

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 2.1.1

Series 2 of the Parables Bookshelf contains a variety of writings covering a wide range of topics related to the Kingdom of God. These writings originally appeared as posts on the Heart4God website, or the Parables Blog, both of which are the websites of Bible teacher Joseph Herrin.

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Matthew 13:35

**I will open my mouth
in parables,**

**I will utter things
hidden since the
creation of the world.**

(NIV)

When most Christians hear the word “Parables” they think of the stories that Yahshua told to His listeners, stories that are recorded for us in the four gospels. Many Christians do not realize that God has always spoken through parables, and that the first parables can be found in the very first chapter of the first book of the Bible.

What is a parable?

A parable is a story, either true or fictional, that serves as an allegory or a simile to convey another meaning. In the case of Biblical parables, a natural event or story is often used to con-

vey spiritual truth.

Example: A sower went out to sow seed. This is a natural story, but we would be mistaken if we thought God was simply trying to tell a story about farming. He was in fact seeking to convey spiritual truth.

Why does God use parables to speak to men?

Matthew 13:10-11

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" Yahshua answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of

heaven, but to them it has not been granted."

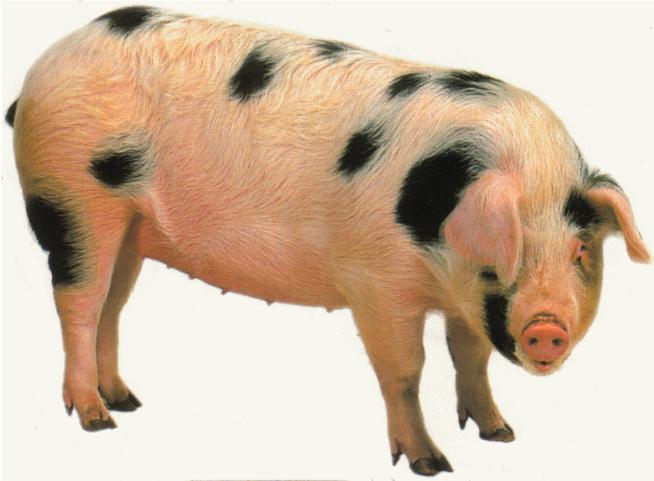
Parables are a way of passing on truth selectively. God does not treat all men the same when it comes to giving them truth. Yahshua told His disciples, “Don’t cast your pearls before swine. Don’t give what is holy to dogs.”

These instructions constitute a principle of Yahweh as He interacts with His creation. He does not give what is holy to dogs and swine. It is not animals that Yahshua has in mind when He speaks of dogs and swine, but men. Therefore we can see that even here He is using a parable.

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The Parable of the Pig

Comparing men to swine is a type of parable. In the old Testament Yahweh gave criteria for clean and unclean animals. For an animal to be considered clean it had to meet two criteria. It had to have a split hoof, and it had to chew the cud.

Both of these things stand for something spiritually. The split hoof is a picture of being able to divide between truth and error, between right and wrong. Chewing the cud is a picture of meditating on truth.

Another term for chewing the cud is ruminant, and we often use this word to speak of a person chewing on a thought or idea. Chewing the cud spiritually stands for someone who loves the truth and who will therefore chew on what they have learned, seeking to derive all the benefit from it.

The pig meets one criteria for a clean animal, but fails in the other. The pig has a split hoof, but he does not chew the cud. This is a picture of the worst type of person, for it speaks of a person who has the ability to discern truth from error, but they do not love the truth, so they do not derive the benefit from the truth they have received.

For this reason Yahshua told His disciples to not cast their pearls of truth before people who fell into this category.

God Himself has always practiced this same discernment in that He has cloaked His truth so that those who do not love the truth would not be able to discern the truths of God, but they would remain hidden to them. Because the truths of God are delivered as parables, those whom God has not granted understanding see them as dark sayings whose true meaning remains a mystery to them.

Matthew 13:13-14

This is why I speak to them in parables:

Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving."

Yahweh has always made decisions relating to men, even to those who were among the called of God. As this passage from Isaiah reveals, Yahweh will even choose to conceal truth and remove discernment from His own chosen people due to their disobedience and wayward affections.

Isaiah 29:10-14

For Yahweh has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep, He has shut your eyes, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, the seers. The entire vision will be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, "Please read this," he will say, "I cannot, for it is sealed." Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, "Please read this." And he will say, "I cannot read."

Then Yahweh said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote, therefore behold, I will once again deal

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marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; and the wisdom of their wise men will perish, and the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed."

So we see that from the very beginning of Yahweh's communication with man that He has spoken through methods that allow those who are granted understanding to perceive truth, while at the same time those who do not love the truth are prevented from perceiving the truths of God.

Yet as we read the gospel accounts of Yahshua's ministry on earth, we see that Yahshua would go aside and explain all things privately to His disciples. The Lord has also entrusted this ministry to me, that of going aside with the disciples of Christ and explaining the meaning of things hidden in His word.



You may ask, "How do I know that God has called me to this task of explaining the parables and dark sayings of Scripture to others?" I really think this is an important question to be answered, not to magnify my own calling, but that you might know that the things I will share with you have been appointed by God, and He is the Author of these things.

Back around 1998 I was serving as a pastor at a church in Perry, Georgia when the Spirit spoke to

me and told me that He wanted me to start using my first name. Up until that time I had always been called by my middle name which is Bradley. My parents and family and friends all called me Brad. Yet the Spirit of God indicated to me that my first name held significance to the calling He had placed upon my life. It was at this time that He first directed me to begin a ministry of writing, and I began signing everything I wrote and posted on the Internet with my first name, which is Joseph.

A short time later a lady who had a genuine gift of prophecy came to the church I was at, and she gave a word of prophecy to all of the church leaders that was a direct parallel of an event in the life of Joseph, who was the son of Jacob. If you remember the story of Joseph, he was the youngest son of Jacob, and Jacob loved him because he was the son of his old age, and also because he was the first son of Jacob's wife Rachel, whom he loved more than his other wife Leah.

When Joseph was 17 years old he began having dreams that were prophetic, and he related the dreams to his ten older brothers and to his father. The message of the dreams was that God was going to promote Joseph over his brothers and one day his brothers would bow down before him.

When Joseph shared this with his brothers, they hated him all the more, for they were already jealous of him because their father Jacob loved him more than the rest of them.

Joseph, however, was not to know promotion immediately. Instead he was to be demoted. His father sent him out to check on his brothers who were tending the sheep, and Joseph was wearing the new multi-colored coat his father had given to him. His brothers saw him from a distance, and they conspired to kill him, but his oldest brother convinced them to not kill him, but to cast him into a pit. Later when a caravan of camels and merchants came along they sold Joseph as a slave and

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he was carried into Egypt where he was bought by Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's bodyguard.

When this woman with the prophetic gift visited our church, she did not know my first name was Joseph, as everyone at the church still only knew me by my middle name. The head pastor asked if she had a prophetic word to share with the church, and she answered that she did, but it was specifically for the church leaders and she asked if she could give it to us after the service.

When all the church leaders had gathered together, she said the Spirit had a word for us, and then she pointed to me and said, "God says promotion is coming to you." Like Joseph, I was the youngest man present among the church ministers, and in a similar parallel, even as Joseph's brothers occupation was tending sheep, so was the occupation of the men I was gathered with, for they were spiritual shepherds of God's people.

Like Joseph, I was not to immediately be met with promotion. In fact, my brothers in Christ became very angry with me due to things the Spirit of Christ was speaking to me concerning them, and they also cast me out from among them. In the final meeting we had together I was met with tremendous anger, and one of the ministers said three different times that he could care less whether or not I died, and this was another parallel to the life of Joseph as his brothers spoke of killing him.

In the years since then, I have known a much more humble existence than most of my brothers in Christ. Even as Joseph's brothers were living as sons of their wealthy father, but Joseph was a slave in Egypt, I found that God would lead me from one humble circumstance to another, until I ended up living at a homeless shelter for a year, and then working in menial tasks for the same shelter while living in a small apartment adjacent to the shelter.

Yet during the years since my brothers rejected me

the Father began opening up to me an understanding of many parables contained in Scripture, and He indicated that the day would come when He would call me forth to share these truths with others. This also is a parallel to the life of Joseph for Pharaoh appointed Joseph to store up grain in Egypt during the seven years of plenty that he might feed the people during the seven years of famine.

Grain is symbolic of the word of God, and the Scriptures declare:

Amos 8:11-12

Behold, days are coming," declares Yahweh God, "When I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of Yahweh. People will stagger from sea to sea and from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of Yahweh, but they will not find it."

Yet in that hour and day, those who are a part of the Joseph company of ministers that Yahweh has chosen will have bread. This company of ministers will feed those who are famished from that storehouse that has been filled with the truths of God's word.

A few years back the Spirit gave me a further indication of the nature of the calling He has appointed to me. I was reading the following Scripture:

Genesis 41:45

Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, as his wife. And Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt.

Zaphenath-Paneah: Latin - Revelator Occulti (Revealer of hidden things).

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The Spirit directed me to the meaning of the name Pharaoh gave to Joseph. Because Joseph had interpreted Pharaoh's dreams when none of the wise men of Egypt could do so, Pharaoh gave him a new name that literally means "revealer of hidden things."

The Spirit has further used this to give me a clearer understanding of the call He has placed on my life. He has continued to give me understanding of types, symbols and parables, as well as an understanding of the many dark sayings of Scripture. He has not revealed these things to me that I might keep them to myself, but so that I might share them with those to whom Yahweh has chosen to have them revealed, even as Joseph explained the meaning of the symbolism of Pharaoh's dreams, as well as the dreams of Pharaoh's baker and cup-bearer, and his own dreams as well.

I believe that God has a specific calling or ministry appointed for all of His children, but we must first endure a time of difficult preparation. We must learn obedience through the things that we suffer. Like Joseph I have had to experience rejection from my brothers in Christ as well as separation from my natural family. There has been much difficulty and loneliness, but there has also been much favor and grace bestowed upon me by God. We read also of Joseph that God caused all that he did to prosper when he was Potiphar's servant, and later Joseph was shown favor with the jailer when Joseph was falsely accused of trying to rape Potiphar's wife. With the difficulties and the sorrow in our years of preparation, there is always the constant presence of God who is watching over us.

Yet many Christians never attain to the calling set before them because they fail to follow God to the places He would lead them, and they despise the difficult preparation that they must pass through.

Mark 4:33-34

With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it;

and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

As we have seen, God makes a distinction between those who are faithful, and those who are unfaithful when He communicates truth to them. As this Scripture reveals, Christ would speak everything to the crowds in parables, but He would then take His disciples aside and explain everything to them in private. All of those present were Hebrews, the natural descendants of Abraham, and the chosen people of God. Yet only a remnant were given understanding of the sayings of God.

Multitudes of people have picked up the Bible and read its pages without understanding. Many have read the histories of the Old Testament patriarchs, prophets, kings and people, and have only understood them as history. They have not understood the spiritual messages contained in all of these stories, and the myriad of symbols that are present. Many have read the more than 600 laws given to Moses and have only understood them on a physical and elemental level, when they were all given to teach spiritual truth.

Obvious - Presented as a parable

Mark 4:30-32

And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, yet when it is sown, grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade."

This type of parable is introduced as a parable. The hearers are made aware from the beginning that what is being told to them is a cloaked saying and that it has a double meaning. The majority of Christians are only aware of this most obvious type

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of parable, and even the meaning of these obvious parables are hidden from many Christians.

Types of Parables

Signification

Revelation 1:1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John...

In this type of parable the entire book is written in the form of symbolic language. Many unusual signs and word pictures are given to describe spiritual truth that is hidden from the masses, but made known to those whom Yahweh chooses to disclose it.

Example:

Revelation 1:12-16

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

Observe how full of symbols this passage is. Every symbol is filled with spiritual meaning, yet the meaning is hidden and must be searched out. We read here of seven golden lampstands, of a man clothed with a garment down to the feet, and having a golden band around his chest. The color of his hair is described as well as the character of His eyes. His feet are said to be as fine brass refined in

a fire, and his voice as the sound of many waters. In his right hand he has seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword comes from his mouth. He is shining like the sun in its strength.

Every detail here is important, for it is Spirit breathed, and stands for some revelation coming from the throne of Yahweh. Yet Yahweh chose deliberately to convey these truths in dark speech, in the form of a parable, so that only those whom He granted understanding would truly discern their meaning. I have heard more ridiculous things taught out of the book of Revelation than any other book of the Bible. This is because men who have not had Yahshua explain the symbols to them have attempted to discern their meaning by employing their own carnal mind. The result is confusion and folly.

Notice the depth of detail here. There are seven golden lampstands. Why seven? Why are they of gold? Look at the description of the man. Why does his garment go to his feet? Why not to the knee? Why is the golden band around his chest instead of his waist? Why is his hair white like wool, and like snow? Why is it not another color, or compared to something else that is white? Why are the seven stars in his right hand instead of his left? Why is the sword described as "two-edged" rather than as a single edged blade?

Every detail is pregnant with meaning, yet all the meaning is lost unless the Spirit of Christ brings illumination to that which is dark.

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I want to look at just one thing listed in this passage and show some of the depth of meaning that is hidden in the word of God. We know from the ensuing passages of the book of Revelation that the golden lampstands are an image of the churches of Christ. We find that Yahshua delivers a specific message to seven different churches and that one is threatened with the removal of their lampstand unless they repent.

The church is called to be a light unto the world, and a candlestick gives off light, so it is easy to understand the association between these two things. The candlestick is also an image of God. It is appropriate that this symbol should stand for both God and the church, for the church is to be a reflection of God. Christians are called to be conformed to the image of Christ, and the church is described as being a body whose head is Yahshua. Therefore, the image of the candlestick represents both Christ and the church.

Yet as we dig deeper we understand that every detail of the candlestick's construction also stands for some particular truth.

Exodus 37:17-24

And he made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, were of the same: And six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: Three bowls made after the fashion of almonds in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds in another branch, a knop and a flower: so throughout the six branches going out of the candlestick.

And in the candlestick were four bowls made like almonds, his knops, and his flowers: And a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it.

Their knops and their branches were of the same: all of it was one beaten work of pure gold. And he made his seven lamps, and his snuffers, and his snuffdishes, of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.

The candlestick is made of one single piece of beaten gold. This is because the candlestick not only represents the church, but it also represents God Himself. Even as there is only one church, we read in Scripture:

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Deuteronomy 6:4

"Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God,
Yahweh is one!"

Matthew 28:19

"Go therefore and make disciples of
all the nations, baptizing them in the
name of the Father and the Son and
the Holy Spirit..."

Revelation 4:5

Out from the throne come flashes of
lightning and sounds and peals of
thunder. And there were seven
lamps of fire burning before the
throne, which are the seven Spirits
of God...

God's nature is viewed by three perfect numbers.
The numbers are 1, 3 and 7. God is One God. He is
also a Triune God, or Three in One, for He is Fa-
ther, Son and Holy Spirit. He also is declared to
have seven spirits, which are identified in Isaiah
11:2.

Isaiah 11:2

The Spirit of Yahweh will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.

Spirit of Yahweh

Spirit of Wisdom

Spirit of Understanding

Spirit of Counsel

Spirit of Strength

Spirit of Knowledge of Yahweh

Spirit of the Fear of Yahweh

Observe how this candlestick represents God in
each of these numbers. It is one candlestick. It has
three branches. It has seven candles. These are the
three numbers associated with Yahweh and He has
stamped these three numbers upon the entire crea-
tion, for it is a reflection of His glory and a product
of His mind.

Consider light. A single ray of light can be split by a
prism into the seven individual colors of the rain-
bow. All colors can be formed from the three pri-
mary colors; red, yellow and blue. God's word says
He is light, and therefore the light of the creation is
stamped with the numbers 1, 3, and 7.

Consider sound. Musicians recognize that music is
divided into three octaves of seven notes each.
Thus all sound as expressed through music is
marked by the numbers 1, 3, and 7.

Consider Nature. All nature can be viewed as a
whole. Yet when we begin to classify nature it natu-
rally falls into seven divisions:

- I. KINGDOM
- II. SUB-KINGDOM
- III. CLASS
- IV. ORDER
- V. FAMILY
- VI. GENUS
- VII. SPECIES

These are not arbitrary divisions arrived at by the
caprice of man. They are the result of observing
God's creation and understanding how it is di-
vided.

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These numbers 1, 3 and 7 are found everywhere in the creation. In chemistry we find that matter exists in three states; solid, liquid and vapor. The earth itself is commonly divided into air, land and sea. Yet man is the greatest reflection of the character of God, for in Genesis we read the words of God, "Let us create man in our image, after our likeness."

Man is a single creature, and is therefore one. Yet man consists of body, soul and spirit. Thus man is stamped with the number three. These three components of man can be further broken down into seven.

Man also has one life in this flesh, but this life can be broken down into three stages, as seen in John's first epistle: little children, young men, and fathers. Yet these three can be broken down to the following seven, as observed in E. W. Bullinger's book "Number in Scripture."

There are seven Greek words used to describe these seven ages, according to Philo:—

1. Infancy (paidion, paidion, child).
2. Childhood (paiV, pais boy).
3. Youth (meirakion, meirakion, lad, stripling).
4. Adolescence (neaniskoV, neaniskos, young man).
5. Manhood (anhr, aner, man).
6. Decline (presbuthV, presbutes, old man).
7. Senility (gerwn, geron, aged man).

This same pattern of 1, 3 and 7 can be observed in the major patterns given by God to the Hebrews to serve as instructions of the children of God. In the Feast days of Yahweh there are three major feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. These three major feasts are further broken down into seven individual parts. Passover consists of Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast

of Firstfruits. Then comes Pentecost, then we have Tabernacles which is another three part feast consisting of The Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Many other examples could be cited both from the Creation and from Scripture that reveal how this characteristic of God has been stamped upon all things. Yet our interest right now is in the golden lampstand.

Every detail of this candlestick is also filled with spiritual truth. We are told that it is to be formed of beaten gold, and in this we can begin to make another connection. There are three distinguishable parts of the candlestick and each part pertains to a specific member of the godhead.

Deuteronomy 6:4
"Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one!"

Matthew 28:19
"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..."

Revelation 4:5
Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God...



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The body of the candlestick represents Yahshua.

Yahshua is declared to be the image of the invisible God. We also read:

Hebrews 10:5

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me."

We are also told that Yahshua learned obedience through the things He suffered. All of these things are observed in the golden form of the lampstand. The body of the lamp is a picture of the body of Christ. Even as Yahshua was beaten, whipped and crucified, His body suffering many things, so too is the outward form of the candlestick to be formed of beaten gold.

The Holy Spirit is pictured in the oil inside the lamp.

Even as Yahshua is pictured in the body of the lamp, we are told that Yahshua was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 4:1

Yahshua, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness...

In the presentation on the oil of anointing, we saw that anointing oil was made from the crushed flesh of ripe olives, and this "beaten oil" was used to light the lamps in the Temple. The anointing oil always signifies the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:38

"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God **anointed Him with the Holy Spirit** and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for

God was with Him."

The seven flames represent God the Father.

Hebrews 12:28-29

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; **for our God is a consuming fire.**

We also read in Scripture that Yahweh God is Spirit, and we read already where the seven flames represent the seven spirits of God.

The body of the candlestick represents Yahshua.

The oil that fills the candlestick represents the Holy Spirit.

The seven flames of the candlestick represent God the Father.

See then how much is represented by a single image that is mentioned in this passage from Revelation. Yet there is even more.



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Jeremiah 1:11-12

Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Jeremiah, what do you see? And I said, I see a branch or shoot of an almond tree [the emblem of alertness and activity, blossoming in late winter]. Then said the Lord to me, You have seen well, for I am alert and active, watching over My word to perform it.

[Amplified Bible]

Shaqed (shaw kade) - Almond Tree

Shaqad (shaw kad) - Alert and sleepless

This Scripture is fascinating in that we see Yahweh speaking through means of a pun, that is, He is using a play on words. There are two words in Hebrew that sound very much alike. They are the words Shaqed and Shaqad. The first word means almond tree, and the latter word means alert and sleepless.

The candlestick is decorated with the form of almond blossoms, and in this we see another aspect of God. We read in Scripture:

Psalms 121:2-4

My help comes from Yahweh... He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The golden candlestick in the Temple was to be always lit. It was never to be allowed to go out.

Leviticus 24:2-4

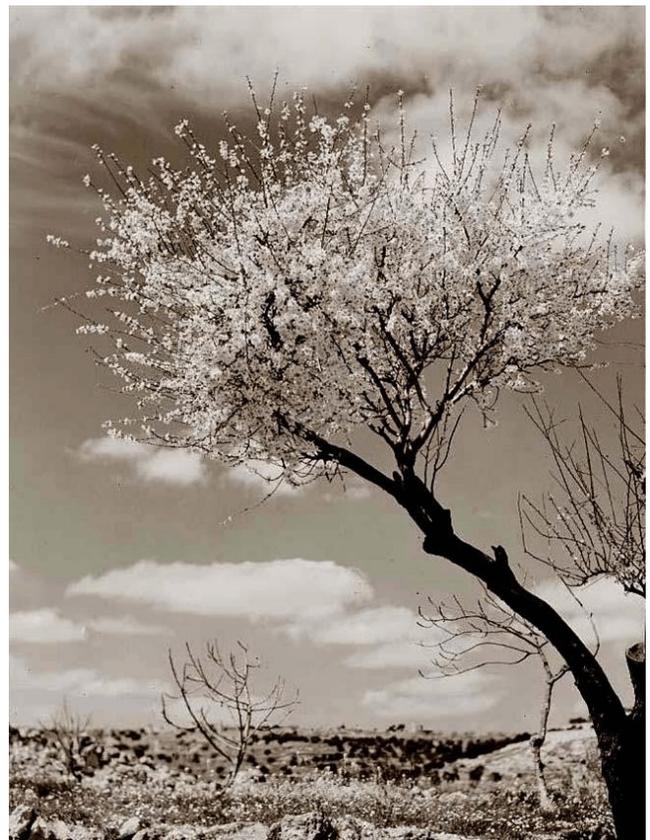
Command the Israelites that they bring to you pure oil from beaten olives for the light [of the golden lampstand] to cause a lamp to burn continually. Outside the veil of the Testimony [between the Holy and the Most Holy Places] in the Tent of

Meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the Lord continually; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. He shall keep the lamps in order upon the lampstand of pure gold before the Lord continually.

[Amplified Bible]

This is a symbol that God never sleeps, but is always alert.

The almond tree is also symbolic in that it is the first tree to bear fruit, for it blossoms in winter.



Almond tree blossoming in winter with snow in the ground.

Bethlehem Almond Tree

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The almond blossoms are part of the outer body of the candlestick that we said represents Yahshua, the Son of God. He is the firstborn among many brethren. He is the first man to reveal the nature of God in His body. He is therefore like the almond tree in that He bears fruit before any other tree.

We have only looked at one symbol from the book of Revelation, and we have seen that a picture truly is worth a thousand words. Yahweh has hidden tremendous truths in the pictures He gives to us through the Bible, yet very few Christians ever discern any but the most basic symbols. A man could literally spend many lifetimes plumbing the depths of all the symbols used in Scripture.

Do you love the truth enough to have God reveal His secrets to you?

Proverbs 25:2

**It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,
But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.**

Proverbs 2:1-5

My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of Yahweh and discover the knowledge of God.

How earnestly do you want to discover the knowledge of God? The Scriptures state that we have not because we ask not. Do you treasure God's words? Have you made your ear attentive to wisdom? Have you inclined your heart to understand the things of God? Have you ever cried out for discernment? Have you ever lifted your voice in prayer that you might be granted understanding? Do you seek for the knowledge of God as for silver and as if it is

hidden treasure?

If you do not seek for it in this way, you will not receive it. Are you more focused on gaining the temporary possessions of this world than you are focused on gaining the eternal knowledge of God? If you are, then you have made a disastrous trade. If you desire the material possessions of this life more than the knowledge of God then you are making a worse deal than the Indians who sold Manhattan Island for a trunk full of cheap beads.

Tell story of man who had a priceless work of art that he decided to give away.

God will not cast His pearls of truth before those who do not love truth. Even those things I will declare to you in these presentations will be lost to you if you are not faithful with the things you receive.

Luke 8:16-18

"Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light. **So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and **whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.**"**

Be careful how you listen! If you do not demonstrate a love of the truth, God will take away even what little truth you have received.

How do you demonstrate a love of the truth. Yahshua is called "The Way, **the Truth** and the Life."

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He said, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” When Yahshua reveals His will to you, do you respond with obedience? If He says I want you to do a particular thing, do you do it? If He points out some area of sin in your life, do you surrender to His work of purifying you from that sin? Are you willing to suffer in your pursuit of obeying Christ? When Yahshua says, “Take up your cross daily and follow Me, are you willing to do so?”

All these things are indicators of whether you love the truth, or not.

Yahshua warned all those whom He was speaking to that it was those who were faithful with the things they had already received from Him who would be given more. Those who were not faithful would have even what they thought they possessed taken from them.

What are you doing with the light you have already received? Are you hiding it away where no one can observe it? Or are you displaying the light you have received through a transformed life?

II Thessalonians 2:10-12

Because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not obey the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

This is one of the most frightening declarations of God in Scripture that I can think of. It is a terrible judgment for God to send a deluding influence upon a person. If God gives you over to a spirit of delusion so that you will believe lies and not know they are lies, then you are without hope in this life. Yahweh says that He will do this very thing to those who do not love truth, but they love their sin instead.

Many of you were raised up with some Christian influence. Some of you sat in Sunday School and Church services and heard the word of God taught. Some of you had mothers who instructed you to do the right thing, and you may think that you have some truth. Yet if you do not choose to obey the things you have received, God will remove the truth from your heart, and He will give you over to lies and falsehood. He does this to those who demonstrate that they love falsehood more than the truth, for even when they know what they ought to do, they choose to do the evil thing instead.

For some of you God has been patient with you for a long time. He has given you time to repent and turn and follow Him. Some of you have callings on your lives, and God has set before you a crown and eternal reward. Yet if you do not begin to show a love of the truth, God will take away even what you think you have, and give to another who is more worthy.

Even so, He took away the kingdom from Saul and gave it to David, for Saul proved stubborn and willful, while David had a heart after God.



Gadara

Parables

Let us return now to looking at the different types of Parables God has given to mankind. We have seen that there are very obvious parables where God has declared that He is speaking in a parable, and there are parables found in books such as Revelation and Daniel where much is revealed through symbols.

There are other types of Parables that are not so obvious, however. The historical events of people's lives as recorded in Scripture are all parables.

As a first example of this, I want to look at a miracle that Christ performed and speak of the parable that is contained within it.

Mark 5:1-13

They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

Seeing Yahshua from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; and shouting with a loud voice, he said, "What business do we have with each other, Yahshua, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!" For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many." And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. The demons implored Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them." Yahshua gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea,

about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

Matthew 8:29

And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us **before the time?**"

What we see here is another type of parable. We are not told that what we are reading is a parable, nor that the story is full of symbolism and truth. To the casual reader it appears that the writers of the gospels are simply recounting a historic event from the life of Christ.

We must remember that God has stated that it is His glory to conceal a matter, while it is the glory of kings to search out a matter. The children of God are called a kingdom of kings and priests. God has hidden many things in His word that He desires for His children to search out. Remember, we must cry out for understanding. We must seek for it as silver and as if it was hidden treasure, for truly the understanding of the truths of God are hidden treasures, and often they are hidden right before our eyes.

This event in the life of Yahshua serves as a parable that reveals truths about the kingdom of God in the church age, as well as the time of the Lord's return.

We are given a clue when the demons ask Yahshua, "Have you come here to torment us **before the time?**" Satan and all those in his kingdom of darkness have studied the word of God, and although many things are hidden from them, they also have discerned that which God has granted them permission to discern. Satan and his hosts understand that God does everything according to a pre-ordained plan and time schedule. They know that God has said He will judge Satan and those in league with him, and they know that Satan will be bound for a thousand years at the end of the sixth

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day of creation, or at the end of six thousand years from Adam. During the millennial reign of Christ on earth, Satan will be bound and cast into a pit.

The demons Christ encountered knew they were to be judged and placed in torment at the end of six thousand years from Adam, but here Christ was appearing before them and it had only been four thousand years from the time of Adam's creation. They therefore asked Yahshua, "Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

What happened after this is also prophetic. The demons entreated Yahshua to send them out into a nearby herd of swine, and Yahshua permitted them. The entire herd then ran down the hill into the sea and perished, and we are told there were "about two thousand swine."

Now I don't want anyone to think that God does not know how to count, and that He could not have told us precisely how many swine there were. Yet every detail in Scripture is Spirit breathed and there is importance both in what is revealed and what is not revealed.

We are not told the exact number of swine, and this is for a reason. The swine are a picture of the kingdom of God during the church age. Remember that swine are a picture of men who are given truth, having a split hoof, but they do not love the truth, they do not chew the cud.

God is telling us that the church age will be a period when many whom He has given truth to will not love the truth. The church age has been a period when doctrines of demons have entered the church, and it has been a period marked by sin. Yahshua gave several other overt parables to reveal that this would be the nature of the church age. He gave the parable of the mustard seed where He said the kingdom of God was like this smallest of seeds, but it would grow up to be the largest tree in the garden until the birds of the air would nest in its

branches. Today Christianity is the largest religion in the world, and it is also filled with much error and false doctrine. The birds of the air are a picture of Satanic influences resting among the various branches of the church.

Mark 4:4, 15

As he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up... These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.

Yahshua gave another parable where He compared the kingdom of God in the church age to leavened dough.

Luke 13:20-21

And again He said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."

Leaven is a symbol of sin, and Christ is saying that the church age would be a time when sin was rampant among those whom He had called to be His children. For this reason we read that "Many are the called, but few are chosen."

The majority of people who comprise the masses of Christianity do not love the truth. They do not submit to God's purifying work in their lives, and they are pictured in the swine that rush down the hill and drown in the sea. This is a picture of the judgment that awaits those who fall into this category. It is the remnant who will be saved.

I have taken time to explain the condition of the church in this present age for I know some will be offended at the depiction of the church as a herd of

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swine, but you must remember that even in the book of Revelation which was recorded less than a hundred years after the resurrection of Christ, seven different churches were written to, and only two of them were not warned about judgment to come to them if they did not repent of the evil that was already present within them. Some of their evil was so reprehensible to God that He warned them that their candlestick might be removed.

Returning to this parable of the swine, we see that it is about timing, and the condition of the church during the age we are now in. We are told that there were “about two thousand swine” and this is a prophecy of the length of the church age. Christ said this leavened kingdom would exist about two thousand years, and then it would be judged and He would come to reign upon the earth. We are not told the exact number of swine, for God has hidden the exact time of the return of Christ.

Mark 13:32-33

“But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come.”

We see then, that God has hidden parables and truth in the historic events of the life of Christ. But God has also hidden parables in all of the lives of the men and women whose histories are recorded for us in Scripture.

I want to mention another very significant type of Parable that God has chosen to use to reveal spiritual truths to His elect. This is through use of types and shadows found throughout the Laws and ordinances of the Old Testament.

Colossians 2:16-17

Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day - things which are a mere

shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

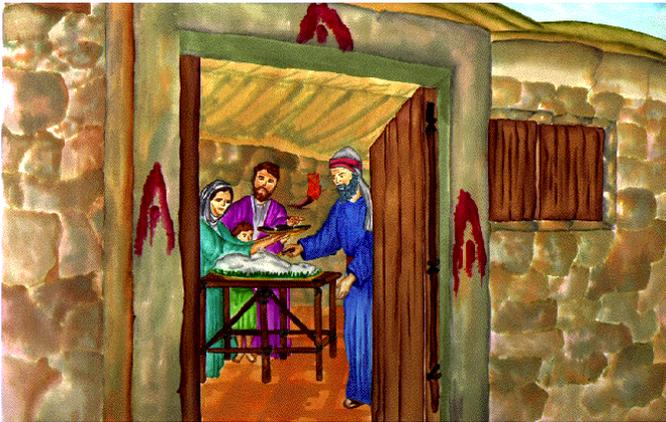
Hebrews 10:1

For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.

The Old Testament is filled with Laws and ordinances established by God through men such as Moses, whose intent is to lead men and women to Christ, and to understand the plan of salvation that God had planned from before the world was created. In the Old Testament there are many instructions relating to observance of feasts and Sabbaths and the eating of food and instructions on washing, etc.. All of these things were given as types and shadows of things to come when the Son of God would be born, bringing salvation to mankind.

For example, God established three main feasts that the Jews were to observe every year. The first of the Feasts was the Feast of Passover. During the first Passover, which was observed the night that the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they were instructed to slay a lamb that they had kept for some days in their home, and they were to eat the lamb, as well as to take some of the blood of the Lamb and apply it to the lintel and door posts of their houses.

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The First Passover

God spoke to Moses and told the Israelites to place the blood of the lamb on the outside of their houses and that night when the death angel came through the land he would pass over every house that had the blood on the doorposts and lintel. That night the firstborn male in every Egyptian household died, as well as the firstborn male among all the Egyptian cattle, but in the land of Goshen where the Israelites were dwelling not a person died, for they all heeded the words of Moses and placed the blood of a lamb on their doors.

This event foreshadowed Christ coming as the spotless Lamb of God and shedding His blood on the cross on behalf of all men who would believe on Him. Those who believe in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, by faith believing that He died in their place, receive the remission of their sins and pass from death into life.

Note that this first Passover occurred 1,500 years before Christ came, but it perfectly pictured the plan of God to redeem mankind with the spilled blood of His own Son. The blood on the doorposts and lintel forms the shape of the cross on which Christ died.

There were many other symbolic instructions to be carried out on Passover, but this should serve as

evidence that all of the Laws and ordinances of the Old Testament contain hidden meanings of spiritual truth.

Luke 21:25-26

“There will be signs in sun and moon and stars and on the earth, dismay among nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world...”

One further type of parable that I will mention is not found in the pages of Scripture, but it is observed in current events. These are parables that continue to be given to this day, and which can be observed in signs in the heavens and on the earth. These signs are for all who have eyes to see them. Yet, like most of the hidden truths of Scripture, there are few who are observing and understanding the messages that God has placed there. The reason for this lack of recognition is the same thing we have already spoken about. Most men do not love the truth, and even if they were to hear it declared openly to them, they would only rebel against it.

I want to end this presentation by bringing you to consider the matter of your own love for the truth. How much do you long to understand the things of God? How great is your desire to discern all the depths of truth hidden by the Holy Spirit in this book of parables and dark sayings? Are you content with the meager amount of light that the church possesses in this hour? Are you content to be wed to the myths and fables that pass as church doctrine in these last days? Do you want Yahweh to grant you access to His most holy things? The price of access is not cheap. You must prove yourself to be a lover of the truth.

Are you willing to prove your love of the truth by being obedient to those things the Spirit of Christ has already revealed to you? Will you follow the Lamb wherever He leads, even though the path

Parables

lead through many sorrows, suffering and loneliness? Are you willing to walk with Christ alone though none of the rest of the world or the church walk with you?

I would take you back to the story of Joseph to show you the cost of receiving both the revelation of hidden things and to be granted authority to rule and reign with Christ in coming days.



The Scriptures reveal that Joseph's life was a lonely one. When he was a youth growing up we are told that his brothers could not speak civilly to him, being jealous of their father's favoritism toward this son of his old age. Joseph was the eleventh of twelve brothers, and when he was seventeen the Lord gave Joseph two dreams that foretold of a day coming when his brothers would bow down to him. When his brothers heard the dream they were all the more enraged at him.

Soon after this Joseph's father Jacob sent him out to check on his brothers as they were tending his father's sheep. Joseph's brothers were known to act wickedly at times, and on a previous occasion Joseph had brought back an evil report concerning them. Joseph was more concerned about speaking honestly to his father than he was about seeking

the favor of his brothers. Yet this integrity to stand honestly before his father cost him dearly as his brothers treated him rudely.

When Jacob sent Joseph out once more to bring back a report on his brothers, his brothers conspired to do Joseph harm. Some spoke of killing him, but in the end they decided to gain material profit by selling him as a slave. For twenty pieces of silver they sold Joseph to a group of Midianite merchants who took Joseph to Egypt and sold him as a slave to one of Pharaoh's officers.

In this we see that although the other brothers of Joseph are all experiencing the fellowship that was theirs as brothers, Joseph was an outcast. He was sold into a strange land, and there he was once more treated as an outcast, for Hebrews were despised. Even when Joseph brought success to Potipher's household and was promoted, he still was not accepted among the Egyptians.

Later we read of Joseph's being cast into prison due to Potipher's wife's false accusation. He remained there until the age of thirty when Yahweh brought him out of the prison and made him second ruler in the entire land of Egypt. One might think that Joseph certainly knew fellowship then, but this is not so. We read the following about Joseph's circumstances.

Genesis 43:32

And the servants set out the food for Joseph by himself, and for his brothers by themselves, and for those Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, according to the Egyptian custom not to eat food with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

This scripture describes the time when Joseph's brothers appeared before him in Egypt to buy grain for their families. Herein is one more profound parable. Whenever a man chooses to follow the Fa-

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ther in integrity, not compromising his obedience in order to secure the favor of his brothers, he will find himself walking alone.

Three groups of people are revealed here in type. The Egyptians are a picture of the world. Joseph's brothers are a type of the church. Joseph is a type of the overcomer in Christ.

We find that those who will walk as overcomers will dwell alone. The world despises the overcomer. The church cannot eat from the same table, and therefore the overcomer must dine alone.

Hebrews 13:9-10

Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

In this verse the apostle Paul is using parables to declare his message. When he speaks of foods he is actually referring to doctrines, or teachings of the church. He says that some are feeding on doctrines that are of no profit, and these have no right to eat at the altar from which the overcomers in Christ dine. In other words, God's most holy things, the truths of the kingdom, are withheld from many in the church.

We find this same imagery of those serving the tabernacle, versus those who have access to God's most holy things, in the book of Ezekiel. In this passage we see a very illuminating and sobering truth.

Ezekiel 44:10-14

"The Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity.

Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house; they shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn against them," declares Yahweh God, "that they shall bear the punishment for their iniquity and they shall not come near to Me to serve as a priest to Me, nor come near to any of My holy things, to the things that are most holy; but they will bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the house, of all its service and of all that shall be done in it."

This passage of Scripture is a prophetic reference to the called of God who do not separate themselves from the idols of the world. Many of God's children today are trying to serve God while retaining a love for the world and the things in the world. These ones who have been espoused to Christ as a pure virgin have become as harlots. They are not pure in their affections. They do not have a pure love for Christ, but they have many loves. Listen then to Yahweh's judgment upon these idolatrous ones.

They will keep charge of the house, the tabernacle, but they shall not come near to Yahweh or near to His most holy things.

This is a great tragedy. In the ages to come, those saints of God who chose the easy path; those who chose the love of the world, the love of family and friends over a love of God, will be prohibited from entering Yahweh's presence. What a great tragedy.

Ezekiel 44:15-19

"But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to

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minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares Yahweh God. They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge. It shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner court and in the house. Linen turbans shall be on their heads and linen undergarments shall be on their loins; they shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat. When they go out into the outer court, into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers; then they shall put on other garments so that they will not transmit holiness to the people with their garments."

The entire church is called to be a kingdom of priests. Yet history and prophecy reveal that there have been righteous and unrighteous priests unto Yahweh in the past, and in this current church age there remain both righteous and unrighteous priests unto God. The reward for the righteous is not the same as the reward for the unrighteous. Zadok was the name of a righteous priest who lived during the time of King David. The name Zadok means "righteous."

Observe here that these righteous priests who have separated themselves from the idolatry of the world to be wholly devoted to Yahweh will be granted access to His very presence. Because they proved their love for God by walking apart from the world, turning away from its enticements and allure, they will stand before Yahweh and have access to all of His most holy things. These will have an altar to eat from which those who serve the tabernacle have no access unto.

How great is your desire to stand in the presence of the almighty God who created you? Is it great enough that you are willing to turn away from the worldly pursuits that occupy the vast majority of Christians today? Is it enough to make you willing

to walk alone, having neither fellowship with the world, or with a worldly church?

The loneliness can be intense at times. There is a feeling that you simply do not belong anywhere in this world. You will go to the local churches and find that they cannot dine on the same truths that you are dining upon. You will find also that you cannot embrace the unprofitable teachings that they are preoccupied with. Like Joseph, you will merely watch the Egyptians dining together, and the children of God dining together, but you will be seated alone.

This message of the lonely walk of the overcomer is found throughout the Bible. Paul walked as an overcomer among the church of his day, and he too was faced with this loneliness.

II Timothy 4:9-11

Make every effort to come to me soon; for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.

Philippians 2:19-21

But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

Paul's message and preaching reached thousands of people, yet there were times when he could not name more than one person who was standing with him as an overcomer. There were times when no one stood with him.

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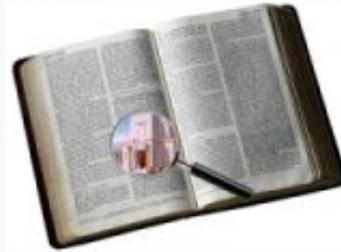
II Timothy 4:16-17

At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth.

Is your love for God greater than your love of the world, and even greater than your desire to have fellowship with the church at large? Then you will follow no matter where the Spirit leads you, even if that means that you are separated from father and mother and brothers and sisters and sons and daughters and spouse. But at the same time you will be granted access to God that is beyond that which these others are experiencing. You will dine from the table He sets before you, which others cannot dine from.

Yahweh will make a distinction between His servants. His word will be more alive and open to the one who proves himself to be a lover of the truth. The dark sayings of Scripture will be opened unto that one, while remaining hidden to all others. Will you pay the price of admission? Will you count the cost and follow the Lamb wherever He leads? The hour is late. Choose this day whom you will serve.

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Charles Haddon Spurgeon - Bible Devotion

*"Thou shalt guide me with
Thy counsel, and afterward
receive me to glory."
Psalm 73:24*

The Psalmist felt his need of divine guidance. He had just been discovering the foolishness of his own heart, and lest he should be constantly led astray by it, he resolved that God's counsel should henceforth guide him. A sense of our own folly is a great step towards being wise, when it leads us to rely on the wisdom of the Lord. The blind man leans on his friend's arm and reaches home in safety, and so would we give ourselves up implicitly to divine guidance, nothing doubting; assured that though we can-

not see, it is always safe to trust the All-seeing God. "*Thou shalt*," is a blessed expression of confidence. He was sure that the Lord would not decline the condescending task. There is a word for thee, O believer; rest thou in it. Be assured that thy God will be thy counselor and friend; He shall guide thee; He will direct all thy ways. In His written Word thou hast this assurance in part fulfilled, for holy Scripture is His counsel to thee. Happy are we to have God's Word always to guide us! What were the mariner without his compass? And what were the Christian without the Bible? This is the unerring chart, the map in which every shoal is described, and all the channels

from the quicksands of destruction to the haven of salvation mapped and marked by one who knows all the way. Blessed be Thou, O God, that we may trust Thee to guide us now, and guide us even to the end! After this guidance through life, the Psalmist anticipates a divine reception at last--"*and afterward receive me to glory.*" What a thought for thee, believer! God Himself will receive *thee* to glory--*thee!* Wandering, erring, straying, yet He will bring thee safe at last to glory! This is thy portion; live on it this day, and if perplexities should surround thee, go in the strength of this text straight to the throne.