

Part Eleven of Dispensations.

So now we have come to a crunch, and it is this; either we take what the scholars say is true, or we believe what God's Word says, even when the scholars differ from it. I'm not unaware of the difficulties that we face, but we have His promise that we find in Matt 7v7 & 8. When we add to this Jn 16v13, we will seek to '**hear Him**' before we dash off into the unknown, alone. Armed with the two great facts that find stated in 2 Tim 3v16 and 2 Tim 2 v15, we can, at least, rest in the fact that we are honest seekers who are prepared to be led by the Holy Spirit.

That said, I want you to take a look at three scriptures with me, realising that they are just a sample of a number of others; each one of them is spoken by the Lord Himself and they set forth a very important principle. You'll find the first in **Matt: 21v42** where He asked the chief priests and the elders, - v23 - this question, '**Did ye never read in the scriptures?**' Let's read this in its context to see what it is stating. It's about a vineyard that the husbandman separated from the rest of the world – by a hedge – v33. There is no question what He's talking about, for Israel was the nation God had separated from the rest of the nations; and it was the Elders of that nation that He was talking to. It makes sense of Him being 'the **true** vine', as He stated in John 15, and makes His Father the husbandman. However, it doesn't say much for what sort of a 'vine' they were. Now let's read v37, which says so much about God and His love and heart towards Israel. Now, these '**husbandmen**' were those who were responsible for producing the fruit from that Nation of Israel – so this was a reference to the High Priest, etc; - and they knew it – v45. The point of reference the Lord used as proof was the scripture; our text in this case. Don't forget that these men were the custodians of God's Word. It is incredible what they had come up with as to its meaning. That really makes our 'text' a loaded one, doesn't it? Next, let's take a look at **Matt: 22v29**, '**But Jesus answered and said to them, Ye err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.**' This was spoken to the Sadducees who didn't believe in the resurrection, or angels or spirits. He completely put the Sadducees' doctrine as being totally out of kilter to the scriptures, which made them – the Sadducees – **wrong**. What He said in **v32** doesn't do a lot for the way some of us talk either, does it? And remember, **Scripture settles it!!!** Last, but not least, we have **Matt: 26v54**, where He asks them another question, namely, '**How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?**' He makes it clear that He could have stopped Calvary right there, but what the consequences would have been are unthinkable. The scriptures are a literal record of what is to be. Right there He – the Living Word - subjected Himself to '**that which is written**'. This is so important to God, and if you look at **Jer: 1v12** you'll find God's attitude towards it. In there you will find that the word 'hasten' is a primary root that means to 'be alert' and, hence, to 'be sleepless'. The written Word stands and it cannot fail because God has it under His gaze the whole time. That accounts for **Rev: 17v17**. Thus we can see that the **written Word SETTLES** the future. This is why we need to have a reliable copy of the scriptures – and I have to say, sadly, that some of our versions are woefully lacking in this area – for, as we see, the Lord used the scriptures as **the final court of appeal**. Though the dispensations are part of this necessary 'dividing' of these scriptures, there are other serious points that also need to be taken into account, regarding them.

When, therefore we come to this third Channel of God ‘speaking’ to man, we see that in this case it was the **‘Word made flesh’ Himself, Who** was the channel. That His basic teaching was about the Kingdom and its King is clearly seen from the layout of the four gospels themselves. Each is subject to the same arrangement of its subject material, i.e, 1/ The Kingdom, 2/ The King, 3/ The King Rejected, 4/ The Kingdom Rejected. Hence, when we read in **Heb: 1v2**, that God spoke to ‘them’ –the Jews – in a Son, the message of the Kingdom was plainly **to the Jews**. This is why we looked at length at the stress that we found, in the scriptures, concerning His earthly life, i.e, at His birth and again at His trial and death. His life was, as we saw, wrapped up in the position of Him being their King. **‘We will not have this man to reign over us’** seals the matter. That was the **stated** reason behind His rejection by the Jews. Therefore we need to note that with the rejection of the King, the Kingdom was also put in abeyance, **but** by no means **cancelled**. You can guarantee, **the matter of the King and His Kingdom will be back**. This explains such things as the restriction we find in **Matt: 10 v5-8**. The ministry is strictly to the Jews and the signs that they require are there stated as part of what is to be carried out; however, the message is also plainly stated, and it is the Kingdom. Their message is NOT for the Gentiles or the Samaritans. What we mustn’t miss here is that when He was rejected as King, by the Jews, He then went on with the other side of His purpose for being here, the side that John the Baptist clearly pointed out, i.e. **Behold the Lamb of God’**, something that His Life had clearly shown Him to be fully qualified for.

Read in this light and being aware of the divisions that we find in the Gospels regarding the King and His Kingdom, the thrust of the Lord’s ministry becomes very clear. But this **third ministry** doesn’t finish here for we read in **Heb: 2v3** that it is to be confirmed, which confirmation, we find to be the fourth stage of God’s ‘speakings’ to man. This time we find it to be the Twelve **‘Who heard Him’**, and are now sent forth to **confirm** the message that Jesus had brought. However, don’t miss what the Word says here, for that third verse clearly states that this **‘confirmation’**, that was made through the Twelve apostles,, was to **us’**, who once again will be the ones Paul was writing to, and they, clearly, are the Hebrews. You should be seeing now how dangerous it is not to let the **‘WRITTEN WORD i.e, ‘the Scriptures’**, be the final arbiter.

We don’t have to read too far through the Book of Acts to see that the ministry of the Twelve, was effectively, **‘the same again’**. Their portion was to ‘confirm’ what the Lord Jesus had taught. The Word they preached was what they had heard from Jesus and was confirmed by ‘signs following’ which was a requirement of the Jews, as we see once again from **1 Cor: 1v22**.

It would probably be appropriate at this point to see the start of the Twelve’s ministry, which we find in Acts 2. I will remind you first that Paul had no part in the choosing of a replacement for Judas as one of the Twelve, simply because he didn’t qualify for the post, as you’ll see if you read from **Acts 1v15 to 26**. The matter was settled by the casting of ‘lots’, a system often used by the Jews. In fact, Paul doesn’t even appear, in any way whatsoever in the early chapters of Acts, his first appearance being in Acts 7v58.

When we look at the ministry of the Twelve, we know already that it was to confirm the ministry of the Lord Jesus. Let me quote you **Heb: 2v3 & 4**. “How shall **we** escape, (*remember that*

the 'we' refers to Paul and the Hebrews to whom this epistle is written!) if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be **spoken by the Lord**, and was **CONFIRMED** unto **us** (*that's the same 'us/we'*) by them that heard Him; God bearing (them) witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His Own will?' It is of interest to note a point here, in the light of God's dealing with His People. The message of '**the King**' was always meant to be to Israel as a whole. On the Day of Pentecost the city was full of Jews, who included those who had been born in at least seventeen foreign countries. They were in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost and they all got the message *in the language of the country of their birth*. The message wasn't 'to the nations' but, if you look carefully at the words in Acts 2, you will see that Peter's conversation is with the Jews. Read carefully from Acts 2v36 and note Peter is referring to 'all the house of Israel'. Who, 'pricked in their heart' asked the disciples what **THEY** should do. Furthermore, we shall see that the nation, as a whole, stood or fell upon the decisions of the elders, then Paul remained faithful to the one part of his commission until the Jewish elders in the capitals of the two basic centres of Jewish life, i.e, Jerusalem and Rome, had effectively denied their King and Saviour.

End of Part 11.

(To be continued.)