

In Search of True Christians

By Warren Zehrung – February 18, 2012

The title of today's sermon is, "In Search of True Christians."

Today I am going to speak on two subjects, and then I am going to tie them together.

First, we are going to look at God's far reaching Plan for the salvation of Mankind – from before creation in the past – all the way up to the millennial Kingdom of God and beyond, into eternity.

Next, we will look at the concept that '*many are called, but few chosen.*' We will examine how, in the Church of God, offences can take people not only out of the church – but out of the eternal Family of God. It is a very, very big question, and offenses do come. People do let down, and it is a hook by Satan. People start letting down, and they begin going back into their old habits, and they go back into their old weaknesses. The next thing that you know, they forget the big picture. They lose sight of the big picture of the plan of God, and they drift right back into the world. Satan is out there fishing for us, and pulling on all of the people of God. Satan does not care what is going on in atheistic countries, but he does he care about the Church of God, and the people of God, because therein is where the plan of God is working.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Brethren, we understand that that was 'A' beginning – but that was not 'the' beginning.

Now let us look at another beginning, and this is the real beginning.

John 1:1 **In the beginning** was the Word, (Jesus Christ) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jesus Christ is Emmanuel – God with us).

God the Father, and the Word, Jesus Christ, formulated a plan wherein they would share their very existence. They would share their love, and their life, and call to their glory **many sons and daughters.**

Hebrews 2:10 For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

God determined from the **foundation of the world** that the Messiah would come, and that the Messiah would have a **Body of brethren**, a group of truly converted people. They would be changed into Spirit, and would reign and rule in the millennium with Him. That is God's great big overall plan, and we will look at it in a little bit more detail. But this plan that God has, was a very long range, specific, and intricate Plan.

John 1:3a All things were made by Him...

So when you think of all things, that would be everything on the earth, everything on the moon, Mars, and beyond, in the far away galaxies. This would also include the spiritual creation.

John 1:3b ...and without Him was not anything made that was made.

The first thing that we are aware of, that Jesus Christ created, was the spiritual world. We call them 'angels,' and it means messengers and ministering spirits.

In Colossians, we see a parallel scripture, talking about the fact that Jesus Christ was the Creator God. God the Father created all things through, and by the hand, of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:16-17 For by Him (Jesus Christ) **were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

So, not only did He create them, but He upholds them by the power of His hand, and by His strength.

Colossians 1:18a And He is the **head of the body**...

This is referring to Jesus as the head of the Church. The Church is the brethren, the people, and the called out ones, the converted ones, and the saints. Over and over we are going to see this. Do not take it lightly, as it is extremely important.

Colossians 1:18b ...who *is* the beginning...

We saw one beginning in Genesis 1, and we saw another beginning in John 1. Jesus Christ is the beginning. All things originate with Jesus Christ. I would exclude God the Father and Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ is the one who originates all of these things. Jesus is also:

Colossians 1:18c ...the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.

Jesus is the Head, He has the Glory, and the Sovereignty. All things rest in Jesus Christ. Do not be afraid to say that.

Jesus Christ created the immense universe, and everything in it, both physical and spiritual, and He set it in motion.

When you go outside on a pitched black night, that gigantic creation, of sparkling and colossal stars, gives us only a slight idea of Christ's phenomenal power. Jesus Christ is incredibly powerful.

And yet, the arch-angel Lucifer, in his jealous rage, thought that he could overthrow God's Plan. He thought that He could ascend to the Throne of God, bump God off, and be number one.

It is foolish, but then Satan's philosophy is not sound, and it is very deceiving. He has deceived himself, and he has deceived a third of the angels.

But, in Satan's effort to topple God from His throne, there was so much destruction in the solar system that everything around the earth became destroyed, scattered to emptiness, and in pitch darkness. It is called- *tohu, bohu* and *choshek* in the ancient Hebrew. It means that everything was destroyed, everything was empty, and everything was totally dark. Can you imagine a creation like that? There was nothing working, nothing there of any value at all.

So when we read Genesis 1:1, it says: "*In the beginning.....*" it would be God recreating the heavens and the earth. He went on with His sure plan to expand His eternal Family. That is what God is about. He is expanding His eternal Family. The whole reason that everything is created is for you, me, and the called out ones. That is the only reason. It is not for the apes and the alligators, or for the beauty of the universe. It is for those that God will have in His Kingdom, and that is the whole reason that this house of God, this universe was created. It is a place for us to work, see, and learn, and to become like Jesus Christ – and ultimately be like Jesus in Spirit as well.

Then after God created the universe He created mankind.

Again, hateful Satan, in his relentless pursuit of the destruction of God's Plan, brought sin and death into the lives of our parents, Adam and Eve. One time he tried to destroy the spiritual creation, the physical creation, and now he is trying to destroy the human creation. He started with Adam and Eve.

That rejection, of the Life and Spirit of God, necessitated a requirement for a redeeming Savior. God was not going to let His Plan go on the rocks. God's Plan is sure, from before creation all of the way into eternity.

And so it was determined, from the very beginning of God's Plan for mankind, that Jesus would be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*.

John is speaking about this:

John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in Him [Jesus Christ] should not perish...

That is what this sermon is about today, it is about those who get offended, and ultimately perish, because they let down and they take their sights off God, and they forget where they are headed, and forget where the truth of God comes from. They, in a way, blaspheme God.

John 1:15b ...but have eternal life.

Brethren, it about knowing God, having a relationship with God, and therein when we have spiritual life, God is going to extend our life to eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,

Now the world was going along, but Satan knocked it off its axis, and he knocked man off his axis, and so we needed the Savior, and we needed the Messiah. And so God provided, and He sent His Son. He gave His only begotten Son. The choice of words 'gave' instead of 'send' is very appropriate, because He 'gave up' Jesus Christ. It could have been that He would have never seen Jesus Christ again. Jesus Christ could have failed. This was a tremendous sacrifice on God the Father's part. [Though Jesus was tempted – He never sinned – He did not fail]

John 3:16b ...that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

So therein is what this is all about. We have to believe what Jesus said. If Jesus says forgive, then we forgive. If Jesus tells us not to be offended, then we are not offended.

John 3:17 For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world.

That is not why Jesus Christ came. He did not come here to damn the world into non-existence.

No, not to condemn the world:

John 3:17b ...but that the world through Him might be saved.

This is the beautiful, loving, and giving Plan of God. And not only saved, but given the incredible human potential of entering into God's eternal Family as His very sons and daughters.

It never goes smooth with God's Plan. It is difficult, and we must fight, and strive, to enter into the Kingdom of God.

John 1:11 He [Jesus Christ] came unto His own [people], and His own received him not.

His own people should have known Him, should have loved Him, should have accepted Him, should have believed in Him, and should have embraced Him.

Here is where you and I come in:

John 1:12 But as many as received him...

That means that we do what Jesus Christ says. We forgive, where we should forgive. We sacrifice where opportunity presents itself. We look for those opportunities to lay our life down.

Jesus Christ said that we were to walk in His steps, and to do what He did. He lay His life down in sacrifice, and we are to do **exactly the same**.

John 1:12a ... as many as received him to them gave He power to become the sons of God...

Those who will become the sons and daughters of God will receive Him, and receive His teachings. They will walk in His steps, believe Him, and have faith in Him as the Savior.

John 1:12c ...even to them that believe on His name.

Believe on His name, His reputation, His power, His philosophy, and His teachings.

John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh...

So when He is talking about us being born, you can think back to your Mother and Father and the day that you were born. That is not what He is talking about. We are talking about God's great plan of being born into His Kingdom as eternal sons and daughters.

John 1:13b ...nor of the will of man, but of [the will of] God.

That is why we are here. From the foundation of the world, before time began, God's Plan was to create us, so that we might be His sons and daughters. We were born of the Will of God, and that is why we are here, and for no other reason.

Now the process that Christians go through is like this: First, they must be **called** of God. When God calls us, He grants us repentance so that we can turn from our evil ways, and walk no more in sin. God grants us, and give us, faith – we do not work up the faith that we have that Jesus Christ is the Savior. We would not know to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, if God did not give us the faith to know that. We are baptized and we receive His Holy Spirit. Then we become, in a token way, in an escrow sort of way, His Spiritual sons and daughters.

John tells us that even now we are the children of God (1John 3:2). So, first of all we are called, and then we must be **chosen**, and we have to choose that way of life and walk in that way of life. Then we have to be **faithful** to the end. We cannot be offended and say, I have had my feelings hurt, I have had my expectations dashed, and I have my standards, and I am not going to lower them. I am not going to sacrifice, I am not going to forgive, and I am not going to let it go. We have to be faithful to God and His way, and what He calls us to do. We have to endure to the very end.

Revelation 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are **called, and chosen, and faithful**.

Today it is politically incorrect, and you cannot get away with saying that only true Christians will inherit the Kingdom of God. [It is true – but the political world thinks that we take too much upon ourselves when we state the Truth.] We are asking, today, where are the true Christians? **We are in search of true Christians.** Who, on this earth today, is doing what God says? Who is still a part of this process that God has initiated from before the world began, all of the way up to the millennium, and beyond? Those are the things that we have to figure out, brethren. But the world will say that everybody, it does not matter what they believe, whether Muslims, Hindu's, everybody is going to go to Nirvana, heaven, or wherever it is. It is not politically correct to say that only true Christians will inherit the Kingdom of God. But let us understand what God says. God tells us who will be His eternal children, and He has a very strict, precise way for us to be in the Kingdom of God. And that process is that we are to be like Jesus Christ, and to follow this process that God has laid out in front of us. Do not believe the world, and do not believe those who say that you can do this, just be comfortable, and just be true to yourself. Let us look and see what it says in Romans:

Romans 3:4 God forbid: yes, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That you might be justified in your sayings, and might overcome when you are judged.

Jesus Christ is going to establish the Kingdom of God on this earth. It will not be by feats of physical power, but by meekness and suffering, and by obedience to the Father, in **laying down His life** for the salvation of many. That is what we must be doing, even now. A lot of people say that they would rather go to Church on Saturday, in some group where they do not have to be accountable for their life, or even address the things that are going on in their life. They would like to have some anonymity, and just sit in the congregation, sing some hymns and listen to some sermons, and go home justified. Jesus Christ warns us about that kind of religious observance.

Let us look at a prophecy about the Messiah, in the book of Isaiah. The word 'Christ' is the word that we get Messiah from. So, if I use the word Messiah you can say Jesus Christ. It is not His last name. Jesus Christ has been ordained [appointed by the Father] to be the Messiah, the one who will establish the Kingdom of God over all of the earth. Right now, we are privileged to be in the Kingdom in so much as we are able to follow the rules, and have the blessings and the protection and a right relationship with God.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him...

Yes, Jesus Christ died on the cross/stake, but it was not an eternal death. in God's way of saying it, through Isaiah, Christ was only bruised.

Isaiah 53:10b ...He hath put Him to grief:.....

Yes, Jesus Christ suffered as no man has suffered.

Isaiah 53:10c ...when thou shalt make **His soul an offering for sin.**

So there we have it, right there. That is **laying His life down** for the salvation of many.

But note this, brethren:

Isaiah 53:10d ...He shall see His seed...

[What seed?] Jesus Christ did not have any children, what is this talking about?

Isaiah 53:10e He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.

What is the pleasure of the Lord? The pleasure of the LORD is this entire plan of salvation, that God has worked out from before creation into all eternity. His seed **is us**, and we are the children of God. That is the whole purpose in God's Plan, to have eternal children in His eternal Family.

And so the question arises, "**Where are the true Christians of today?**" Many have been called, but where are the true Christians of today?

We are "*In Search of True Christians.*" We are looking for people who live it, who do not fall away, who do not get offended, and who do not get lost on the way to the Kingdom of God.

Where are those Christians who are actually living their faith, so as to be in the First Resurrection and be in the Millennium with Jesus Christ? I know what they will say, "I can go another way, and I can find somebody that says things that are easy to hear, or fun (Isaiah 30:10)." They want this because they are never called into account, they never really examine their conscience, and they just do what feels good. You judge everybody all around you.

Brethren, we cannot live like that. Where are the Christians living their faith so as to be in the First Resurrection, and to be in the Millennium with Jesus Christ?

You know the answer to these questions.

Is a true Christian one who only professes to be a true Christian?

Is a true Christian one who only hopes to be included in the category of Christians?

Is a true Christian one who only says, 'Lord, Lord?' I picked that one because Jesus says that there are a lot of people that say, Lord, Lord (Matthew 7:21-22). They think that they are very religious, but they also feather their nest and they get comfortable, they are happy and they have their reward right now. They are fooled and Satan takes them away.

There is a process that began before time, and will continue until the Messiah has completed His work.

If at any point a converted Christian interrupts God's process of salvation in his life, there remains no more...you fill in the blank...no more hope, no more possibility of salvation?

We see the answer to this in the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth...

We who are reading these scriptures today, we received the knowledge of the truth. But if we sin willfully after that, if we go aside, if we let anger enter in, if we let hate enter in, if we let disappointment enter in, any of the tricks of Satan, notice what God says"

Hebrews 10:26b ...there remains no more sacrifice for sins.

Christ sacrifice no longer applies to us.

Hebrews 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

Brethren, it is too horrible to think of. To miss out on the process that God has planned for us from all time in the past to all time in the future, because we have had our feelings hurt, or because an evil heart has entered into us.

Let us carry some of what we are seeing to its conclusion. We need to understand what God is saying in the scriptures. The world does not understand the Bible, and very few who have ever been in God's Church understand the Bible, because they do not delve into it and they do not put the pieces together. They do not do their studies, they are not taught, and they are not willing to be taught.

Let us put the pieces together. There must be a calling [from God – John 6:44,65], we must repent, we must be baptized, we must receive God's Holy Spirit to become the sons of God through sonship! We become a part of the Body of Christ, we become the Bride, and we will teach in Millennium with Jesus Christ the Messiah.

As Christians, we follow our faith.

What about the many, from the past, maybe ten, or twenty, thirty, forty years ago, who started keeping the Sabbath, quit going to church on Sunday, quit eating pork-chops, and they got baptized and they said, "I want this."

None of us really understood the full depth of baptism [because we were to grow in grace and knowledge], we just knew that it was an initiation; it was something that we had to do, and God says that you have to do it if you want to be in the Kingdom. What about the ones that went through all of that, only to fall away? There were many, many that did that, and fell by the wayside.

We commonly say that God did a great work in restoring the truth and preaching the Gospel to the world – but how many true Christians were there in the Worldwide Church of God.

We are speaking about, "**In Search of True Christians!**"

The great majority of those who responded to the World Tomorrow Broadcast did not go on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1).

More than 70% of Worldwide went along with heretical Protestant doctrine that does not lead to salvation.

Not many from Worldwide will be in that number, because:

They did not grow in grace and knowledge – they did not complete their course.

They did not endure to the end (Matthew 24:13)

They did not love the brethren. They did not lay their lives down.

They did not believe God. They know that there is a God, but they did not believe what He said.

They did not believe His Word.

Even before that great falling away, even before that great apostasy, there was a very high rotation of people – in and out of the church – who responded enthusiastically for a while, and then fell by the wayside. They became offended, they were hurt, they were caught up in the busy life, or whatever it was, and they drifted away. I can remember one of the first cases that I heard of, and it was a minister's sister. She left the Church, and we all said how terrible it was. But, she said that she would never go back into Christmas, or go to church on Sunday, or celebrate Easter. Within two years the kids had [worldly holiday] things at school, they put up some Christmas decoration. They were doing Christmas and everything within two or three years. They never thought that they had slipped and slid right out of God's process of salvation.

Brethren, it is a horrific thing, but Satan puts the glitter on it. All it takes is one false step to fall off a tight wire. Think of our Christianity as being precarious. We have to strive to enter into the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:24).

Do we think that because we were able to see what happened to Worldwide that we have passed the only test of true Christianity for our time? No! Tests come when we least expect them. Tests come when we do not know that it is coming. We don't get up in the morning and say, "I am going to have a wreck today," but sometimes we do. We don't get up in the morning saying, "My faith is going to be shattered today, and I am going to have it broken, and I am going to make choices that are going to take me out of the Kingdom of God."

The Gospel invitation went to a people who eventually rejected it. It happened to them, brethren, and **it can happen to us**. The Bible is full of warnings. God replaces those who refuse His offer. If we miss the mark, God finds someone else to take our crown (Revelation 3:11). God finds a new convert to call into the Church if we refuse His offer.

If you want to read a sobering Scripture, these are the words of Jesus Christ in the book of Matthew:

Matthew 8:12 But the children of the kingdom...

That is you, and that is me.

Matthew 8:12b ... shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

God is saying it does happen, it is possible, and it takes place.

Let us look at what Jesus Christ taught, His very words when He was on the earth, about the possibility of being offended and letting go and moving on, and going back into the world. None of these people are saying, I am going back into the world, and I am going back into sin. Satan is wiser than that. Satan gets us to take little baby steps away from where we are being fed, where we receive the truth, and where we know that God is working.

Matthew 22:1 And Jesus answered and He spoke unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven...

That is this great process that we are talking about. It started before the world was, and it will continue until its completion, after the Millennium.

Matthew 22:1b ... The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son...

He is talking about God the Father and the Church who is going to marry Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:7-9).

Now we come to verse 3, and this is where the invitations go out.

Matthew 22:3a And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding...

Brethren, so many have been called to be the Bride of Christ. But notice:

Matthew 22:3b ... and they would not come.

That is so hard to understand. But we saw that with the Worldwide Church of God. Look at how many people had the invitation [bidden to the wedding] and they would not come.

Matthew 22:4-5a Again, He sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner (this is the wedding supper) my oxen and my fatlings are killed [the wedding banquet], and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it...

They said they had a job and I have to please my boss. I have to please my wife. I am not going to put up with anybodies back talk. I am not going to out up with anybodies weakness. I have to be a man, I have to be strong, and I am not going to take that off anybody. You know, Satan can fill a phone book with his excuses.

Matthew 22:b ... and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

They killed Jesus Christ and they killed the prophets. They tried to destroy the true ministers who teach the truth. They draw away a following after themselves. That is what this scripture is talking about. The servants of God are entreated spitefully. That is the way that Satan works. If you find yourself a part of that, repent of it.

Matthew 22:7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth...

God the Father is angry. Can you imagine God the Father saying, "Please come and be a part of the Bride?" And you say, "No thank you very much."

Matthew 22:7b ...and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

It is just like we saw a minute ago, the children of the Kingdom are going to be cast into outer darkness and there is going to be weeping and gnashing of the teeth.

When God gives us an invitation and we, through hurt feelings, spite, rejection, hate, or whatever it is, God is angry when we turn our nose up on His initiation to be the Bride.

Matthew 22:8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

So, what does He do? The Plan of God is going to be filled up from the beginning of the creation. God knew *how many*, and *who*, and knew their *attributes*, their *dispositions*, their *intellects*, and their *personalities*. He knew who He was going to call. If we fall into this number [and we refuse His invitation] He is going to call somebody to take our crown, as it says in Revelation 3:11.

Matthew 22:9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

I believe that is going on right now. There are new people coming into God's Church. They have never heard the truth before. Remember the first love when we first heard the Truth, how wonderful it was. You could not get enough of it.

Matthew 22:10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found... [Now, God is calling those people you would least expect.]

This verse is saying that, at first, God called the people you would kind of expect. This was the people that had a little wherewithal, a little understand, and knew their way around a little bit. He is now going out and picking up what we might refer to as the dregs of society. People with broken homes, prison records, divorces, and all kinds of problems,

Matthew 22:10b ... both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

So brethren, you and I were not called back in the 1940's and '50's when the gospel began to go out mightily. But so many of those called then fell by the wayside. We were called a little later, as it were, when the gospel went out again into the highways and byways. God said invite as many as ye shall find, whoever hears this word of God, and God is instrumental in who hears it and He draws us out of the world (John 6:44, 65). 'Bid them to the marriage' that is us now being called – right here in these very last days.

Matthew 22:11 And when the king came in to see the guests, He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

You see the tests and the trials continue. Just getting invited to the marriage supper is not enough. A qualification is required. We have to have on the Wedding garment. That Wedding garment is the *righteousness* of Christ. Would Jesus Christ be offended? Would Jesus Christ turn His back on His friends? Would He withdraw His support, His love and His concern? Would He do the same thing to them that was done to Him? No, when we are treated horribly we ask people to pray for us as we are being treated horribly. People are not talking to me and they are treating me terribly. Then we turn around and do the exact same thing to others. That is where we are, brethren.

The man that did not have on the wedding garment had not overcome. He had not passed the test, and He had not put on the righteousness of Christ.

Now listen to what God the Father says:

Matthew 22:12 And He saith unto him, Friend, how came thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

And, or course, there is no answer for not overcoming. We have to face our trials, and we must go to our brethren and reconcile. Where are the true Christians of today who do what God says?

Who is righteous? Who has a white wedding garment? Who is forgiving and loving? Who is laying his life down for the brethren? Who will reach out with an open hand?

People hear those words over and over and they just close up their heart and their mind and they close up their ears and they will not relent and surrender to God even once. They harden their hearts a flint stone:

Zechariah 7:12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets:

They will not act first – they leave that to others. They are too fearful to make the first move.

They will do it after the fact when they find out that somebody is safe to be around, or enjoyable to be around, or politically appropriate to mix with. But they will not do it up front. People today don't want to be **uncomfortable**, and they do not want to be inconvenienced. They want to go into the Kingdom of God like you were going down a slide at a child's playground. It is not that way! It is an uphill battle, brethren.

Matthew 22:13-14 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him [the man who has not put on righteousness] hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. :14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

We are speaking on the subject of, **In Search of True Christians** today. *Many are called, but few are chosen.*

Every one of us was called. Do we think that we have passed the only test of true Christianity for our time?

God determined from the foundation of the world that the Messiah would come, and that the Messiah would have a Body of brethren to reign and rule in the millennium with Him. To reign and rule we have to be *like Christ*, and we have to have the love, the forgiveness, the mercy, the giving, and the laying down of our life, attributes that Christ displayed.

Philippians 3:20-21 For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body...

This body that we are in is vile and it does sin. Once we are converted we do not practice sin as a way of life. But we still fail, we fall short and we still sin.

Philippians 3:21b ... that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,.....

This is what it is going to be like in the Millennium. Christ is the Head and we are the Body. He is the glorious Head and we will be the glorious Body.

Philippians 3:21b ... Who shall change our vile body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

How does God the Father work with His children, even now? Brethren, we are the only people on earth that can see this fantastic beautiful picture, this process that God is working out from the beginning all of the way to the end. Let us not be offended and let us not lose site of the goal.

I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [Children] of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not.

We are a special breed. We are royalty. We are children of God.

I John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God,

Even in these vile bodies we are still the sons of God, and we do not know what it is like to have a glorious body. Jesus Christ has a glorious Body, and we get a glimpse of that in Revelation 1:13-15.

I John 3:2b ...and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as He is.

There is a glorious change coming and we will be able to see Him as He is.

Revelation 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. [We are to be Kings and Priests in the millennium.]

We will be ruling on the earth with Jesus Christ – the Messiah. We will be kings - ruling in the civil realm, and we will be priest – ruling in the spiritual realm.

We are co-saviors with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Savior, and He died for all mankind. He lay His life down for all mankind. We are co-saviors in the sense that, one on one, when we find somebody that offends, or hurts, us we lay our life down for them. God puts us in touch with people who will offend us. We will be set back, but we cannot be offended out of the Kingdom, brethren. Not if we expect to live and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4 ...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

God the Father set Jesus Christ at His own right hand in the heavenly places...

Ephesians 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.

We know that Jesus Christ created all the powers, whether in the spiritual world, or on the earth.

Ephesians 1:21b ...not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

That is Jesus Christ's job as the Head, as the Messiah. We have seen that we are to be right there at His right hand, reigning and ruling over every project on earth. This will be from the moving of mountains to telling people, "*This is the way, walk you in it.*" That is going to be our job, and we qualify for that now. Now is when we learn to 'walk this way' and to be like Jesus Christ and not turn from the left to the right.

Ephesians 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the **Head** over all things to the **Church**.

God the Father has made Jesus Christ the Head. We see this over and over. Jesus Christ is the Head, the Leader, and the Sovereign. But He has been given us to be **His Body**, His members, to work with Him, to do His bidding, and to help bring things about.

When he says that He is the Head over the Church, that is the Church **brethren**, and it has nothing whatsoever to do with organizations or different ministers on the face of the earth. This is talking about those people who are led by God's Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14) in their daily lives. These are those brethren that get down on their knees and have a relationship with God. Jesus Christ is Head over them.

Ephesians 1:23 Which is his Body.

These people are the Body, the called out ones, the Spirit led ones. We are the Body of Christ if we are led by the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 1:23b ...the fullness of him that fills all in all.

The fact that Jesus Christ is the **Head** implies that He has a **Body**.

The next verse is talking about us '*growing up into Him.*' This is not the way that we came into the Church. We barely understood the days of the week; we barely understood the food laws, or the Commandments, when we were baptized. We have to grow up, grow in grace and knowledge.

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking [pursuing] the truth in love.

This is a daily endeavor on our part.

Ephesians 4:15b ... may grow up into Him in all things...

To be like Jesus Christ and to put on the stature and the fullness of Christ – is what we are supposed to be doing.

Ephesians 4:15c which is the **Head**, even **Christ**.

Again, we are the Body, and verse 16 speaks about the fact that we are the Body.

Ephesians 4:16a From whom the **whole body**...

This is talking about you, me, and all of the brethren, who are living this life of laying down our lives, and loving and serving one another. We are forgetting, forgiving and overcoming.

Ephesians 4:16b ...fitly joined together and compacted...

That is all the brethren working close together; and that is not giving people the cold shoulder, not turning off your love, and not withdrawing your affection.

Ephesians 4:16c ...by that which every joint supplies...

Every one of us is important. It is a terrible loss to loose through hate, meanness, or demonic influences – the love of any of the brethren.

Ephesians 4:16d ...according to the effectual working in the measure of every part,

Every part is important in working. That is why God, from the very beginning, determined that this Body would be there to support Christ.

Ephesians 4:16e ...makes increase **of the body** unto the edifying of itself in love.

Notice that, *'the body makes increases unto the edifying of itself in love.'* That is what has been missing in all of this. Offenses do not come in love, and hate does not come in love.

Every part should grow up to the measure of Jesus Christ's perfection (Ephesians 4:13) .

Members of the Body of Christ are the representation of Christ to others in this world. If we have hate and bitter disputations – are we representing Christ to others in the world?

Matthew 13:3-4 And [Jesus] spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

This is the Word of God going out. This is the Truth of God going out. When we are on the radio, internet, or when we send out booklets, some falls in fertile soil, and some falls on the wayside. God knows that not everyone that hears His Word is going to spring into life.

Matthew 13:5a Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth:

Now stay with me, brethren, because we are all sitting here thinking, "Well I fell into fertile soil, and I am growing like a sequoia tree – 300 feet tall." Let us read what the Word says:

Matthew 13:5b-6 ... and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

They did not have the wherewithal, they did not look into the Word of God, they did not establish a sure foundation and they did not believe God. They were not nourished in their lives, and they dried up. It is like people who hear the Word of God, but one little thing comes up and it is too much for them. They say, "I'm not going to put up with it," and it gets too hot in the kitchen, and they say, "I am out of here."

Brethren, let me explain something to you. God is measuring and shaping our trials. He promises that He never gives us too much. You will run into people that are recalcitrant, intractable, and obstinate. You might have a boss that is forward, but God knows that. God wants us to learn from that, He wants us to be sharpened by that, to be trained by that, and to overcome that. Do not tell God that He sends you too much, or that you do not like the trial that He sent to you. Notice that God measures our trials:

1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no [trial] taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tried more that ye are able to bear; but will with the trial also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Matthew 13:7-9 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear?

God is saying that His Word goes out and, some falls by the wayside. Brethren, here is a truism, write this down. If there is anything that can separate us from the love of God, if there is anything that can do that, it will! God is not going to have anyone in His Kingdom who is going to turn lose of Him – that can be separated from Him.

If you can be pulled away from the simplicity in Christ, you will be pulled away. That is what this parable is about. Is our root deep enough? Are we firm enough? Can we swallow our pride? Can we do what God says?

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? [a small offense, a misspoken word, or a bad attitude...]

Sometimes God will take everything that we have away from us, to get our attention. Will anything separate you from the love of God?

Romans 8:36a As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long...

That is talking about laying our lives down for others, and being a sacrifice. That is talking about giving until it hurts. That is talking about giving when there is no recognition. That is talking about giving when there is no remuneration; you do not get paid for doing it.

Romans 8:36b ...we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Jesus Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the earth, and we saw that scripture a moment ago (Revelation 13:8). '*We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*' Do we say that we do not want to be the sheep, because it hurts too much?

Romans 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Look at what Paul says when he is talking to the Romans:

Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to **separate us from the love of God**, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul is talking about himself, but he is also praying and hoping this for the brethren. Paul is telling them to stay on track, stay with the program.

From the foundation of the world God has this Plan. This world is designed for us. The trials are designed for us. Nothing should separate us from the love of God.

Many brethren do not heed the biblical warnings and let down. They tell themselves that they are not quitting or letting down, I am just exercising some options and prerogatives.

They are hiding their eyes from the truth, and going where they will not be scrutinized, where they will not be cared for, or looked after by a caring shepherd. They lock the door and they throw away the key. They will not let anyone into their heart. They live in problem times and they will not ask for help. They will not receive or hear help when it is there, and when it is offered. Because they would have to do some of these things that we are talking about. There would have to be some forgiveness, and some humility. They are hiding their eyes from the Truth.

It happened to the Apostle Paul's congregations in a big way. They lost their blessings, and they lost God's protection.

Acts 19:10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia **heard the word of the Lord Jesus**, both Jews and Greeks.

You can look at all of those Churches, the Corinthians, the Philippians, the Galatians and the Colossians.

Paul brought the Gospel Truth, and Paul suffered persecution for it. It is difficult to bring the Gospel Truth. You are maligned, put down, and stoned sometimes.

Acts 20:19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and trials, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

People fight against the ministry, and they think that the ministry has it easy. They think that the ministry has all of the answers, and that they have the key to the Kingdom of Heaven, and it is plush and it is soft. That is the way that they treated Paul.

But notice, that in spite of Paul's preaching, and teaching, and sacrifice, here is what Paul told Timothy:

II Timothy 1:15 This thou know, that **all they which are in Asia be turned away from me!**

Everyone of those people left. They fell away, and they are not going to be in the Kingdom of God. They are not going to reign and rule. These are warnings for us, brethren. This is crucial.

The World Tomorrow will be composed of those who came to know God, received His Holy Spirit, and will accordingly receive Eternal Life, if they do not fall by the wayside.

They will work with Christ to train and to educate those people throughout the world.

God has specific purpose for each of us that He calls, and He expects good works in specific instances.

Christ chose to be humble, and He chose to be obedient, even to the point of it costing Him His life to fulfill His role. Jesus said:

Matthew 13:16-17 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Brethren, we have been given it all. Are we going to fall into the clutches of the demonic world?

Matthew 13:18-19 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one hears the word of the kingdom, and understands it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catches away that which was sown in his heart.

Brethren, protect your heart, lock your heart, and keep the Truth of God.

Matthew 13:18-19b ...This is he which received seed by the way side.

So, in Jesus' own words He is saying that Satan snatched away the love of God. Satan snatched away the Kingdom. He is the wicked one.

Matthew 13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heard the word, and anon with joy received it;

Mark 4:17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

All it takes is some affliction to take some people out of the Church. People say that they will just stay home and read their Bible. They say that it will be just them and the Lord. They say that they do not need to work with anybody, I do not need to support anybody, and I can avoid all of these trials and tribulation. No, that is burying the seed too deep to sprout. They have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

It has to do with doing what God says. We must be protecting and coming to the aid of our brother. To get offended about something like that is detestable.

Mark tells us that, '*immediately they are offended.*' The work of God is going on and immediately they are offended.

Do you know what it says in Psalms 119:165?

Psalms 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and **nothing shall offend them.**

Now let us continue in Matthew 13, where Jesus Christ is explaining how people **fall away** from this process that He and the Father established from before time, to shape us and to form and build us to be able to rule and reign with Jesus Christ..

Matthew 13:21a Yet hath he not root in himself, but endures for a while: for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word,

This is God's work that is going on.

Matthew 13:21b-22 ... by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

He just drops out.

Matthew 13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, and understands it; which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Let us just close with this:

Matthew 24:10a And then shall **many** be offended...

It says that many get offended; it does not say a few. They listen to somebody chit-chat and they rely on somebody who is drawing a following after himself, or making himself the judge and jury of what should go on at church and what should be taught, and who to fellowship with and who to reject.

Matthew 24:10b ... and shall betray one another...

That is the way that God looks at it. You ask for prayers and then you turn your back on them.

Matthew 24:10c ...and shall hate one another.

Brethren, these are the words of God. God from the beginning has determined that He will have sons and daughters. They will endure unto the end, and they will overcome. They will forgive and they will have reconciliation. They will lay their lives down for one another. They will be filled with love, and nothing will snatch away the love of God from their heart.

WMZ/pp/wz