Introduction [Note to Small Group Leaders: This is a longer than usual study.]

There are seven instances recorded by the Gospels wherein Jesus refers to hell as a place where “there will weeping and gnashing of teeth”, six within the Gospel of Matthew and one in Luke. These took place at various times during His earthly 3-1/2 year ministry, the last two occurring during His final week within the Olivet Discourse. In some instances these characteristics are additionally supplemented with darkness or fire, but more important are the accompanying reasons why a particular person’s or group’s behavior is ultimately responsible for assigning them to this final destination. As we shall see, Jesus’ warning as to who may find themselves at this most undesired terminus each comprises different types who still share a common spiritual dilemma. None of these teachings are actually identical in terms of to whom they apply, except for the common result regardless.

“The outer darkness” depicts the worst spiritual condition of separation and loss contrasting sharply with one of the key features of heaven in that the light from the Godhead negates the ongoing need for a sun. (Is. 24:23; 66:19-20; Rev. 21:23) It is an idiomatic Hebraic expression to describe the ultimate separation from God. “Weeping” refers to the emotional agony of loss, and “gnashing of teeth” to the physical agony of pain to express the ultimate separation from God’s love both emotionally and physically. All of these combine to describe hell as the ultimate opposite of heaven.

It should be noted that being cast into hell is not a purely physical dilemma, but accompanied by being conscious not just of why one has been deposited there, but side-by-side with the stark knowledge of what one could have experienced instead! Each of these conditions unequivocally demands eternal consciousness on the part of the sufferer. While life on this planet may be mortal and come to an end, the soul is immortal, and whether it spends eternity in heaven or hell, it will consciously exist in either.

And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, “and saying, Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented.” 7Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8But the centurion said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” 10Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. 11I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; 12but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed that very moment.

[Read Mt. 8:5-13]

Q: To whom is Jesus specifically directing the warning in v.10-12?
   A: “Those who were following”. (v.10) Apparently there were Jews other than His disciples who had gathered to see to Jesus in Capernaum and witnessed the centurion’s interaction with Christ.

Q: In this particular instance, how do we know for sure that Jesus is directing His remarks solely at ethnic Jews?
   • First is the observation, “I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel”. (v.10)
   • Second is the specific reference to “the sons of the kingdom”. (v.12)
   • Finally is the event described as reclining “at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob on the kingdom of heaven”. (v.11)

   These combine to show that in this particular instance Jesus is applying this teaching exclusively to Israel.

Q: Why would this be a powerful rebuke to the Jews of the day?
   A: A commonly held belief was that because of their ethnicity and Israel’s calling, Jews were automatically “God’s people”. Likewise, Gentiles were considered automatically disqualified and could only gain access by first going through Israel.

Q: How would you summarize Jesus’ warning to Israel?
   A: They are in danger of losing their place in eternity—which is here expressed as “recline at the table”, and being replaced by those they believed to be automatically disqualified—the meaning of “many will come from east and west”. (v.11)
**The 1st Instance:** Just as it is to Israel Jesus first takes the Gospel and the opportunity to accept Him as their personal Savior and Messiah, they are the first to be warned of the consequences for rejection of same. This first instance is specifically applied to that generation of Jews who rejected Jesus in the course of His First Coming.

**[Read Lk. 13:22-30]**

Q: To whom does this first and foremost literally apply?
A: Like the previous teaching, this is squarely directed at Israel.

Q: Are these two instances identical?
A: No. The consequences are the same, but the situations are not.

**Point:** In this instance we have an example of Hebrews 11:6, that “without faith it is impossible to please God”, and in the previous example a parallel to Romans 14:23, “whatever is not of faith is sin”.

Q: What is the spiritual situation being described?
A: They only realized the need for Christ when it was too late. Their steadfast rejection of Him has resulted in being shut out.

Q: How are the consequences similar in both instances, but slightly different?
A: Once again Jesus refers to who “will recline at the table in the kingdom of God” with the likes of “Abraham and Isaac and Jacob”. (v.28) However, there is the added details of including “and all the prophets”, and that the Gentiles will come from all four directions (“from east and west and from north and south”) and not just “east and west”. (v.11) In both cases the consequences are to be “thrown out”. (v.28)

Q: What is Jesus’ warning to ethnic Israel in both instances?
A: Rejection of the Messiah by Israel is going to open the door for the Gentiles.

Q: What is the nature of the response to their initial rejection?
A: They try to make the case that they should be let in because, “We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets”. (v.26)

Q: How does this differ from the first instance?
A: Whereas the first case deals with their “proximity” to the Patriarchs through their ethnicity, here they are claiming “proximity” to Christ by His having come and lived and taught among them, although they still ultimately rejected Him. In both cases, they think they are “close enough” without actually following through with the required obedience and faith.

Q: How does Jesus describe this behavior? What does it reveal about their true, spiritual nature?
A: He calls them “evildoers”. (V.27) To have experienced His personal presence and teachings and yet still rejected Him, they instead chose to pursue their lifestyle of sin until it was too late. They are going to reap the consequences of their behavior.

[Continued on the next page.]
Q: To the Jews of the day, what might be the most powerful aspect of this scenario?
A: When the door shuts, those who thought their proximity and familiarity would qualify them for automatic inclusion and protection will find that from Jesus’ point view, they are as unfamiliar as total strangers with not even a passing attachment. They are dually rejected as they knock and plead from the outside trying to get in when it is too late: “I do not know where you are from”. Their true identity and character will be exposed from Christ’s viewpoint when He ends the discussion, “I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from Me all you evildoers”. (v.27)

Q: How does this instance end with an ominous foretelling of what is going to happen to Israel in the very near future?
A: The statement, “some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last” has as one of its primary meanings that God came to Israel first, but because of their overall rejection of the Messiah will be last, and the Gentiles who will later come to faith in the Messiah through the Church will be first. Scripture further teaches that once the Church is removed, God finishes His salvific work in Israel, another example of the first being last.

The 2nd Instance: Likewise directed at ethnic Israel, this instance, however, is not directed at those who outright rejected Christ, but those who never properly acted on their beliefs. Whereas the chief issue was previously ethnicity, here it is merely being “close enough”. For both, the consequences are the same.

[Read Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43]

Q: What, exactly, is a “tare”?
A: It is a type of weed which resembles wheat. It grows side-by-side with wheat and is best dealt with by leaving it alone until the wheat is ready to harvest, at which time it is separated and destroyed as worthless.

Q: Who does Jesus plainly state is represented by the wheat and the tares?
A: “…the sons of the kingdom” and “the sons of the evil one”. (v.38)

Point: Notice that there is no “middle” option; either we belong to one or the other. This is contrary to teachings about, or variations of, the concept of Purgatory, where a third option is falsely purported so as to gain the opportunity for a second chance when it is otherwise too late.

Q: How might this teaching on tares relate to the previous example of those rejected by the Master?
A: They look like, and grow up next to, the real thing, and by all appearances seem to belong. In the end, however, they are exposed for what they are, separated, rejected and “burned with fire”. (v.40)

Q: How do we know this is not just speaking about the world in general, but has an additional meaning for God’s people specifically?
A: In the detailed explanation of the parable, Jesus further stipulates, “and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks and those who commit lawlessness”. (v.41)
seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 39and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. 40So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 41The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 42and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

**Point:** The term “kingdom of God” is repeatedly defined in the Gospels as solely comprised of people and not referring to an earthly empire. “My kingdom is not of this world...My kingdom is not of this realm”. (Jn. 18:36) Or as Jesus will tell the Pharisees, “...the kingdom of God is in your midst”. (Lk. 17:21)

**Q:** What is absent from the description from hell which indicates that this is not referring to ethnic Israel alone?

A: Any reference to the Patriarchs and a loss of place, something uniquely ascribed to Israel.

**Q:** So what do the tares also represent where God’s people are concerned?

A: Counterfeit believers who purposely function as “stumbling blocks” against the authentic, and who “commit lawlessness”, someone who does not merely undermine God’s Word but actively works against it.

**Q:** What is the dual working of this ultimate removal of the tares at this divine harvest time?

A: Their removal from the world in general, and additional surgical extraction from God’s house, yields the unprecedented result, “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”. (v.43) The harvest results in a dual purification of both venues of the earth proper and God’s house.

**Q:** How does this reveal who truly belongs to the kingdom of God?

A: The specification that they belong to “the kingdom of their Father” indicates that these are the true children of God, not selected solely because of their ethnicity, but their faithful obedience to His Word and ways.

**Q:** Why might some postulate that this instance is NOT the same as the others where the description of the final destination is concerned?

A: In the first instance, the overall final destination was described as “the outer darkness” (v.12), whereas here it is “the furnace of fire”. (v.42) On its face, a place of darkness would not appear to be able to exist in a fiery furnace.

**Point:** These are not conflicting locations, but describing two parallel consequences of hell as eternal spiritual separation and eternal physical torment. Both will be reiterated in future examples, but the irony is not lost that the light from the fires of hell will not overcome the spiritual darkness participants will at the same time experience, whereas heaven not only provides idyllic conditions, but because of the proximity to Christ has no further need of the light of the sun.

**The 3rd Instance:** Jesus continues to direct this teaching at ethnic Israel, but expands it to include everyone who tries to appear religious by counterfeiting the authentic. He begins to apply this teaching to more than just those belonging to ethnic Israel.
47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; 48 and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. 49 So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[Read Mt. 13:47-50]

Q: How do we know that Jesus has now moved the emphasis to the world, and is not exclusively addressing ethnic Israel alone?
   A: Throughout Scripture the repeated metaphor for “the sea” or large bodies of water is the Gentile nations.

   Who stills the roaring of the seas,
The roaring of their waves,
And the tumult of the peoples. — Psalm 65:7

   And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. — Revelation 17:15

Q: And what do fish represent?
   A: People.

   And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
   — Matthew 4:19

Q: How is this plainly proven from v.49?
   A: The bad fish are identified unambiguously as “the wicked”, and the good fish as “the righteous”.

The 4th Instance: Jesus expands His warning concerning hell to include not just Israel alone, nor to only counterfeit vs. authentic believers, but to the whole world.

[Read Mt. 22:1-14]

Q: How does the context of this parable plainly indicate that the emphasis has shifted from Old Testament Israel to the New Testament Church?
   A: Whereas the first two instances directed at Israel mentioned reclining at a table with the Patriarchs—the eternal ideal goal for Old Testament Israel, the emphasis here is on the New Testament Church’s eternal ideal, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (Rev. 19:9)

Q: Who are those who were originally invited who refused to come?
   A: This is Israel in the First Coming, who by and large rejected the Messiah.

Q: How do we know from the text that the rejection of Christ in the First Coming was not merely passive or simply ignoring Him?
   A: They heard the invitation, “But they paid no attention and went on their way”, and many even went so far as to render violence to the messengers of that invitation, a metaphor for the Gospel. It is a picture of the complete rejection of both the Messiah and God’s Word. Even those who “went on their way” did so after hearing but refusing to act upon the message.

Q: What might be particularly important about the instruction to make the subsequent invitations to those on “the main highways”?
   A: The underlying Greek is actually describing a fork in the road where two or more streets cross. In other words, this represents people who all come to the same place and must choose which branch to follow. This is particularly powerful in this usage because it is describing what people do when they hear the Gospel, whether they choose to follow Christ or to instead pursue their
10“Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

11“But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, 12and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And the man was speechless.

13“Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14For many are called, but few are chosen.”

own path in the character of the original invitees, and it literally applied to everyone.

Q: What is the result of the new round of invitations?
A: “…the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests”. (v.10)

Point: This is a prophetic parallel of the prolific success of the Gospel among the Gentiles during the Church Age.

Q: So with whom, exactly, does the king take umbrage?
A: It is not one of the originally invited guests nor anyone else who refused to participate, it is one of the new invitees who is actually present at the feast.

Q: How does the text reveal that the target of this particular warning from Christ about hell is directed to the attention of believers?
A: The scriptural metaphor for a person in a right relationship with God is clean, unsoiled clothes, representing good deeds in Christ; improper attire is associated with uncleanness and unrighteousness.

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. — Revelation 19:7–8

He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” Again he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.” Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by. — Zechariah 3:4–5

Q: Who is the type of person portrayed by this figure who was not properly dressed for the wedding?
A: Someone who has not been obedient to Christ subsequent to accepting Him as the Messiah.

Point: Jesus repeatedly warns about this particular case, such as in the Parable of the Minas (Lk. 19:11-27) and Parable of the Talents (Mt. 25:14-30) when a trusted servant fails to carry out the Master’s business, or the discourse on The Wise vs. Evil Slave. (Mt. 24:42) None of these or other related instances involve non-believers, but are solely directed at believers, and in each case when the Master returns, the unfaithful do not merely experience some kind of temporary loss or discipline, but are themselves permanently thrown out.

Q: What is particularly powerful about what happened to this misdressed guest versus those originally invited?
A: Whereas those initially invited suffered judgment and loss, this figure actually made it into the feast, and therefore experienced for at least a short period of time what he was about to permanently lose forever. He will forever live in hell with the memory of what he could have had.
45“Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 47Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

48“But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ 49and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, 51and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**The 5th Instance:** The ultimate and most severe final destination is not solely reserved for those who outright reject the invitation of the Gospel; Christ has expanded the warning of who may be cast into hell to those who are not “dressed and ready”. The spectrum of this teaching now includes both Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church.

**[Read Mt. 24:45-51]**

Q: How do we know this is speaking exclusively about those WITHIN the Church?

A: By the designation that these servants were “put in charge of his household”, and that their assignment was to “give them [their fellow servants] their food at the proper time”. Food and feeding is one of the most often-used illustrations of teaching God’s Word used throughout Scripture. This is addressing the responsibility of believer’s ministry within the Church.

Q: What is the specific context in which this teaching is given? What does that tell us about the primary meaning of “when he comes” in regards to the Master?

A: This is part of the Olivet Discourse when Jesus is answering a small group of Apostle’s question, “...what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Mt. 24:3) This is directly addressing the Second Coming.

**Application:** Since Jesus can “come” for us at any time previous to the Second Coming by the advent of our death, this warning for believers is actually in force all the time. Our death can come about as suddenly and unexpected as the Rapture, so should we “meet” Him today through death, are we presently acting in the character of the “faithful and sensible slave” or “that evil slave”?

Q: What will happen to those serving Christ when He returns?

A: The “faithful and sensible slave” (v.45) will experience reward and gain, but the “evil slave” (v.48) will experience punishment and loss.

Q: What additional punishment has been added to this previously used description of hell?

A: “...cut him in pieces”. (v.51) There appears to be a specific, added punishment for those who should have known better and not only failed in their assignment to build up the Body of Christ through the Word, but joined with others to abuse Christ’s flock and to engage in fleshly, sinful behavior.

Q: Whereas hell was also previously assigned the additional descriptions of “the outer darkness” (Mt. 8:12; 22:13) and “the furnace of fire” (Mt. 13:42; 50), what is additionally provided here?

A: “...a place with the hypocrites”. (v.51)

**Point:** The term “hypocrite” carries with it a meaning which can be closely associated with that of a “tare”, in that it describes a counterfeit, someone who assumes and speaks or acts with a feigned character. But in this case, it is not someone posing in place of the authentic like a tare, but has received an actual appointment to carry out God’s work who not only fails to do so, but perverts their position to actually inflict harm and abuse.

**The 6th Case:** Employing the same basic warning for hell, Jesus has travelled from addressing Israel alone, to all the Gentile nations, to now focusing exclusively on the Church. This teaching applies as much to His Second Coming as it did to His First Coming.
For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. 19 To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.

Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. 17 In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. 18 But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20 The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’

‘His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

21 Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’

‘His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

22 And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. 23 And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’

24 But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. 25 Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.’

26 ‘Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ 27 For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have abundance; but from everyone who has not, even that which he has will be taken away.’

Q: Where do each of these last two instances take place? How does this provide a different context for each?

A: In the previous instance, the focus was restricted to the Master’s household and the conduct and treatment of its members; in this case it is carrying out the Master’s business in the world and not confined to just what takes place within His house. One pertains to our ministry to the Body of Christ and fellow believers, the other to our ministry of the Gospel to the world and the unsaved.

Q: How does the text help verify this?

A: In v.24 the references to sowing, reaping and gathering are all associated with harvesting a crop in a field. Think of this in relation to the Parable of the Sower and how the Gospel is spread by us in the world. This is further reinforced by the last slave’s action of burying his talent in a hole.

Q: To whom is this teaching addressed? How do we know for sure that this is exclusively directed at the Church?

1. The foundational condition is that the master is “a man about to go on a journey” (v.14), and then “went on his journey” (v.15), and “after a long time the master of those slaves came”. (v.19) This can only refer to Christ’s going and coming in relation to the Church. (Jn. 14:1-4; Lk. 17:22)

2. It is specified that the Master “called his own slaves”. (v.14) By definition this pertains only to those serving in the Master’s house and carrying out His business.

Q: What might be telling about the difference in the way the Master addresses each failure in these final two instances?

A: Whereas in the previous instance of failing one’s responsibilities within the Master’s household they are identified as an “evil slave” (Mt. 24:48), the one here falling short in carrying out His business in the world is called a “wicked, lazy slave”. (v.26) This is in line with the differences of the first case where abuse and harm are actively committed versus now being completely inactive and doing nothing at all.

Q: This slave being called “lazy” is certainly understandable, but why does he deserve the added designation of “wicked”?

A: Because, by his own admission in v.24-25, he knew better. He did not act out of ignorance or a lack of information, but in spite of quite the opposite.

Q: What is uniquely added to this particular assignment to hell?

A: He not only loses a potential award as exhibited by the two faithful examples, but experiences additional loss before permanent reassignment—“take away the talent from him”. (v.28)

The 7th Instance: The previous instance is a teaching for believers in terms of their faithfulness for ministry within the Church, but here expanded to include the parallel requirement of faithfulness for ministry to the world; both aspects are addressed in these final two instances.
have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 30 Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Big Picture

No two of these seven teachings are identical, and it is impossible not to notice how they follow a chronological order overlapping and transitioning from Israel to the Gentiles and then not just to the Church in “this present age”, but extending specifically into “the end of the age”. They not only cover all of history from Old Testament Israel to the New Testament Church, but all spiritual conditions. The consequences in each instance result in the worst possible destination for all eternity.

- In the 1st instance there are those with an ethnic connection but lacking spiritual obedience and faith who are warned where the path of their behavior and choices is ultimately leading. (Mt. 8:10-12)

- In the 2nd instance there are those claiming the same kind of ethnic and cultural proximity to Christ which they attached to the Patriarchs who are warned where the path of their behavior and choices is ultimately leading. (Lk. 13:25-30)

- In the 3rd instance there are “tares” of the world identified as “sons of the evil one” and “tares” identified within the kingdom of God proper who are warned where the path of their behavior and choices is leading. (Mt. 13:40-43)

- In the 4th instance both the global generic “wicked” and the “righteous” are informed where the path of their behavior and choices is leading. (Mt. 13:47-50)

- In the 5th instance, those who reject Christ’s invitation, and those who are invited but are not properly dressed and ready, are warned where the path of their respective behavior and choices is leading. (Mt. 22:1-14)

- In the 6th instance, those from within God’s household proper who are found to be “evil slaves” by their treatment of those entrusted to them are warned where the path of their behavior and choices is leading. (Mt. 24:45-51)

- In the final instance, a double caveat is provided to those within God’s household who fall short of faithful service to the world at large and deemed a “wicked, lazy slave” who are likewise warned where the path of their behavior and choices is leading. (Mt. 25:26-30)

Jesus addresses the issue of the eternal consequences for falling spiritually short in an overlapping fashion so as to nullify the possibility that there is some kind of “loop hole” or “exemption” when there is not. The same fate awaits everyone across all ethnic groups, historical periods and responses to His calling, not just in “this present age”, but in the course of His Second Coming as well.
Overall Application

Jesus devotes much more time in the Gospels to the issue of hell than heaven because of the spiritual hurdle which first presents itself before attaining to all which will come after: “...when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Lk. 18:8) Not faith in proximity or heritage or other false hopes, but providing the evidence of a biblical faithfulness practicing obedience, service and steadfast commitment to His Word and ways alone.