-year famine. It was so bad that there was no trace of the seven years of abundance.

Grain is food that mirrors spiritual information and knowledge. God prophesied to Pharaoh that He will cause a severe food shortage. It will be unrelenting and people will eventually sell everything to survive. So much so, that all of the reserves the people housed, will be used up and they will buy from Joseph. The famine will not bring relief until everyone has sold everything to Joseph, even themselves.

This story lived by Joseph in his time will occur in the latter days, but not on a physical level rather as a spiritual awakening. Through the image of the east wind that caused the drought those thousands of years ago, that same force will completely absorb the succulence of traditional thought and knowledge that people hold onto to so dearly and it will be replaced with God’s word, His truth, and His law. The puffed up lies will be exposed. People who want to live will exchange falsehood with truth. They will sell everything for truth, pay their tithe, and become indentured slaves to Almighty God. The east wind is a powerful force throughout the Bible, used to teach and correct God’s people.

The house of Judah in rebellion against Almighty God, the God of Israel, tried to escape from God’s punishment that brought them into a treaty of bondage with Babylon. They sought the help of the superpower kingdom of Egypt. Ezekiel recorded God’s response to this rebellious action.

## THE TWO EAGLES

Egypt



Babylon



“Even if it [the house of Judah] is transplanted [relocated], will it thrive? Will it not wither completely when the east wind [God Almighty] strikes it—wither away in the plot where it grew?” (Ezekiel 17:10)

This verse is only a small portion of the allegory recorded in Ezekiel 17.

The use of allegories is a powerful tool for God to direct attention to beings and their actions in the heavens when they are intertwined with leaders and activities on earth. Explained by God Himself, He said, “Do you not know what these things mean?” (Ezekiel 17:12)

God then, explained the meaning of the two great eagles, the vine and the east wind. The King of Babylon is the first great eagle, Pharaoh of Egypt is the second great eagle, the vine is the house of Judah and finally, the east wind who will strike the rebellious house is Almighty God, himself.

“He declared, ‘As surely as I live, I will bring down on his head my oath that he despised and my covenant that he broke. *I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare.* I will bring him to Babylon and execute judgement upon him there because he was unfaithful to me. All his fleeing troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken’” (Ezekiel 17:19-21).

It should be noted at this time that God is using Babylon to punish the rebel house of Judah and also Egypt later on. The heavenly ruler over Babylon was at this time loyal to God. Over time, to God’s bitter disappointment, all of the heavenly rulers who inherited rulership over the nations fell away from ruling righteously and allied with Satan to battle against Him and force their rule over His kingdom.

God is using the king of Babylon to overthrow rebel kingdoms on earth. There may be mirrored activity in heaven, as well. God said, “*I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a mortally wounded man*” (Ezekiel 30:24).

God described the fall of Egypt against Babylon like a “mortally wounded man” emphasizing how weak the heavenly ruler over Egypt will be against the heavenly ruler over Babylon. This comparison illustrates the strength difference between mortals and spirit beings, as well as, spirit beings and Almighty God. This comparison also reveals that these kings are spirit beings and one will be wounded at the level likened to that of being mortal.

Often passed over is a preserved story of the king of Babylon being rewarded by Almighty God for his service of his work for God.

God dealt with Tyre through the king of Babylon. “Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will carry off its wealth, seize its spoil, and remove its plunder. This will be the wages for his army” (Ezekiel 29:19).

These wages were due because “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to labor strenuously against Tyre. Every head was made bald and every shoulder made raw. But he and his army received no wages from Tyre for the labor they expended on it” (Ezekiel 29:18).

Tyre was never destroyed, rather agreed to recognize Babylonian hegemony after a long and labouring thirteen-year siege. God said, “*I have given him the land of Egypt* as the reward for his labor, because it was done for Me, declares the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 29:20).

The plagues of Egypt provide another example of God’s use of the east wind. By the power of Almighty God, locusts were brought to torment Egypt prior to the exodus of the ancient Israelites. These locusts were carried by the east wind. “So, Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and *the LORD directed an east wind* on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, *the east wind* brought the locusts” (Exodus 10:13).

These locusts consumed what little grain was left in Egypt. Grain was a staple food. The word of God is imaged as bread made from grain. The complete consumption of their staple food by the locusts was symbolic of destroying the last of Egypt’s core teachings, their beliefs, and their God-of-Israel-opposing theology. Through God’s power imaged as the east wind, opposition will be destroyed.

God is a relentless force driving His rebel people far from Him.

“*Like an east wind* I will scatter them before the enemy; I will show them My back and not My face in the day of their calamity” (Jeremiah 18:17).

God uses directions as a symbol. The home of righteousness is God’s temple located in the east. The ten tribes of Israel, did not repent after they were released from their 360-year captivity by the Assyrians. They lived in the area of the Caucasus mountains. When God pushed His people away from Him, they moved westward. They are identified into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as Caucasians. They moved westward because God’s powerful hand from the east pushed them away from the home of righteousness to the place of unrighteousness. The place where He said, “You are not my people” (Hosea 1:9).

God Almighty corrects His people. “Though he [the ten tribes—house of Israel] flourishes among the reeds, an *east wind* will come. The wind of the Lord coming up from the wilderness; and his fountain will become dry and his spring will be dried up; it [the powerful force of the east wind] will plunder his treasury of every precious article” (Hosea 13:15).

Under the leadership of Ephraim, the ancient ten tribes turned away from the God of Israel to serve the gods of the nations and all Godly knowledge was forgotten. They worshipped rebel sons of God. These ten tribes saw the great kingdoms built by the nations of the world ruled by rebellious heavenly rulers and they craved that power and the glory these nations wielded. The ten tribes were consumed with the drive for superpower status, moving west where immeasurable resources lay untapped.

“Ephraim feeds on wind, and *pursues the east wind* continually; he multiplies lies and violence. Moreover, he makes a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried to Egypt” (Hosea 12:1).

In God's allotted time, He will use His power through the east wind, to dry up their resources, their power and strength, again and humble them. They would be later overthrown and taken into captivity for their sins and corrupt behaviour.

The bad and rebellious behaviour of the ten tribes of Israel caused God to act and forcefully push them to the borders of the west, far from Him. After living with the curses of disobedience for hundreds of years, they did eventually awaken to their foolishness, like the prodigal son, they returned to their Father. God's people were never rejected by God nor did He lose sight of them, despite their slow repentance. Though they were sifted and scattered; they were never forgotten, never lost.

"Remember these things, Jacob, for you, Israel, are my servant. I have made you, you are my servant; Israel, *I will not forget you*" (Isaiah 44:21) and "For I will give the command, and I will shake the people of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and *not a pebble will reach the ground*" (Amos 9:9). Though scattered, never forgotten, never lost.

One of the most remembered stories among the Judeo-Christians is the story of the Exodus. The great hand of Almighty God dried up the bottom of the Red Sea with the power of the east wind, so that the ancient Israelites, all twelve tribes, would walk across a dry surface.

"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord swept the sea back by *a strong east wind* all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided" (Exodus 14:21).

This display of immense superhuman strength could not be duplicated by the warring Egyptians. Their god could not do the same as the whole army of Pharaoh who pursued the ancient Israelites became engulfed in soft mud and drowned by the rushing return of the waters. All of the pursuing Egyptian army died; their god could not save even one of them.

The last verse written by the Apostle John in the book of John concluded, "Jesus did many things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (John 21:25).

This would indicate that the stories preserved in the Bible would be the most important ones to remember, since countless stories were not recorded. Doubly important, like a legal witness, would be a story recorded in both the Old Testament and the New Testament—both testaments. Such was the story of the saving of the people living in the ancient city of Nineveh.

Jonah was selected by God to complete a job but Jonah was reluctant. His task was to warn Nineveh of God's plan to destroy them for their wickedness. Jonah walked the full width and length of the city warning them; they listened, believed and repented. The king took off his royal clothes and humbled himself in sackcloth and sat in dust, proclaiming to all Nineveh by decree, "Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them



give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish” (Jonah 3:7-9).

The king called for both man [men and women] and beast to be covered with sackcloth. There could have existed at that time, a type of hybrid animal with a level of awareness to clothe themselves in sackcloth understanding the crucial moment of the time. The herds and flocks fasted along with men, women and beasts, but were not clothed in sackcloth. The king of Nineveh knew the God of Israel has supreme power over all gods in heaven and he repented to the only God who can forgive and save.

When Nineveh repented, God extended His grace and they were saved. Jonah was not happy with God’s compassion. He demanded, “Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live” (Jonah 4:3).

Jonah knew the God of Israel would forgive Nineveh the moment they repent because he knew that his God is “a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion—One who relents from sending disaster” (Jonah 4:2).

Unlike humans, who want to see the wicked suffer and die before offering first an opportunity of repentance and a return to living righteously, God Almighty wants people to repent and live.

While Jonah was determined to sulk, God was determined to teach him about loving his enemies, spreading the gospel of repentance, and being joyful when the wicked hear and fall to their knees before Almighty God, the Great God of Israel.

While Jonah sat in a make-shift cover, hoping to see the destruction of a large number of people, God caused a vine to grow and cover him from the hot sun. Jonah liked the cooling cover of the vine. The next day, God caused the vine to wither and a *scorching east wind* and blazing sun beat down on Jonah and soon he became faint (Jonah 4:8). Always, it is the east wind God uses to blow to authenticate His great power.

Jonah fulfilled the job of warning a wayward people. They listened to him, though he did not care for them nor did he want them saved. Jesus, who loved the Jews and wanted them to respond to his correction cried, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing” (Matthew 23:37).

With all of the miracles done in Judea, Jesus was rejected by many, unlike the people of Nineveh who believed an insignificant man and repented. “The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgement day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent” (Matthew 12:41).

The crux of this story was recorded twice because a legal witness took place that will be used in God’s heavenly court on Judgement Day.

The east wind is imagery for an instrument of great power. It was characterized in ancient times by great dryness and heat, tempestuous and destructive. Almighty God used the imagery of the east wind to reflect His relentless drive and great power in love, to correct and direct His people onto a journey back to Him.

## **FIRE**

Perfection is not achieved without the purging by fire of everything worthless and wrong. God is at work; much of mankind is asleep, but not for long. Jacob's trouble is at the door. A time like no other nor ever to be again is knocking. The forces and powers behind it are supernatural and mankind will awaken in a fright. Foreseen long ago, God used the plans and actions of Wickedness to purge the dross off His precious people. Correction is coming; God has sent His people a message of warning and hope.

“‘And in all the land,’ declares the LORD, ‘two-thirds will be cut off and perish, but a third will be left in it. This third I will bring through the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, “They are My people,” and they will say, “The LORD is our God”’” (Zechariah 13:8-9).

God's church is not a building, but a people purified and righteous. One-third of the angels in heaven have fallen away to join Satan's great rebellion. There is no saving plan for these spirit beings; they are destined for destruction. God loves His creation. The destruction of life is painful for God; He is doing all He can to save His creation.

God's second creation on earth, made mortal, is a mirror of life without God's Holy Spirit where a baby begins dying a birth. Though the child grows rapidly at first, a point is reached when the adult ages and deteriorates. God's creation was intended to grow in knowledge, understanding and wisdom. All believers will come into the fullness of God's word and live. Mortal mankind is the essence of grace and the essential companion of God's law for leaders to live in love and peace. Grace is the adjective to the noun—grace-filled leadership. Overcoming is the burning journey mortals walk towards our LORD, which purges, purifies, and perfects. It is the only way; God knows best.

“As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him” (II Samuel 22:31).

God's second creation on earth is special. Their suffering on earth will forge an unrelenting desire for righteousness and an iron sceptre against Wickedness. God's family kingdom is still in the making. Rebellious sons of God in the first creation will be destroyed and righteous mortals from the second creation will be transformed into eternal children of God. God, our LORD, is the way.

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

God will test with severity, the actions of mortals. Work done in righteousness will prevail, but work without a covering of righteousness will not prevail. “Their work will be shown for what it

is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work" (I Corinthians 3:13).

Governments pretending to care for their people will be uncovered; charities pretending to give to the needy will be revealed; news media pretending to give you the truth will be exposed; "experts" pretending to give the people an understanding of their specialities will be shamed; and Judeo-Christians pretending to serve God will fall away. Soon, everyone will be seen for who they are.

God Almighty is the Commander of change. Baptism by water is only the beginning. It will take the commitment of a blood covenant with our Father in heaven. Then, a transformation will come from severe testing, persecution, standing up against Wickedness and its lies. Those who enter into a blood covenant with God cannot be drawn away. Attacks and persecution will only draw them closer to God with a stronger will to serve love instead of hatred.

"John answered them all, 'I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire'" (Luke 3:16).

God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). In earthly terms, He is in a constant state of purity and purifying all that is around Him. While God is using Wickedness to test both creations during this evil age, He will burn and destroy Wickedness in heaven and on earth at the end.

"Therefore, the Lord God of Hosts will send a wasting disease among Assyria's stout warriors, and under his pomp will be kindled a fire like a burning flame. The *Light of Israel [Jesus Christ] will become a fire, their Holy One [Almighty God] a flame*; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briers [the wicked] (Isaiah 10:16).

The "Assyrian," who God allows to test with fire His people, is not a mortal man, but a fallen and very wicked being, "a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue" (Daniel 8:23). God has identified him with different names: the Antichrist, the Little Horn and the Assyrian.

This wicked leader is doomed. "The splendor of his forests and fertile fields, it [the fire] will completely destroy, as when a sick man wastes away. And the remaining trees [leaders] of his forests [governance] will be so few that a child could write them down" (Isaiah 10:17-19).

God is prophesying about the day of the destruction of the fallen heavenly angels. His once majestic heavenly rulers—angels—sons of God, who may think they are invincible, will be destroyed. In their place, He will ordain righteous people from the second creation on earth.

The righteous are molded through forces imaged as wind, the east wind, fire and rain that transforms mortals who will be anointed into highly-esteemed positions in God's eternal family.

## WATER and OIL

*“A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; for the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks and fountains and springs that flow through the valleys and hills”*

*(Deuteronomy 8:7-9).*

God uses the physical elements and objects to illustrate the spiritual, unseen parts essential to our learning. Mankind needs eyes to see and ears to hear. They need to see into God’s mind and understand His thoughts, decisions, and plans. Mankind needs a transformation that forges an eternal relationship with Almighty God and our loving Saviour. The “water” and “oil” are the ingredients to achieve what cannot be accomplished as ordinary mortals.



Water is used to image God’s Holy Spirit that works as a cleansing agent that flows and fills repentant believers with a superior level of thinking and knowledge acquisition.

### WATER

“But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:14).

Baptism is the image of repentance and being washed clean through the inflowing of God's Holy Spirit.

God preserved, in the stories of the Bible, forgotten history. The story of the prodigal son is a companion to the story of Naaman, the gentile general.

It is a historical marvel that the house of Israel—the ten tribes, came to repentance, sometime during their wandering among the nations. They were a stubborn house, short tempered, proud and obstinate. Upon their release from captivity, a small voice reminded them to return to their God, for He is compassionate and forgiving. They listened and came before the Almighty God but—with attitude. There was no repentance of their evil ways; they were indignant and demanding. God sentenced them with an additional seven times their original punishment, so they withdrew from God, angry, and resentful.

Their history is mirrored in Naaman, the gentile general who sought to be healed from leprosy, a chronic infectious disease. Naaman's name means "who prevails with God," which is meaningful as his story comes to light that reflects the fallen ten tribes of the house of Israel.

Our Great Creator is infamous in His use of names and the importance He places on them. A little slave girl pointed Naaman to Elisha, a prophet from the ten tribes of Israel. He went to Elisha and was directed to wash seven times in the Jordan River. He was insulted by the instructions, thinking the rivers in his homeland would suffice. He became angry and left. This is a mirror response of the ten tribes of Israel.

God was driving a point home. Healing comes only out of God's Holy Land. There is a distinction. Only the God of Israel can heal; the gods ruling over the nations cannot forgive sins. Gentiles cannot be healed spiritually in their lands, while ruled by rebel heavenly rulers.

During the days the ten tribes spent wandering and suffering searching for a home, they grew tired. With their heads down, this time, they approached the Almighty God for forgiveness. Their sinful behavior had exhausted them. God told them to wash in the baptismal waters. This time, they obeyed His voice and to their amazement, they became a new man washed of sin and accepting of God's Holy Spirit. Now, they could walk in ways of God.

These rebellious and stubborn people became transformed into a God-fearing people—a wonder to the nations watching. The grace the ten tribes of Israel received then, still amazes their descendants today. With gratitude, they continue to give thanks to God singing, "Amazing Grace" and "Your Grace Still Amazes Me."

The healing of Naaman, the Syrian general, was a physical re-enactment of the spiritual healing of the national leadership of the ten tribes of Israel. Jesus reminded the Jews in Nazareth of this story many years ago, which made them very angry.

He said, "'And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.' All the people in the synagogue were

furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way” (Luke 4:27-30).

Their reaction expressed disdain for the forgiveness and healing of gentiles.

Gehazi, Elisha’s assistant from the tribe of Judah, ran back to Naaman and took payment. His actions mirrored the Jews’ reaction to Jesus who was healing and bringing the lost ten tribes back into the covenant family. If the Gentiles—our fallen brothers, are to return, the Jews thought, then, they must pay.

The story of Naaman is rich with imagery. The healing of Naaman and the lost ten tribes of Israel are one of the same. Parallels are visible.

- Naaman was a gentile general images Ephraim, the leading tribe of the ten tribes of Israel who were divorced by God and were labelled as gentiles by the Jews.
- Naaman came with payment. Though the history of the repentance of the lost ten tribes is not recorded, stories in the Bible all point to their repentance and eventual reunion with their brothers from the house of Judah. The imagery of Naaman’s payment is a Hebraic practice for grace.
  - 6,000 shekels of gold followed the Hebraic sacrificial system of the guilt offering. This mirroring story records the repentance of the ten tribes who knew the required amount. They offered a payment in gold, even though a guilt offering was made in silver. Gold keeps its shine eternally. They were determined to show God their sincerity.
  - The ten talents of silver mirrored each tribe with one talent showing the minimum God gives to His called people to increase and multiple. They acknowledge that they are called by Him.
  - Ten sets of clothing imaged each of the ten tribes desire to change their behaviour into a new clothing—new behaviour.
- Naaman came for healing, like the ten tribes, they turned away angry when told to wash seven times in the Jordan River, failing to understand that not any river would do. This mindset reflected the carelessness of the ten tribes who habitually disregarded God’s instructions.
- Naaman was encouraged to return, like the ten tribes. He humbled himself and followed the instructions carefully. He was healed; his aged body became youthful. This is a mirror of the appearance of those given God’s Holy Spirit; they have a youthful spirit, energetic, and driven to learn God’s word and keep His commandments.
- Speaking to the Jews, Jesus spoke of only one story where a gentile was healed from leprosy. He was mirroring the story of Naaman with the divorced brothers of the covenant family, the ten tribes labelled now as Gentiles. These gentile ten tribes of Israel were healed by Christ. The Jews rejected Jesus and became spiritually sick imaged in Gehazi’s curse with leprosy for asking for payment. Jesus’ priority was to save, heal, and redeem



God's people. He said to the woman, "I was sent only to help God's lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24).

Coming into the knowledge of God's way, requires overcoming the ways of the world to willingly choose God's way, repent, seek righteousness, and change. There should be no superficial apologies or self-righteous appearances. Change will demand a painful recognition of our sins and an agonizing tearing out of every part of the cancer that is toxic. A sincere believer will enter into the race described by Paul and run that Olympian-style competition: training daily by studying the word of God, applying the way of God, putting every effort to discipline themselves without exception.

That believer, filled with God's Holy Spirit, will produce greatly like a well-watered tree. Not everyone will choose that level of discipline and commitment, unfortunately. The people given heavy responsibilities to do God's work during this evil age, will suffer more than those following behind. But, shame to the person who hears the word of God and does nothing. That person remains in sin, void of any desire to love God, His ways or even their fellow man. People who remain in wickedness will be destroyed.

The prodigal son is another mirror of the repentant lost ten tribes. He returned and was welcomed back by the father, like the lost ten tribes. While they were still a distance away, Almighty God saw their return and rejoiced.

The Apostle Paul trumpeted, "All of Israel will be saved." No longer only the two tribes, but now all twelve tribes of Israel will be saved through the grace of Almighty God. "For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them *all*" (Romans 11:32).

Washing healed Naaman. Washing through baptism, heals all people from spiritual uncleanness that leads to death.

God preserved the history of the repentance of the national leaders of the ten tribes through the story of Naaman. Traces of recorded history are found in Josephus and other historians but the healing of these national leaders is wonderfully preserved in the Bible.

The church of the ten tribes repented as well. Her story was also preserved in the Bible in the story of the woman at the well, recorded only by the Apostle John in the book of John, chapter four. This church came into repentance and accepted God's Holy Spirit when she learned about an eternal source of strength. The church of the ten tribes accepted Christ on the *same hour* (different day) as the Jews rejected Christ.

Recorded after that fateful event, "It was about the *sixth hour*. He [Pilate] said to the Jews, 'Behold your King!'" (John 19:14) The Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah around the sixth hour.

The woman brought her town's people and Jesus stayed with them two days. The number two points to a legal witness occurring, confirming Jesus as the Messiah and holding them now accountable for all he taught them during that time.

The baton was passed to the ten tribes of Israel to take the gospel to the world. Humbly and gratefully, they took it and Christianity grew into an international faith.

So many future events still lie ahead. God's people will repent and He will heal them and their land. "For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring and My blessing on your descendants" (Isaiah 44:3).

"I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols" (Ezekiel 36:25).

The people of Israel, all twelve tribes, have fought against God often and yet, He will choose them again as His people, a special people. They will be eternally indebted to His kindness, His enduring patience, and His wonderful grace.

"But the LORD will have mercy on the descendants of Jacob. He will choose Israel as his special people *once again*. He will bring them back to settle once again in their own land. And people from many different nations will come and join them there and unite with the people of Israel" (Isaiah 14:1)

God has never forgotten this creation on earth. All of mankind will be offered His Holy Spirit.

"It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days" (Joel 2:28-29).

Now, on our near horizon after Jacob's trouble, God's words of prophecy will become a reality.

"And *foreigners* who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, and love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, and all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—*these* I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called *a house of prayer for all nations*" (Isaiah 56:6-7).

Water is the physical cleansing agent for mankind and God's Holy Spirit is the life-giving force that opens the mind to understand God's spiritual world, His thoughts and His salvation plan for all of mankind.

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

God is offering all of mankind "living" water—His Holy Spirit that leads us to eternal life.

## **OIL**

In the evil, dark world of this age, God is seeking people who are His lights to reveal the lies, misconceptions, and disinformation of Wickedness. He is molding people who light up the way to Almighty God, His truth, His laws of love, and His ways of righteousness.

High quality compressed oil burns a bright light. God is molding His people for that task—to show the world God’s way of righteous living but at least half of them will not be ready to attend the wedding of their Messiah.

The parable of the ten virgins shed light on the importance of not only having oil from within but a storage also of oil. It images God’s covenant people who, through the blood of Christ, have been redeemed from their sins. God had this parable recorded because it tells the story of a very large group of His people in the latter days.

## **THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS**

In a parable, God addresses a problem with ten virgins. The use of the word “virgin” identifies a specific group of people. He is referring to a covenant, redeemed people. They were playing the harlot, that is, binding with the theology of the nations who worship fallen gods. The people under the rulership of this rebels were trapped without any way out, except for someone who could pay the price for their sins. These rebels led the nations to aspire for power and superpower status. Their priests were taught magic arts and commanded to perform detestable rituals. God’s people were attracted to the acquisition of power and glory that these nations, like Egypt, showcased.

Both houses of Israel were guilty of harlotry. “Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also” (Jeremiah 3:8).

All twelve tribes turned to worship the gods over the nations and became “harlots” in the eyes of the God of Israel. Through Christ’s redemptive sacrifice, now God considers all twelve tribes to be spiritual “virgins.” However, within this group, ten virgins have a problem.

Jesus told the parable to warn all twelve tribes of Israel, but as Jesus prophesied, only two heeded the warning and ten remain asleep to this very day. The parable filled with imagery describes ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take extra oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on

their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut” (Matthew 25:1-10).

The secrets of the kingdom of heaven are woven carefully into a story for all the read. However, keys are needed to unlock the meaning. In this parable, the significant identifiers are:

- The time period
- The kingdom of heaven
- The ten virgins
- The lamps
- The bridegroom
- The five wise virgins
- The five foolish virgins
- The oil
- The wedding banquet
- “I don’t know you”

**THE TIME PERIOD:** “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom” (Matthew 25:1). “At that time” is the period of time prior to the return of Christ.

God begins many scriptures with “at that time” when referring to the very last days of this evil world. For example:

“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time” (Daniel 12:1).

God prophesied to Moses about the state of His people “at that time.” “Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant, which I have made with them. Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’ And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods” (Deuteronomy 31:16-18).

“At that time” is likely the final three and half years of this evil age referred to as Jacob’s trouble, the Great Tribulation.

**THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN:** God is presently building His family kingdom. At the time of Jacob’s trouble, this portion of His covenant family on earth will be like ten virgins. A virgin in God’s spiritual world is a faithful and redeemed church.

The Apostle Paul had a clear understanding of God’s plan and His building of a family kingdom that exists both in heaven and on earth. “For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom *His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name*” (Ephesians 3:14-15).

God is molding and teaching His royal children. The Apostle Paul taught, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away [from God] have been brought near [to God] through the blood of Christ... Through him [Christ] we both [those far and those close] have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple [people] in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (Ephesians 2:13, 18-22).

God’s kingdom is a family kingdom of righteous beings in heaven and on earth. People on earth being prepared for God’s kingdom, will be transformed into eternal beings at the time of the resurrections. Presently, God’s kingdom is in the process of being perfected and will comprise of only the righteous in heaven and on earth.

**THE TEN VIRGINS:** “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom” (Matthew 25:1).

The ten virgins mirror ten churches, one for each tribe. God uses the female gender to image a theological body of people. All of Israel will become a kingdom of priests, hence, God’s continual use of the female gender to reference a church.

The Apostle Paul quoted Genesis 2:24 to reveal an important key to understanding God’s coded language on this matter when he said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. *This mystery is profound, but I am speaking about Christ and the church*” (Ephesians 5:31-32).

God created marriage, which began with Adam and Eve, to provide a living model of the special relationship Christ will have with his church. They will operate as one, totally unified in every jot and tittle of God’s word. Christ, the last Adam will marry a single body of faithful and loyal men and women. The profound mystery is often God’s use of imagery to teach mortals about spiritual realities.

God identifies these people as virgins because Christ died and paid the penalty of sin for God’s covenant people and all of mankind. These virgins have not returned to paganism and worshipping gods. They all go to meet the bridegroom because they know they are redeemed and expecting the second coming of Christ.

While God’s covenant people have a history of serving the gods of the nations and falling into paganism, but in that day, still in our future, they will sincerely call out to Him and He will hear them. It will be clear for them that the invading gods thrown out of heaven are their enemies and they are totally powerless to combat them. What ancient Israel could not see, 21<sup>st</sup> century nations of Israel—their descendants, will clearly see. They will awaken to who they are and they will burn with humble passion, a reverence and pride for their God, the Almighty.

“The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you with loving devotion. Again, I will build you, and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. Again, you will take up your tambourines and go out in joyful dancing’ (Jeremiah 31:3-4).

The ten virgins are ten groupings within God’s covenant people. In addition, ten is often a number God uses to indicate peaceful order, a condition that results when His ten commandments are kept. The ten virgins likely mirror groupings of people who are keeping God’s ten commandments, including the Sabbath. These ten groupings also appear to be pointing to Revelation 12:17, “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

Revelation 12:17 indicates two different groups of churches:

1. The woman—a faithful church attacked by Satan, escapes into the wilderness for three and a half years
2. Her offspring—churches keeping God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus do not escape, but are the target of Satan’s rage for three and a half years. These are the ten “virgins,” but only half will be ready to be invited into Christ’s wedding with his bride.

God’s covenant people, all twelve nations of Israel into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, are considered by God as a church kingdom—a kingdom of priests. “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).

Two groups within the twelve nations of Israel appear to fall into the group identified as the woman in Revelation who escapes into the wilderness. Her offspring become the target of Satan’s rage for three and a half years. The offspring of the woman keep God’s commands and hold to the testimony of Jesus. This group are the ten virgins in the parable imaged as ten virgins who were asleep. They will enter into the three and a half years of distress because they were not ready.

The five “wise virgins” are not the bride because Christ invites them as guests to his wedding. Jesus’ closing words in the parable are, “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour” (Matthew 25:13).

The woman in Revelation who escapes into the wilderness from Satan’s rage, is protected for three and a half years. She is a special group of faithful men and women, who do not deny Christ and endure patiently. Persecution is coming to all of God’s people. Those who follow Christ will be hated. Many will fall away from their faith during times of great distress.

The Great Harlot will open her doors for business and the whole world will begin exchanging truth for lies, faith in God for technology, belief in the healing power of Almighty God for alien medical science, devotion to the supreme God for service to raging, rebel sons of God. After

“the woman” escapes to a place of safety, the two witnesses will follow with great power, preaching the pure word of God.

The ten virgins are ten different groups within God’s covenant people who eventually return to keeping God’s ten commands and holding to the testimony of Jesus. They will not be ready to escape the great tribulation. Only half of the ten groups will be ready to enter into the wedding banquet.

**THE LAMPS:** “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom” (Matthew 25:1). The lamp is a key that images the mechanism to having access to God and His word. Jesus Christ is that mechanism. All of these ten groupings of people, accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour; they have the lamp with them.

God uses imagery to point to specific meaning. He refers to Jesus as the Lamb in Revelation 21, because Jesus sacrificed his life for mankind. He became the lamp—the conduit because he purchased mankind with his blood. Through him, access to Almighty God is now possible. The lamp is the mechanism where oil is placed and burned producing bright light. Righteous living is learned through Jesus Christ; he is the Word. In the New Jerusalem, “the city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp” (Revelations 21:22-23).

Christians who accept Christ and follow him have “the lamp” and as they live the word of God, they produce a radiant light. They are all producing light because they are living God’s way in varying degrees. But, as the story shows, all of them became drowsy because the bridegroom took a long time to come. They all stopped watching; they fell asleep to return to being consumed by the cares of this world.

In Revelation, Jesus urged his seven churches to overcome. He speaks well of two churches, but the light of five of them is flickering. Jesus identifies their weaknesses that is causing the light to fade:

- **The church of Ephesus—a falling church:** “Remember the height from which you have fallen. Repent and do the things you did at first” (Revelation 2:5).

This group was once devoted totally to taking the gospel to the whole world but today, they have fallen completely out of view.

- **The church of Smyrna—a persecuted church:** “You are rich... Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer... for 10 days. Be faithful, even to the point of death” (Revelation 2:9b, 10).

This group is promised a crown of their own; they need to remain strong during extreme distress and they will be well rewarded.

- **The church of Pergamum—a compromising church:** “You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam... you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans” (Revelation 2:14b, 15).



This group of people are located where Satan has his throne, which into the 21st century may be among those who preach his theology: science without God, medicine without God, technology without God, all knowledge without God. This centre of learning without God are all of the schools, universities, research centres, and learning facilities that have rejected God in their studies and teachings.

There are Christians who spend their whole life studying God's word. They research ancient writings, study languages, translations, and supporting writings from endless sources. They pass judgement on scriptural meaning and publish their work but their publications have inaccuracies. That is why Christ appears with the double-edged sword. He stands before them to pierce through the layers into their inner soul to discern their deep thoughts and intentions.

These people tolerate the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak how to get the ancient Israelites to sin against God. Balak taught ancient Israel to compromise the word of God and accept false teachings as if they have merit. Some of the people of this group may compromise, while others may not, still the compromise is allowed and Christianized, to show a stamp of approval.

- **The church of Thyatira—an infiltrated church:** “You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants...I will cast her on a bed of suffering” (Revelation 2:20, 22).

The people of this group receive a warm introduction from Jesus; they are doing more than what they had done previously. Doing more than what they have done previously, points to the national leaders, specifically of the ten tribes of ancient Israel, who have struggled to do the right thing most of the time. They are not known to keep God's commandments or establish law and order. They have a dark history of barbarous living fighting for superpower status. However, a time came somewhere in their forgotten history when they repented like the prodigal son. They asked for healing and their repentance was accepted.

Their history was scanty until they repented, then the light shone again and they were found changing their behavior, a grace-filled people learning to love and obey God. The house of Joseph is a significant leader into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. “In God we trust” is their motto. While wicked leadership often prevails, it can be expected that those seeking the right things in national leadership positions in every level will overthrow the deep state and Joseph—the righteous father of Ephraim and Manasseh—will rise up to lead the world in righteous living.

- **The church of Sardis—a dying church:** Jesus trumped, “Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God” (Revelation 3:2).

These are a people who are truly in trouble. Their work is incomplete and they are about to die, that is, become totally wicked. These people, like the people in Ephesus, do a global work within Christianity. This is evident where Jesus is described receiving

briefings from the seven angels of the seven churches. Their work professes to be noble and pure, which it may have been initially but it has deteriorated to such an extent that Jesus consults the seven spirits of God.

The Sardis group may have had a focus to genuinely care for the needy, homeless, widows, and fatherless. Organizations, foundations and charities were formed to do their work. However, today, scandals of how donations are being used is coming to light. If these organizations are pocketing most of the donations or abusing the use of funds, they indeed would be in trouble with God, for they claim to serve the poor and needy, which God considers to be pure religion (James 1:27). Instead, they use them for their own profit.

- **The church of Philadelphia—a loved church:** Jesus said, “Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it” (Revelation 3:12).

Jesus introduced himself to this church from the view of his role as high priest; he is holy and true. He tells this group of people that he has the key of David. He can lock and unlock doors and nobody can hinder him. Before these people, he places an opened door: opportunities, power, authority to complete his work. They will be part of a great witness.

Despite their vulnerability, they will not deny Christ’s name and they will keep his word, during a time of great distress when everyone who follows Christ is hated (Matthew 10:22). They will understand their spiritual enemy and they will be fully dressed in the armour of God ready for battle. They will boldly stand strong against the enemy and work to save their brothers and sisters. They will keep Jesus’ command to endure patiently. They understand that God wants to save everyone and more time is needed to awaken their brothers and sisters. Their suffering is lengthened but they will endure because they too, want to see everyone repent and be saved.

- **The church of Laodicea—an unrighteous church:** Jesus said, “you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (Revelation 3:17b).

These people are part of many churches under different names. They believe that they are worshipping God fully. They lift up their arms and sing, but they are not careful to obey God's commandments, His ordinances, His Sabbath, His Holy Days. They know that Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever and kept them. The Apostle Paul warned Christians “not to be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings...” (Hebrews 13:9), yet, many are confused and have wandered away and they do not know it. Into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are hundreds of different and opposing doctrines all claiming to be Christian and Biblical.

Jesus said that he is the only Teacher. “And don’t let anyone call you ‘Teacher,’ for you have only one teacher, the Messiah” (Matthew 23:10).

What Jesus meant was that he is the only one who understands God's word perfectly. Many of the Judeo-Christian teachers do not understand the scriptures perfectly and remain full of spots, wrinkles and blemishes. Open dialogue on meaning should be heard with a humble spirit to reduce factions and bring God's people back into the unity of one Almighty God with one theology.

An awakening moment will startle the Laodicean people from their blindness and they will remember and see. Those who overcome, will successfully lead God's people in a time of extreme distress.

**THE BRIDEGROOM:** Jesus Christ is the bridegroom. "And Jesus said to them, 'The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast'" (Matthew 9:15).

**THE FIVE WISE VIRGINS:** The five wise virgins awaken and realize that they were asleep. Fortunately, their relationship with God immediately ignites and they overcome by drawing on what they know already—the extra oil with them. They will humble themselves and follow Christ who will lead them back onto the narrow path of righteousness. The five wise will meet the standard required to enter the wedding banquet. These people are not the bride of Christ, rather those who qualify to be present at the wedding of the bride and the bridegroom.

**ALL OF THEM GO AND MEET THE BRIDEGROOM:** All of the redeemed go out to meet Christ, though he has not yet arrived. This brings to mind Isaiah 14:1. "The LORD will have *compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel* and will settle *them* in their own land. Foreigners will join them and unite with the descendants of Jacob."

God makes a distinction between "Jacob" and "Israel." He will have compassion of the group of slow-repenting people and choose "Israel", the wise virgins, again. The wise virgins are invited to the wedding as guests. He will settle both groups, "them," in the land of their forefather, Jacob.

**THE PARALLEL OF OIL PROCESSING AND THE MAKING OF A PRIEST:** Olive oil, common in ancient times, was made from crushing the olives. Judeo-Christians who endure instruction and correction, learn and grow, and shine brightly. This principle is the same for the ten virgins. Five are seasoned, trained, disciplined, and faithful people, while five are weak, uncertain, emotional and likely unaware of their disloyalty to God.

The foolish virgins do not know the word of God very well because they have limited amounts of God's Holy Spirit. They will likely become confused during deceitful times or too lazy, hoping to just hold onto the coattails of the wise virgins, without searching and proving the truth for themselves.

**OIL IMAGES THE CHARACTER OF WARRIORS:** Oil is the key that images an enduring, faithful follower of Christ during times of extreme distress. It brings change in behaviour and binding

love for God's ways. It forges an intimate and unbreakable relationship with God because it is formed by loving God and His ways.

**THE WEDDING BANQUET:** Falling asleep, while waiting for Christ's return, is a careless mistake. Returning to follow the crowd will cause a fall into the snares of this physical world that will cost Judeo-Christians the honour of becoming Christ's wife, the New Jerusalem. The bride is seen in Revelation wearing a crown of twelve stars and she is radiant. She is a great and wonderous sign in heaven clothed in the sun, moon at her feet with that glorious crown of twelve stars (Revelation 12:1). She represents the theological body that birthed Jesus; she is the faithful church who didn't fall asleep.

"Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb... coming down from heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:9, 11).

This structure is a body of men and women purified and perfected. They image a cube mirroring layers upon layers of righteous people who overcame.

When the cry was made, the five foolish virgins returned with the wise. They try to partner with the wise because they don't have a limited amount of God's word. They try to enter into the banquet through the merit of the wise. The wise tell them to buy oil from the "buyers" who are the teachers, to help them see where they need to overcome and grow. But, their devotion to God remains superficial.

They "buy" a little extra. Confident of their spiritual progress, they run back to find the door is closed. They cry, "Sir! Sir! Open the door for us!"

**"I DO NOT KNOW YOU":** Jesus opens the door and says, "I tell you the truth, I don't know you" (Matthew 25:12).

Jesus does not recognize them as his sheep—his followers, because they were only doing what it takes to get what they want when they are in trouble. They had not yet matured to come to know Christ, their Saviour and love him.

**GOD'S WARNING TO 21ST CENTURY JUDEO-CHRISTIANS:** "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour." God is warning Judeo-Christians not to behave like the ancient Israelites who have a long history of sin and a fleeting relationship with God, who call out only when they are in trouble.

"What can I do with you, *Ephraim*? What can I do with you, *Judah*? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears" (Hosea 6:4).

Both houses of Israel are guilty of the same problem. "Ephraim" was the leading tribe of the house of Israel and God often refers to this house under the name of their leader. "Judah" are the Jews today.

God is perfecting His people and they are overcoming, building a lasting and enduring relationship with Him.

Luke recorded, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

The delay of the Bridegroom could be intentional, so that God can sift-out the pretenders from those who are truly committed to obeying God and living in harmony with Him.

In the last days, scoffers will come, following their own evil desires. They will say, "'Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.' But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and with water... By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men" (II Peter 3:3-7).

The Apostle Peter reminds 21<sup>st</sup> century Judeo-Christians, "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God" (I Peter 1:22-23).

The Apostle Peter understood the precious gift Almighty God will give to those who overcome. He said, "make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him... Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:4b, 18a).

The Apostle James reminds the wise virgins, "Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near" (James 5:7-8).

Again, he said, "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that *God has promised to those who love him*" (James 1:12).

In summary, the keys that unlock the parable of the ten virgins and their meaning are:

- **The time period:** During a time just prior to Christ's return.
- **The Kingdom:** God's everlasting kingdom.
- **Ten virgins:** A redeemed people, addressed to ten of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- **Lamps:** Image the mechanism by which access to God and His word is made. Christ is the lamp and these Judeo-Christians have all accepted Christ's sacrifice. While many of the Jews today do not accept Jesus as the Messiah, their awakening is still in the future. God will lift the veil of stupor and they will see and weep bitterly.
- **The Wise:** Redeemed people who awaken in a fright realizing, that for a time, they had

slipped away.

- **The Foolish:** Redeemed people who awaken without a full understanding of God's law and His ways. They awaken with the wise and realize they don't have a relationship with God or Christ. They think a quick sale can take place where spiritual maturity can occur over night. They race to return and Jesus says that he does not know them.
- **The Oil:** Overcomers who have oil within and a back-up supply have a substantial knowledge of God's word and shine, though distracted with working in this world.
- **The wedding banquet:** Overcomers who are present at the wedding supper of Christ and his bride.

This secret of the kingdom of heaven reveals an unfortunate statistic. Fifty percentage of redeemed people of a large group will not be ready when Christ returns. The warning—be vigilant, waste no time drawing close to God. He loves all of us so much that He gave His beloved Son, Jesus Christ to die for us. He is molding a redeemed people into a humble and teachable holy nation of royal priests whose loyalty and love is eternal.

### THE TWO OLIVE TREES

A fascinating mystery is recorded by Zechariah of two olive trees. He was engaged in a conversation with an angel that unveiled a story, still in the future, revealing a battle against Wickedness, God's military plan, His weaponry and His guaranteed success.

"What do you see?" he [the angel] asked.

"I see a solid gold lampstand," Zechariah replied, "with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven spouts to the lamps. There are also two olive trees beside it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left. 'What are these, my lord?' he asked the angel who was speaking with him."

"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:2-5, 6).

God just revealed *who* will undertake this battle and use His weaponry. A resurrection will take place where many of the ancient prophets will work together with Jesus Christ and his seven churches to bring down the old guard and raise up God's eternal structures. The battle will be won by the power of God's Holy Spirit, not military might.

These two olive trees are the two witnesses of Revelation 11. The olive tree is symbolic of a religious leader—the rabbis, the ministry. They will preach the truth. The battle is an information war.

The Apostle John confirmed it. "These witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth" (Revelation 11:4).

God has commissioned two priests to give His wayward people and the world the final legal warning against their sins. The number two is symbolic for a legal witness. Judgement will be made after the world knows the truth. This battle will not be a military fight, it will be the power of God's Holy Spirit to open the minds of people to see truth.

Through truth and the righteous application of His law, God will bring down the towering corrupt government [mountain] entrapping the people. Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah during Zechariah's time. He will be resurrected at the return of Christ, and finish the job given to him. He will walk on a plain. God uses that imagery to describe the collapse of all the insurmountable obstacles that were present then and remain present today under Satan's rule.

"What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain. Then he will bring forth the capstone accompanied by shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'" (Zechariah 4:7)

The great mountain—world-ruling government will be overthrown and made flat.

"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of Hosts has sent me to you" (Zechariah 4:9). Zerubbabel will finish the task given to him thousands of years ago.

The two olive trees are also described as lampstands—mechanisms holding an abundant supply of oil—two spiritually strong religious leaders who will burn brightly—radiant beings of righteousness. They will be present in God's heavenly courts against the unrepentant. "The two anointed ones who are standing beside the Lord of all the earth" (Zechariah 4:14).

The books will be opened and the legal witness of the evil actions of the world will call into judgement an accountability. Justice will be served. Repentance will be encouraged. Like corrupt Nineveh who heeded Jonah's warning and deeply repented for their sins, so God in His great compassion will extend grace to the humble and He will forget their sins. The unrepentant will be destroyed.

The nations of the world will be conquered not through military might but through the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. Their eyes will open to the truth and they will feel the shame of their actions. They will willingly seek to worship the God of the Hebrews, as they see the peace God's people will enjoy under the rule of Jesus Christ.

"In that day there will be an altar to God in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to God at its border... the Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day, they will acknowledge Him... The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The God Almighty will bless them, saying 'Blessed by Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance'" (Isaiah 19:19-25).

“And many peoples will come and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways so that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3).

“He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4).

A new world is coming.



## BREAD and YEAST



*“Watch out!” Jesus told them.*

*“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees”*

*(Matthew 16:6).*



Jesus warned his disciples about the effects of yeast, leaven, that rises and causes dough to puff up, and yet, he described the kingdom of heaven to have the same effect as leaven. Through a parable, he told the story of a woman who mixed in thoroughly a little leaven in sixty pounds of flour and it permeated every part of the dough (Matthew 13:33).

What is this ingredient that leaves nothing untouched?



Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).

Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with the old bread, leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8).



### BREAD

The staple food of ancient Israel was bread. It is the imagery God uses for the fundamental knowledge of His word.

As central as bread is to the diet of Judeo-Christians, so is Jesus Christ; he is the bread of life.

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (John 6:51).

The imagery is clear. Follow, lean on, and learn from Jesus Christ. He is perfect in God’s law and ways that God Himself identifies him as the Word.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

God uses imagery to teach mankind heavenly things. “And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me’” (Luke 22:19).

Jesus too, uses God’s imagery. His body is the Word; perfect and flawless. Jesus is not teaching his disciples to be cannibals, rather the image that Jesus is fundamental to their spiritual growth, development, and very existence. He wants them to remember that and not drift away to follow someone else. One-third of the angels fell and departed from truth—God’s knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Jesus wants all of mankind to lean on follow him; he will not disappoint them or jeopardize their spiritual safety.

“For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:33). Only Jesus Christ was able to save the world, paying the price for their sins. He only is the key to our spiritual growth and eternal life.

- His beaten body heals mankind.
- His death paid the price of sin.
- Mankind is indentured to Christ.
- Eternal life is again offered to mankind through the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The body is imaged as the temple of God, a perfect structure flowing with God’s Holy Spirit.

“Don’t you know that your body is the temple of the LORD” (I Corinthians 6:19).

God’s Holy Spirit is a unique essence that is comprised of three groupings of two precious qualities. God grouped them intentionally to show that His Holy Spirit is a legal witness of righteousness and the three groupings confirm His seal placed over them. Isaiah recorded the Spirit of the LORD and how it is grouped.

- The Spirit of **wisdom** and **understanding**
  - **Wisdom:** God’s highest form—a comprehension of the deep things of God
  - **Understanding:** sagacity, which discerns the right thing to do and the right word to say
- The Spirit of **counsel** and **power**
  - **Counsel:** the processes that bring right resolutions
  - **Power:** unwavering strength to carry out the processes
- The Spirit of **knowledge** and the **fear of the LORD**

- **Knowledge:** complete awareness of Almighty God—His character, His ideals, His plans, His ways, His desires and His love
- **Fear of the LORD:** reverence for Almighty God bound with unbreakable loyalty.

The spirit is an essence that for mankind, awakens them to be self-aware, to think, choose, and act. God's Holy Spirit is superior to all spirits. It is comprised of six precious qualities that bring all thoughts and action into perfect righteousness. The spirit of man was created by God and given to mankind giving them: intelligent awareness and an ability to make free-will choices that lead to actions. It is limited and designed by God to be just that. God is molding mankind into a humble creation of righteous priests. They will remain incomplete in many ways, until they humble themselves and allow God to finish His work in them through His Holy Spirit.

All of the precious qualities of God were awarded to Jesus Christ (Isaiah 11:2). Indeed, he is spiritually perfect in righteousness.

In the beginning of the creation of God's family, God, the Father began in heaven, creating through the Son, spirit beings who were created with God's Holy Spirit and the fundamental knowledge to choose righteously, preventing any accidental fall into sin.

God has always allowed free will. Along the way, Lucifer was the first to rethink his options and deviate from righteousness. His pride, due to his beauty, twisted his logic draining God's Holy Spirit where he began losing truth, understanding, and wisdom. A transformation and discolouring took place to reveal a dark spirit, void of God's glory, which grew to consume him and throw him deep into iniquity.

The human mind accesses information from all sources. It is important that information is tested before accepted as truth. Jesus Christ is the perfect leader for all of mankind to lean on and, in him, put their trust.

The story recorded in the gospels of the feeding of the multitudes were important events that Jesus did not want forgotten. He directly taught both the Jews and the ten tribes of Israel—the Gentiles, as part of his ministry on earth.

### **JESUS TAUGHT THE JEWS FIRST IMAGED IN THE FEEDING OF 5,000 PEOPLE BREAD AND FISH**

Every story recorded in the Bible is filled with meaning that goes well below the surface. The disciples recorded Jesus feeding five thousand Jews and four thousand gentiles from the ten tribes of Israel. The record of these two events is filled with symbolism. He taught them that he has authority from God to teach them. In addition, his disciples will continue to teach Jews as well as the ten tribes, after he returns to our Father in heaven.

The Apostle John was one who recorded the teaching of the Jews. It began with Jesus going up on the hillside. He selected that site to show that he has authority to teach, a place of elevation. The Jews kept the Hebrew Passover, so he planned to teach them at that time, to point to his upcoming sacrifice and their spiritual saving.

Jesus saw the people and he had compassion on them immediately because they were like sheep without a shepherd. They were law-keepers and faithful to God. He began teaching them about the Kingdom of God and healing the sick. This healing was coupled with the forgiveness of sins that he was qualified to do.

Mark recorded the push back by the priests. “And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’”

“But some of the scribes were sitting there and thinking in their hearts, ‘Why does this man speak like this? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’”

“At once Jesus knew in His spirit that they were thinking this way within themselves. ‘Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?’ He asked. ‘Which is easier: to say to a paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk?”’”

Jesus continued, “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...” He said to the paralytic, ‘I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home’” (Mark 2:5-11).

Both the Jews and the Gentiles of the ten tribes of Israel anticipated a Saviour but the Jews could not understand the role of Jesus and did not make the connection of Jesus with the angel of the LORD in the Old Testament. Moses recorded God’s warning to them. “Behold, I am sending an angel before you to protect you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to his voice; do not defy him, for *he will not forgive rebellion, since My name is in him*” (Exodus 23:20-21).

Jesus’ name in Hebrew is Yashuah whose name is in God’s name Yahuah. The common translation “YHWH” has been adopted by the Christians. The vowels are not written in Hebrew.

God added, “But if you will listen carefully to his voice and do everything I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and a foe to your foes” (Exodus 23:21).

The angel of the LORD in the Old Testament and Jesus, Yashuah, are one of the same.

As Jesus taught the Jews on that day, it became late. The disciples told Jesus to send the people away, so that they can buy food for themselves. Jesus had other plans—a miracle that would reflect his teaching to the house of Judah. The Jews gathered in a remote location. It imaged a place away from the teachings of the Jewish religious leaders.

“Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?’ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.”

“Philip replied, ‘It would take eight months of earnings and still, it would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!’”

Spiritual food, the word of God is priceless. No money can buy the word of God and it is a free gift to those who repent.

“Jesus replied, ‘How many loaves do you have? Go and see.’”

“Andrew said, ‘Here is a boy with five small loaves of barley and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?’”

The boy from within this group could point to Jesus, himself; the young man about his father’s business who can perform the miracle of teaching a great number of people imaged in feeding the multitude.

Jesus directed the disciples to have the people sit on the green grass in groups of hundreds and fifties. The green grass imaged a place where the word of God was rich and plentiful. The Jews were the keepers of the oracles of God and this is imaged in the green grass.

Jesus intentionally organized the people in groups of hundreds and fifties to keep with the practice of organizational order that is established and maintained in the keeping of God’s ten commandments. As the keepers of the Law and oracles of God, the Jews were grouped accordingly.

Jesus then gave thanks to God and broke the bread and gave the food to the disciples who gave it to the people. They all ate and were satisfied. The breaking of the bread was an image of opening up the word of truth to understanding. The food was then given and eaten, imaging the obtaining of knowledge and understanding.

Jesus multiplied five barley loaves to feed five thousand people, leaving twelve baskets left over. He is even greater than Elijah who multiplied flour and oil to save a widow and her son from starvation and greater than Elisha multiplied twenty barley loaves to feed one hundred with some left over.

Moses predicted that God would raise up a prophet like himself. “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him” (Deuteronomy 18:18).

Starting with five barley loaves, Jesus transformed the Mosaic Law into something much bigger, greater and more nourishing, imaged in feeding five thousand people. The number five thousand points to people throughout eternity (one thousand) having God’s Holy Spirit (five) and learning from the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of the barley bread that were left over, nothing was wasted. The number twelve is used specifically to teach us about a perfect government in the making from an early harvest [barley], who will establish and fortify God’s new government, to the summer and fall harvests which will bring in the remaining believers under God’s jurisdiction.

After the people saw the miracle done by Jesus, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus told the disciples to get into the boat and go ahead, knowing that the people intended to come and make him king by force, then he withdrew again into the hills by himself.

Jesus left the people. He knew their heart; they wanted to make him king so they could overthrow Roman rule. Jesus' first-coming was not about overthrowing the present rulership, but saving everyone through his death on the cross.

Still young in their spiritual growth, the Jewish people sought saving from the Romans, not spiritual saving. Their religious leaders rejected Jesus because they didn't want to upset the status quo that gave them privilege. Many Jews were confused about the validity of Jesus, he urged them, "If I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don't believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father" (John 10:38).

Jesus turned away from the people and prayed in private. It could be surmised that his private prayer would be a request to his Father for help, to turn these people's hearts of stone into a willing heart of flesh, so that they could hear and understand God's grand plan for all of mankind. The Jewish leaders rejected him and caused confusion for the people. Hence, they will have to wait two thousand years before they come to realize their Saviour.

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo" (Zechariah 12:10-11).

Soon afterward, another group of people were fed by Jesus. They were four thousand from the repentant Gentiles of the ten tribes of Israel.

Prior to the story of the feeding of the four thousand people, Mark recorded Jesus defining that which is "clean" and that which is "unclean." This was intentional by God so that it was understood by the Jews prior to the teaching of these Gentiles. Cleanliness was all about what lies within the heart. "For from within out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'" (Mark 7:21-23).

After that teaching, Jesus healed a Greek girl possessed with a demon and a deaf and dumb man. Jesus was showing that he was now turning to a different group of people and healing them. In a time after Jesus had clarified what it meant to be 'clean', four thousand men besides women and children were taught. These people were not from the house of Judah. They were considered 'unclean', until Jesus clarified to the Jews what it means to be 'clean' and 'unclean'.

God recorded through Ezekiel, His plan to give His people a heart of flesh and what that means.

“O house of Israel... For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness” (Ezekiel 36:22, 24-29).

Jesus was stating that the ten tribes of Israel, the divorced house, are no longer unclean. His death will be the wiping clean of their sins and their re-entry into the covenant family. He fed them personally the word of God in their territory close to the borders of the Decapolis region.

Mark recorded the details of the teaching of the four thousand people in chapter eight. Again, Jesus went up into the hills showing his authority to teach and heal these people. They sat down on desolate ground after traveling three days. This desolate place is symbolic of a spiritually dead place filled with paganism. They were “cut off” for hundreds of years and lived as Gentiles adopting many of the pagan beliefs and customs. Having been at one time close, these people were now “far away.” They came prepared filled with a willing spirit to learn, but their trip home would cause them to eventually fall away from the truth, if a structure for sustaining God’s word could not be established. Hence, the establishment of the church.

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us” (Ephesians 2:13-14).

The wall of hostility the Apostle Paul addressed was the tension between the two houses of the kingdom of Israel. Great crowds came bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the dumb, and many others. They laid them by Jesus’ feet and he healed them. The people were amazed and praised the God of Israel because they were very grateful that Jesus would heal them, sinners of sinners, the divorced covenant people—the cast-out dogs of the family. With all their heart, they were grateful and the grace they received, they held dear to their heart.

The crowds were healed from their physical ailments; this healing amazed them and they believed Jesus immediately. When they praised the God of Israel for their healing, they acknowledged that God gave Jesus authority to forgive their sins, healing them, both physically and spiritually. That was the amazement they experienced. A second God who could forgive sins. Amazing!

Jesus taught them and they listened eagerly. They began to see, hear, and walk in understanding of spiritual truth. They were grateful for their healing. Where the Jews stumbled, the ten tribes of Israel walked in ease and without hesitation.

Jesus felt compassion for both groups of people, but at different times. With the crowd of five thousand, Jesus had compassion on the people at the moment he saw them. With the crowd of four thousand, Jesus had compassion on them after they responded with amazement for their healing and praised the God of Israel. This was the repentance Jesus needed to witness before he felt compassion for them.

These people were from the ten tribes of Israel who had a long history of rebellion against the God of Israel and perpetual promises of returning but only when it suited them. Jesus accepted their repentance and he was ready to save them. Well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Christians sing about grace with their hearts poured out to God.

This group of people were thrilled and deeply grateful that they were healed. They had already been brought to their knees begging to return to the covenant family. Journeying a long way from many areas in the far north of Judea, they came to see Jesus, the Son of God.

These people had come with resources and had been with Jesus for three days; now nothing left to eat. Jesus said that if he sends them away, they will collapse on the way. From a spiritual perspective, it can be said that these people were far from God spiritually. They wanted grace because they were the divorced house who sincerely regretted the choices made by their forefathers. Their humble heart and willing spirit sustained them, until Jesus witnessed and accepted their repentance. They had to wait symbolically three days indicating God's seal on the event and their repentance verified by God, Himself. Though these people were divorced from God, through the blood of Christ, they could return to the covenant family and draw near to God.

An interesting scripture is found in Ephesians 2. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the *dividing wall of hostility*, by abolishing the law of commandments *expressed in ordinances*, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace" (Ephesians 2:13-15).

The dividing wall of hostility was specifically between the house of Judah and the house of Israel (the ten tribes). The priesthood was determined to enforce their own ordinances, such as:

- Jews cannot associate with Gentiles
- Judgement was passed on disputable matters:
  - Meats offered to idols
  - Days of fasting
  - Foods determined "common"
- Enforce the added ordinances of the elders, opinions, and decrees by the priesthood.

The houses of Judah and Israel have a long history of conflict. Jesus came to bring the "lost sheep of Israel"—the ten tribes, back into the covenant family and remove the barrier of man-made laws, ordinances, and judgements that are not of God, so to heal and reunite the two houses that will in the future, be bound together as one kingdom, as it was in ancient times.



Like the multitude of five thousand, this group was in a remote place but in a desolate location. This image describes the areas where they live—places that are spiritually dead where paganism is practiced. The disciples asked how these people could be fed. Jesus asked, “How many loaves do you have?” They replied, “Seven.”

The loaves of bread and fish came from what the disciples had brought. Now the disciples were beginning to grow spiritually and provide the basis of the food—the teaching, that they would provide in the future after Jesus returns to heaven.

This second feeding—teaching, was to the scattered house of Israel (the lost sheep of Israel), which would be accomplished through the teaching of the disciples, imaged in them having the bread that Jesus multiplied to feed this multitude. These gentile ten tribes accepted the teachings, humbled themselves and begged to learn more. The baton would be passed to them to take the gospel to the world.

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

The Apostle Paul said, “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” (Acts 28:28)

These followers of Christ became known as Christians. “Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?’” (Acts 27:28)

Christ was successful at teaching and converting many from all twelve tribes of Israel after feeding the multitudes. The Apostle Paul acknowledged that all twelve tribes hoped for God’s promise of eternal life and said, “This is the promise our *twelve tribes* are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God, day and night... the hope of what God promised to our fathers” (Acts 26:7,6).

This statement confirms the reinstitution of the ten tribes with God’s covenant people. Jesus was successful at bringing back into the covenant family, the lost sheep of Israel. He told this crowd of Gentiles to sit on the ground. In contrast with the five thousand, these people are identified as unstructured, hence without the Law of God. They were “cut off” for hundreds of years and lived as Gentiles adopting many strange pagan beliefs and customs.

Jesus gave thanks, broke the bread and gave the food to his disciples who gave it to the people. The action of “breaking bread” truly is the continual teaching that would take place.

Over the past two thousand years, the word of God has been a continual learning period as Judeo-Christians grow in grace and knowledge.

They had a few fish as well and he gave thanks for them. The people ate and were satisfied. Afterwards the disciples collected seven very large baskets full of leftovers. It imaged the long period of time that Christians would need to be feed the seven churches described in the book

of Revelation. After having sent them away, he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Magadan.

While Jesus was on earth, he taught the Jews and the gentile ten tribes, God's law and His ways. Remembering this history was critical; Jesus urged his disciples not to forget the teaching and the miracles that took place.


Jesus warned about the pride and arrogance of those in religious and national leadership positions. The disciples "discussed this with one another and said, 'It is because we have no bread.'"

He saw that they were confused and said, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for 5,000, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" (Mark 8:16-19)

"Twelve," they replied. Jesus was reminding them that they will be the ones to take the testimony of Jesus to the Jews, the 5,000. They are the twelve baskets of leftover bread.

And when I broke the seven loaves for the 4,000, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven." He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

**Jesus' ministry taught all twelve tribes of Israel**



- Lean on Jesus Christ
- All of the twelve tribes of Israel were taught by Jesus Christ, on earth over 2,000 years ago.

- 5,000 from the house of Judah
- 4,000 from the ten tribes, the house of Israel

The understanding of both the Jews and the Gentiles being taught by Jesus was preserved in the Gospels.

## YEAST

God uses the action of yeast to illustrate the complete infiltration of corruption when people obtain power and become proud and arrogant.

Jesus warned his disciples, "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod" (Mark 8:15).

Jesus was referring to those people in the national, civil and religious leadership positions. They had become puffed up, vain, proud and arrogant. Money and power are the root of all evil.

Jesus taught his disciples to be humble servants. “The greatest among you must be a servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:11-12).

The innocence and humility of little children is the quality God is molding in His people through Christ. God is mankind’s heavenly Father who knows best.

Jesus added, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3-4).

Humility is one of the greatest character qualities, along with compassion, but most valuable of all, is love for Almighty God and one another.

Matthew recorded a parable of a woman who took yeast and mixed it into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough and it rose flowing over the bowl (Matthew 13:33).

A clear image is visible of the effective action of yeast to completely infiltrate dough through kneading. That is the imagery God is showing His people. The gospel will go out to all creation on earth; nobody will be left untouched or unaware.

The yeast is the teaching of the word of God that spreads from little into the whole. Five plus seven loaves of bread totals twelve loaves that were broken by Jesus. The twelve disciples and the seven churches were commissioned to continue until it is kneaded into the whole world.

The gospel will go to the whole world. It will be “preached as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

The teaching of the gospel to the world has already started, but the Great Tribulation will bring many to repentance. “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands” (Revelation 7:9).

God will pour out his Holy Spirit in the last days. “I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams” (Acts 2:17, Joel 2:28).

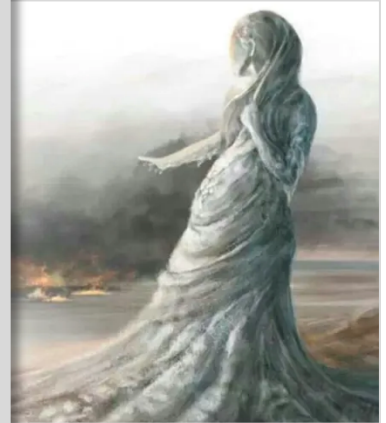
The yeast images the complete work that will be done of the teaching of the word of God and it will overflow to cover the whole world. The burdens of the world will become light when they all begin to hear the word and live the way of God.

## SALT

*“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt,  
so that you may know how you ought to answer each person”*

*(Colossians 4:6).*

Salt is an essential mineral that when applied to food, brings out the flavours that would otherwise remain hidden. God created salt with that special quality. It was His intention from the beginning to use it as a teaching metaphor that is easily understood by mankind who apply salt in their daily lives for multiple purposes



Speech seasoned with salt is a conversation where the meaning is brought out from the muddled language of deceivers. God wants believers to be forgiving and kind in their conversations with each other, while at the same time, using clear and easy-to-understand language so that the truth is brought out from misinformation and disinformation.

God describes the righteous as the salt of the earth. This is a description of people who are preserving and saving the people on earth when they teach them God's law and His ways of loving one another and loving Him, the Great Creator. It also reflects the spiritual healing that takes place as people overcome and turn away from carnal behaviour that hurts and destroys to humble responses that care and protect one another.

Jesus said, *“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet”* (Matthew 5:13).

The image of people losing their saltiness is the return to living carelessly, polluting honesty with lies and falling back into deception. There is no saving plan for people who return to the old ways of darkness. They will be destroyed—trampled under the feet of the righteous.

In ancient times, the offerings given to God were always seasoned with salt, “*You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt*” (Leviticus 2:13).

God wanted the Israelites to live righteously and their offerings to Him to be genuine, humble acts of repentance and deep sorrow for the harmful effects of living in sin. Salt added to the offering acknowledged the importance of the preservation and healing that comes from living God’s laws and His way. It is symbolic of an everlasting agreement with the focus on the relationship between two or more parties—maintained by an added element—a distinctive quality typified in one of enduring character.

The old expression “worth your salt” goes back in time when salt was attached to money. It carries the message that those who are good at the work they do, are respected and recommended. It is the lingering memory of God’s warning to hold onto your saltiness—good character, quality work in all you do.

Salt is also associated to the keeping of promises. Honest people will keep their word.

“Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the people of Israel, saying, ‘This is what the LORD has commanded. If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth’” (Numbers 30:1-2).

God taught the ancient Israelites the importance of honesty and integrity. These qualities are woven into covenants with Him and are referred to as a covenant of salt. God is honest and true. The covenants He makes, He keeps and will never break. God promised David that he will be king over Israel forever.

“Ought you not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?” (II Chronicles 13:5)

The fall and scattering of the twelve tribes of Israel has temporarily suspended David’s family rule. During the Millennial reign of Christ, God will fulfill His covenant of salt with David and he will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel again and forever. The kingdom of Israel will reunite as one and the people will choose David as their king.

“My servant David will be king over them, and there will be one shepherd for all of them. They will follow My ordinances and keep and observe My statutes. They will live in the land that I gave to My servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They will live there forever with their children and grandchildren, and My servant *David will be their prince forever*” (Ezekiel 37:24-25).

When the twelve tribes of Israel entered into the promised land, they all received land—their own territorial homes, except for the Levites who were their priests. God promised to care and provide for the Levites by giving them portions of the sacrifices and tithes from the people. This was a covenant of salt made by God.

“All the holy contributions that the people of Israel present to the Lord I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. It is a *covenant of salt forever* before the Lord for you and for your offspring with you” (Numbers 18:19).

Salt is that essential mineral that is used to savour and preserve food, as well as a medicinal benefit. Too much salt has the opposite effect. Plant life cannot be sustained in salt pits. Too much irrigation of farmland without sufficient drainage will cause the land to become unproductive and eventually a wasteland because it carries salt.

God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah using brimstone and salt to completely destroy those cities, along with their allied cities of Admah and Zeboiim. The people in these cities were involved in the same strange and forbidden practices with fallen angels. The perversion involved a breeding formula between fallen angels and humans.

“All its land is brimstone and salt, a burning waste, unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and in His wrath.’ All the nations will say, ‘Why has the Lord done thus to this land? Why this great outburst of anger?’ Then men will say, ‘Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt’” (Deuteronomy 29:23).

God used fire—brimstone—to destroy the evil within the cities and heavy amounts of salt to clean but not restore. An example was made as a lesson for many generations to come. Abraham’s nephew fled Sodom before God destroyed the city. Lot’s wife looked back with longing; she believed in what they were doing as if it was good. God turned her into a pillar of salt; she became a memorial of God’s intolerance to such perversion.

“And the angels who did not stay within their own domain but abandoned their proper dwelling—these He has kept in eternal chains under darkness, bound for judgement on that great day. In like manner, Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, who indulged in sexual immorality and pursued strange flesh, are on display as an example of those who sustain the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 1:6-7).

A seasoning of salt brings out the deeper and richer flavours within the food, so the teachings of the righteous who enlighten with precision and clarity, God’s truth and His way of life.

In contrast, death by salt saturation is God’s sentence of catastrophic sterility—an abrupt final ending and complete cleansing of detestable perversions.

God gives His creation free will to choose; He wants His creation to choose life.

“I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set before you, life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that you and your descendants may live, and that you may love the LORD your God, obey Him, and hold fast to Him. For He is your life, and He will prolong your life in the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

Choose life.



## BARLEY, WHEAT and GRAPES

“THREE TIMES A YEAR you are to celebrate a feast to Me” (Exodus 23:14).

“The THREE ANNUAL APPOINTED FEASTS—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks,  
and the Feast of Tabernacles”  
(11 Chronicles 8:13).

God’s seal is on His three celebrations. These holy days, God’s celebrations, were taught to His people as part of revealing His timeline of His salvation plan for His people and all of mankind. God does not hide His grand plan from mankind. On the contrary, He is doing all He can to teach His people every detail of it. The three annual appointed feasts celebrate three harvests, which image three resurrections into life eternal.



Barley is the first grain to ripen in spring and this harvest images the first resurrection of men and women at the time of Christ’s return. The wheat harvest takes place in summer; it is an image of the second resurrection. The harvest of the grapes is the last resurrection that brings judgement and death on the unrepentant. It then will bring life eternal for people, though slow to come into repentance, humbly seek God at the end of the Great Tribulation. Each harvest has its own story.

### **BARLEY**

Barley is produced from the land and is one the first of grains to be harvested in the Middle East. The spiritual story of barley is the announcement of the first resurrection of the righteous on earth.



God's Holy Days provide the timeline for God's plan for mankind beginning with His people. The resurrections to come are mirrored in the grain harvests. Barley ripens around Passover in the Middle East, the home of ancient Israel. The death angel passed over the firstborn before ancient Israel began their exit out of Egypt. This was the great joyous message God was teaching His people. Christ's sacrifice was foreknown to be accepted, hence the blood of the sacrificed lamb brushed on the door post. This annual celebration teaches God's people about the first resurrection of men and women imaged as the first to be born into eternity from creation on earth. The death of the firstborn sons of the Egyptians prior to the exodus of ancient Israel, was a direct message to Pharaoh, the heavenly king over Egypt, that there will not be a first resurrection of his people into eternity. His people will have to wait for the second resurrection. Jesus Christ is the first of the firstborn. He was resurrected at the time of the barley harvest.

The wave-sheaf offering took place on the day after Passover. Barley was offered to God. This celebration takes place during the month of Abib, which means "green ears." It is a direct reference to the ripening of barley in that month. In ancient times, the determination of when the Passover would be kept, was done by the priests. They inspected the ears of barley, which is a mirror of God inspecting the people who will be in the first resurrection and determining whether they are ready.

Dr. Stephen E. Jones of God's Kingdom Ministries provides valuable insight into the imagery of barley and the harvest.

"Jesus presented Himself before His Father in the heavenly Temple at the time the priest waved the barley sheaf in the earthly temple. The waving motion, up and down, signified resurrection. Though Jesus had actually been raised from the dead "very early in the morning" (Luke 24:1), He did not allow Mary to touch Him prior to the wave-sheaf offering (John 20:17). Not until the wave-sheaf offering was Jesus declared legally alive in the court of heaven.

When God was dealing with Pharaoh to allow Israel to leave, He sent ten plagues upon Egypt. The seventh plague was that of hail, which destroyed the barley and flax, but not the wheat and spelt. (This took place just prior to the Passover, which took place with the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn.) We read:

"Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was in bud. 32 But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined; for they ripen late" (Exodus 32:31-32).

The barley was ripe and eared out just prior to that first Passover. But the wheat was not yet ripe.”<sup>4</sup>

#### **A SIDE NOTE**

The seventh plague of hail and thunder was a warning to Pharaoh that if he and his people did not repent of their sins, their firstborn will die. Pharaoh, ruler on earth, understood the spiritual message and knew very well that the heavenly gods he worshipped could not match the God of Israel. And, he knew that he and his people were sinning against the Supreme God.

“Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, ‘This time I have sinned,’ he said to them. ‘The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Pray to the LORD, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don’t have to stay longer’” (Exodus 9:27-28).

“When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts” (Exodus 9:34).

Pharaoh knew full well, that the Egyptian leadership had led their whole kingdom into sin. After the plague of locusts, Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses again, crying, “I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. Now forgive my sin once more and pray to the LORD your God to take this deadly plague away from me” (Exodus 10:16).

The God of Israel was teaching the Egyptians about His supremacy over all of the heavenly rulers over the nations. The heavenly ruler over Egypt had turned against the Almighty God and in his rebellion, he claimed to be a creator of the great Nile River. God considered the fallen heavenly ruler a monster living in sin and dragging everyone down with him.

“Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. Speak to him and tell him that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great monster who lies among his rivers, who says, “The Nile is mine; I made it myself.”’ But I will put hooks in your jaws and cause the fish of your streams to cling to your scales. I will haul you up out of your rivers, and all the fish of your streams will cling to your scales” (Ezekiel 29:2-4).

The heavenly rulers over the nations understood God’s plan to resurrect repentant mankind. They appeared to be competing to qualify their people for the first resurrection. Each heavenly ruler eventually sinned and turned against God. His message to Pharaoh was clear: the Egyptians would not be part of the first resurrection.

Pharaoh admitted that he and his people were sinners. God hardened the heart of Pharaoh to multiply the impact of the miracles done through Moses and Aaron. He was teaching the

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Jones, Stephen E.. “Chapter 2: The Barley Harvest.” *God’s Kingdom Ministries*, <https://godskingdom.org/studies/books/the-barley-overcomers/chapter-2-the-barley-harvest/>. Accessed June 4, 2022.

people of Egypt that the gods they worshipped were powerless before the God of Israel and He is the Supreme God over all gods.

This has been the battle all throughout ancient times and will occur again during the Great Tribulation, and again, at the end of the Millennium when Satan is released and God calls Gog of Magog to war. Gog and those with him are the last remaining rebel rulers in heaven. God has saved their overthrow and destruction for last. The nations will learn that the God of Israel is Supreme, All Powerful and their Great Creator.

“I will execute judgement upon him [Gog] with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. And so, I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD” (Ezekiel 38:22-23).

Dr. Stephen Jones understands the pattern and imagery God uses to bring transparency into the great spiritual story of the salvation of mankind.

He continued, “We see another example of this forty years later, when Israel was ready to cross the Jordan. Joshua sent two spies to Jericho. It was the time of Passover (Joshua 5:10), and Rahab hid the spies under stalks of flax (Joshua 2:6). Flax ripened at the same time as barley, as we saw from Exodus 9:31. Linen comes from flax. It was used to make priestly garments, and in Revelation 19:8 we see that *“fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”*

The week after Passover is also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The people were required to remove all leaven from their houses for a full seven days. Leaven is symbolic of sin; thus, removing the leavened bread depicts the removal of all sin from one’s house (body). This is the same symbolism as we find in flax, for to be clothed in flax (linen) is to depict putting on the righteousness of Christ. So all of these things work together, woven into a complete picture of the plan of God for Christ and the overcoming body. The body of Christ (the overcomers) who are identified with their Head will soon follow Him in the first resurrection.”<sup>5</sup>

Rightly so, he concluded that the overcomers are imaged as barley. It is the produce grown on land that is significant because the land is imaged as the place of the living. God doesn’t refer to plants that are grown in the sea, like seaweed or plankton, as an image for a harvest that represents a resurrection. This is because the sea is not the place God uses to image those who are growing in grace and knowledge, and living in righteousness filled with God’s Holy Spirit. The sea is the image of those dying spiritually. When the new earth and new heaven are created, there will be no sea—no haven for Wickedness. It is on the land where God seeds and harvests. Barley images a special type of believer.

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Jones, Stephen E.. “Chapter 3: Barley Stories.” *God’s Kingdom Ministries*, <https://godskingdom.org/studies/books/the-barley-overcomers/chapter-3-barley-stories/>. Accessed June 4, 2022.

Dr. Jones unveils stories that support God's imagery of the barley harvest, which point to people who will be in the first resurrection, and in the case of Gideon, he and his remnant overthrow the enemy.

### **Gideon: The Cake of Barley**

"Gideon is an interesting Bible character, because his ministry reveals not only the character of the barley company, but also shows it in relation to the wheat and the grapes. Israel had been forced to pay tribute to the Midianites for seven years (Judges 6:1). When Israel finally repented and cried out to God for deliverance, God sent them a prophet to give them a history lesson (Judges 6:8-10). This was to show them why God had brought this captivity upon them. As Paul wrote many years later, these history lessons were written for our learning. They are examples of how God deals with men and nations.

When the people repented at the word of the prophet, then God sent an angel to commission Gideon as a judge, or deliverer, to save Israel. The angel found Gideon threshing wheat in a winepress (Judges 6:11). Since it was wheat harvest time, we know that this call came in early summer at the time of Pentecost, for that is the time wheat ripened.

Gideon's threshing wheat in the winepress depicts the calling to remove the chaff (carnal nature) from the wheat (the Church). The winepress signifies judgement that is normally reserved for unbelievers and yet somehow applied to the Church. Gideon's actions here are striking, because one does not normally thresh wheat in a winepress, but on a hilltop where the wind can blow the chaff away. This seeming incongruity is matched only by the statement in Revelation 14:18, which says:

"And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe."

One does not harvest grapes with a sickle, any more than one threshes wheat in a winepress! These are highly symbolic things, but the main thing for our purpose is to show that the wheat company (non-overcoming Church) will undergo trial by fire to see if their works are made of wood, hay, and stubble (I Corinthians 3:12)."<sup>6</sup>

Gideon was called by God to lead the overthrow of the Midianites. Ancient Israel was ready to be rescued by God. God chose only three hundred to fight with Gideon against 120,000 Midianites and their allies. This was to showcase the strength of Almighty God. Gideon was reluctant to take on the Midianites. God assured him and said, "I will be with you, and you will strike down the Midianites, as if they were but one man" (Judges 6:16).

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<sup>6</sup> Dr. Jones, Stephen E.. "Chapter 3: Barley Stories." *God's Kingdom Ministries*, <https://godskingdom.org/studies/books/the-barley-overcomers/chapter-3-barley-stories/>. Accessed June 4, 2022.

Gideon asked for a sign of proof that it was Almighty God speaking and gave Him an offering. Ancient Israel was deep into the practices of the pagan people around them. Gideon cut down the Asherah pole and destroyed the altar of Baal. The people of his town were very angry when they saw what he did. Opposition among your own people will always be present. Gideon asked God for another sign that the God of Israel would save his people. He said, "I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said" (Judges 6:36).

He woke up early the next morning and the fleece was soaking wet and the ground dry. Still, hesitant he asked God again to prove Himself. This time, he asked for the ground to be wet and the fleece dry. God did as he asked and Gideon was convinced.

Three hundred men with Gideon camped on the hill. The vast army in the valley was a terrifying sight. God told Gideon to go down and spy out the camp of the Midianites and he will hear something that will encourage him. So, Gideon and his servant went and he heard a Midianite sharing his dream, "I had a dream. A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed."

His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands" (Judges 7:13-14).

God's imagery is providing details of a spiritual level. Even the number three hundred has meaning. Three indicates God's seal on an event and one hundred (10 X10) is a multiplied legal witness of judgement against the Midianites and their allies by God.

The round barley bread is an image of Gideon with his three hundred men. They represent the people in the first resurrection who will overthrow the vast army at Armageddon. Gideon's battle is a mirror of the overthrow of armies of the nations against Almighty God in the future.

Dr. Steven Jones provides an interesting interpretation of *how* Gideon and his three hundred men will succeed.

"The manner in which Gideon's army defeated the enemy tells us **HOW** the overcomers of today will receive the promise.

Each of the men in Gideon's army was given a trumpet and a torch inside an earthen jar, or pitcher. With little oxygen in the jar, the torches could only glow. At the signal, they blew their trumpets and broke the jars, holding up the torches in the air, causing them to burst into flames.

The trumpet signifies the Feast of Trumpets, which prophesies of the first resurrection when the trumpet sounds. The Feast of Trumpets occurs on the first day of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. Since they blew the trumpet on the first day of each month to mark the calendar, the Feast of Trumpets is the seventh trumpet. It is the final

trumpet in the series of feast days laid down in the law. Of this event, Paul speaks in I Corinthians 15:52, saying,  
“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”

When Gideon’s army blew the trumpets, they prophesied of the resurrection of the dead, and this was the first event by which the enemy was conquered. Likewise, it is the first prophetic event that will occur in the events leading up to the second coming of Christ.

The second event deals more with those believers who are living at the time of the second coming of Christ. The torches within the pitchers signify the hidden presence of God in our bodies—the earthen vessels. Nine days after blowing the trumpet for the first resurrection comes the Day of Atonement and the Jubilee. These bodies of death will be broken. The debt that Adam incurred will be cancelled.”<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Stephen E. Jones interprets the bright light bursting out of the earthen vessels as a resurrection into immortality. God chose the three hundred men who drank directly from the river, leaving those who cupped the water in their hands to wait behind. This points to God selecting those receiving a full amount of God’s Holy Spirit.

Certainly, the timing of the seventh trumpet corresponds to the Feast of Trumpets—the return of Christ—the resurrection of the saints. The bright light that bursts out from the breaking of the earthen vessels can also image the power and force of God’s truth trumpeted by the saints. Battles at that time will be won not by military might and power but by God’s Holy Spirit, when truth will flood across this planet, unveiling the lies and deceit during Satan’s rulership on earth.

God’s coded language is all about transparency. A quick review of Gideon’s story shows:

- Three hundred men are few, by comparison to the enemy of 120,000. God is all powerful and He showcases His strength with only a small group.
- Those who have the strength to stand against the enemy need to be filled with God’s Holy Spirit, hence, God’s choice to select those who drank directly from the river.
- Sounding the trumpets are the markers along God’s timeline for the salvation of all of mankind.
- The explosion of light by the breaking of the earthen vessels is a beautiful image of the radiant bodies of the resurrected simultaneously showcasing the power of God’s word bursting out.
- The battles in the future will not be won by military power but by God’s Holy Spirit. God wants to save everyone. Through truth and grace, God’s holy church will nurture the nations into coming to God on their own free will.

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<sup>7</sup> Dr. Jones, Stephen E.. “Chapter 3: Barley Stories.” *God’s Kingdom Ministries*, <https://godskingdom.org/studies/books/the-barley-overcomers/chapter-3-barley-stories/>. Accessed June 4, 2022.

God's penmanship is rich in detailed imagery, foreshadows, mirroring, reflections that are layers deep. He moves out of time into limitlessness with a stroke of a pen.

## **WHEAT**

In the Middle East, wheat ripens around Pentecost, it points to the church as it was formed on Pentecost. This story is rich in imagery:

- 50 days after the Passover
- The 50<sup>th</sup> year is the Jubilee
- Jubilee is symbolic of the millennial reign of Christ.

While the believers imaged as barley and wheat exist throughout time, the barley group are different because they have bound themselves to a blood covenant with God bringing them into a full commitment with Him, while the people imaged as wheat mature later. Their spiritual growth develops fully during a time of great distress imaged in God's use of threshing to successfully harvest the grain.

The differences between barley and wheat have a spiritual significance.

<b>Barley</b>	<b>Wheat</b>
Harvested in Spring	Harvested in Summer
Longer beard	Shorter beard
Barley spikes bend	Wheat spikes are straight
Barley is ready for harvest when yellow-white in colour	Wheat is ready for harvest when golden brown
Barley is winnowed; chaff easily blows away	Wheat is threshed; chaff difficult to release

There are only a few differences between the barley and the harvest group. God differentiates between those who mature spiritually without His heavy hand and those who need an awakening before they mature into the fullness of Christ. Barley is winnowed to remove the chaff; a gentle wind is enough for the chaff to fall. Wheat is threshed. It is beaten because the chaff is difficult to release.

Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after the Passover. The number fifty symbolizes a new beginning. It is the year of Jubilee when all debts are forgiven. It is also a symbol of the future outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, filling the people of God. Traditionally, it was the season when ancient Israel harvested their wheat.

On Pentecost, the high priest of ancient Israel presented two loaves. The two loaves image the two houses of Israel: the house of Judah and the house of Israel in a sinful state because the loaves are leavened. The kingdom of Israel is God's church; it is a church kingdom.

This church kingdom was reborn on Pentecost 33 A.D.. This body will not be limited to God's covenant people, but it will eventually include people from nations all over the world. However, God works in an orderly manner. Ancient Israel initiated the first step on the day Almighty God

spoke the law at Mount Sinai from heaven. His voice echoed like a great boom of thunder causing flashes of lightning. Trumpets were sounded and the people saw smoke covering the mountain. The people were immediately afraid. They all kept their distance and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die" (Exodus 20:19).

These few verses describe a people without God's Holy Spirit, without a relationship with God, and without an understanding of the devotion and dedication necessary to overcome the wiles of this evil age and stand unwavering against evil. John the Baptist baptized with water, but Jesus' redemptive sacrifice opened the door again for life eternal, which comes with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire. Ancient Israel withdrew from overcoming; it was simply not possible for them because the Holy Spirit could not be offered to them until the redemptive sacrifice of Christ.

The Mount Sinai event was the lesson for 21<sup>st</sup> century Judeo-Christians because they will enter the fire of the Great Tribulation and it will either purify or destroy them. Those who accept the challenge will be filled with God's Holy Spirit allowing them to mature into the fullness of Christ.

"And in Him, having heard and believed the word of truth—the gospel of your salvation—you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the pledge of our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession, to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:12-13).

The church kingdom is still in its infancy. The promised Holy Spirit is trickling into the body of Christ. The Great Tribulation, Jacob's trouble, will create the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit so that God's church kingdom can mature and be the example God had planned long ago.

"And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on My menservants and maidservants, I will pour out My Spirit in those days" (Joel 2:28-29).

The parable in Matthew of the weeds provides a briefing of the outcome of the wheat harvest. It will be done at the end of this evil age and the harvesters will be the angels (Matthew 13:39b). The wheat is mixed with weeds because the enemy of God sowed his weeds among the recently sowed wheat. The plants grow up together. While the young growth may appear to be the same, as each plant forms heads, the distinction becomes clear. The wheat images the people maturing in God's grace and knowledge, while the weeds image people bent on living in corruption and theft, lies and deception, murder and all forms of evil.

God wants to save everyone, but His church kingdom will not include people who refuse to submit and obey Him. God's people will be the centre of the upcoming fiery testing. Not all of God's people will enter into the millennial reign of Christ. "And in all the land, declares the LORD, two-thirds will be cut off and perish, but a third will be left in it. *This third I will bring through the fire*; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. *They will call on my name*, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, '*The lord is our God*'" (Zechariah 13:8-9).



The people in the churches who wake up from their stagnating spiritual growth, during the time of great distress, and overcome by igniting their passion for God and following Christ wherever he goes, will be saved. Those who weak and choose to slide into an unsavable rebellious state will be destroyed.

John the Baptist understood the forces of fire that will purify and strengthen or expose and destroy. He said, "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering the wheat into his barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:11-12).

The wheat harvest is the image of the second resurrection of people transformed into their eternal, glorious bodies. This harvest will include many people. The final harvest will decide the fate of the remaining few who will have to prove their sincerity by their blood.

### **GRAPES**

The story of the harvest of grapes is comprised of two choices. One will bring a great celebration and the other a crushing blow.

The death angel of Revelation is called to work. "Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, 'Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe'" (Revelation 14:18).

"Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full; the wine vats overflow because their wickedness is great" (Joel 3:13).

The people imaged as overripe, rotting grapes are people determined to live wickedly. They are unrepentant and sold completely and fully into sin. These will be trodden under the feet of the righteous.

"Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act," says the LORD Almighty" (Malachi 4:3).

The destruction will likely occur through the application of the law, judgement, and sentencing. God's people will clean up their institutions and appoint righteous judges and law-enforcing officials at every level. Rebels will be judged, sentenced, and destroyed.

From the same fruit, one dies and another lives. A crushed people will repent and choose life eternal. God will see these late fruit-bearing people and offer them grace. Their suffering will forge an eternal relationship with God.

Christ's rule during the Millennium will be a one-thousand-year rule of peace and righteousness. It is imaged in the annual celebration of the Feast of Booths also known as the Feast of Tabernacles/Sukkot. The final harvest of grapes will have taken place and the wine vat will be full.

The Fall Holy Days foretell of great celebrations that rest on our near horizon. "You shall celebrate the Feast of after Booths seven days you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat; and you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your towns. Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful" (Deuteronomy 16:13-15).

Barley and wheat are grains used to make bread, imaged in the word of God. Harvesting grapes that make wine, requires crushing to break the skin and release the juice. God's supper table is comprised of both bread and wine. Christ's body imaged as bread, God's word and his blood imaged in the wine together represent the two core components of righteous character: living perfectly by God's word and binding to a blood covenant of eternal trust, faith and loyalty to Almighty God.

At the end of two harvests, born-again people on earth will together be the total culmination of righteous character. Resurrections into life eternal will have taken place, others resurrected back into mortal beings to learn to live God's way. Earth will be filled and populated with the ancient and the young, living together.

God's people will be re-established in the land given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; they will live and love God's ways. They will be richly blessed and nations will come and ask to learn God's way of life.

God's timeline is expressed in His Holy Days beginning with the Passover, the prophecy of the redemptive sacrifice. The Feast of First fruits celebrate Christ's resurrection and the first mortals to be resurrected before the many in the second resurrection. Pentecost established the reborn church filled with God's Holy Spirit. The Fall Feast of Trumpets sounds the return of Jesus Christ. The Day of Atonement brings God's people to their knees and a total cleansing of sin. The Feast of Tabernacles celebrates Christ's Millennial rule and finally, the Last Great Day is Judgement Day putting an end to all the unrepentant mortals and rebel spirit beings.

God uses imagery, symbols, stories and Holy Days to teach His people His saving plan. God's coded language is all about transparency.

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## GOD'S CODED LANGUAGE BRINGS TRANSPARENCY

For people seeking to understand the spiritual world and the deep things of God, decoding God's imagery, numbers, colours, parables, parallels, stories, and foreshadows is fundamental.

God is transparent to those who search through His word. Nothing has been hidden from those who obey God and follow Christ wherever he goes. For it has been written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9). For those who love the word of God and relentlessly search out the deep things of God, *"these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God"* (I Corinthians 2:10).

When God's coded language is applied, the BIG picture explodes into vivid, vibrant detail. The trusting and loving bond God the Father has for His children is mirrored on earth between a devoted father and his child. The intimate relationship of Christ and the church is mirrored on earth between a loving husband and wife. The beauty of every righteous member of God's family is mirrored in a cultured garden of tall trees, flowering trees and shrubs, fruit-producing trees and vines, and the fragrances of countless flowers. The righteous character of God is mirrored in earth's finest, rarest, and most precious treasures.

God's coded language is consistent. Under Christ, all people have been redeemed. God has provided His legal witness that will be complete at the end of the Great Tribulation and God's wrath. Number two is symbolic of a legal witness, hence, the two core elements of the core structure of God's kingdom: law and grace. These two fundamental elements will be bound as one, so that justice, kindness, and compassion reign.

God stepped out a timeline sealing a marker on key events. Each third event identifies a divine strategic move. Through His use of number twelve, God disclosed who would form His new government. His use of multiples and one thousand adds dimension and infinity to the revelation.

The Biblical stories have preserved, forgotten history. Parables taught key principles of life. God has hidden nothing and yet, the world is blind because they lack God's special Holy Spirit that gives spiritual knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

God's coded language is the key for greater understanding, forging a journey closer to the great Almighty God and building an intimate, ever-lasting relationship. The Apostle Paul discovered the mysteries and he taught them. "This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one" (Ephesians 5:32).

Every aspect of God's creation on earth is a revelation of eternity for those with eyes to see, ears to hear, and a willing heart of flesh.

## ***ABOUT SHARINGSHARPENS***

Sharingsharpens is a resource centre providing studies and videos on God's word. The responsibility of Christians is to study the word of God, test the doctrines of the many churches, and prove from scripture what is right and true. Pray daily asking God for guidance and beseech Him for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Every human being will stand before God in judgement on that day. Each person will stand individually with no one to blame but himself/herself.

For this reason, <https://sharingsharpens.ca> works to share with the body of Christ every study and every precious truth with sincere Christians who love God's word.

There is nothing on this earth that compares to the glory of being resurrected in God's kingdom. There is nothing on this earth that can surpass the importance of mankind's calling as royal, ruling children of the living God. There is nothing on this earth worth more your time than studying God's word, living God's way with Christ in us, and growing in grace and knowledge.

The Holy Bible of the Jews and the Christians is a book that reveals the whole plan of God. It is a book that will take a lifetime to read in pursuit of understanding. There lies the importance of sharing.

Collectively, the body of Christ can teach each other, learn from each other, and grow into mature Christians—the work of God's hands, giving Him pride and joy eternally.

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