

Sunday January 3rd 2010
Matthew 13 Parables – Part Four
The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

1). In our study of the parable of the Sower we had learned that Christ had come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel for the purpose of offering them the opportunity to move into the heavenly realm of the Kingdom in the place of Satan and his fallen angels, and that this offer was conditional upon Israel's national repentance, repentance with regards to their long history of disobedience and unbelief – Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

a). We had seen how through the actions of the nation's religious leaders, both the King and His offered Kingdom were rejected - Mt 12:23 *And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" 24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*

b). And as a result of this rejection the heavenly realm of the Kingdom was taken from Israel and was promised to a new nation who would produce fruit in relation to the Kingdom where Israel had failed to do so - Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God [the Kingdom of the Heavens] will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."*

c). This new nation would be the Church, a completely new creation in Christ, which would come into existence following the Lord's death and resurrection. This new creation, rather than being the physical descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, would be the spiritual descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob as a result of their positional standing in Christ by faith - Ga 3:29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

d). We had seen in the symbolism of Christ leaving the house the setting aside of the nation of Israel with regards to the heavenly realm of the Kingdom and His going to the sea symbolizing the offer of this realm of the Kingdom to the Church – those who would predominantly come from the Gentile nations over the course of this dispensation.

e). We had seen then that this parable is given for those who would be Christians, the eternally redeemed, as only those in the household of God would be in a position to receive an inheritance, and it was given, as with the rest of the parables, before this group had come into existence.

f). We had seen that the Lord Jesus Christ has ‘sown’ Christians out in the world for the purpose of producing fruit based on their receiving the word of the Kingdom - Mt 13:18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom,*

g). And how in our parable there are four locations in which Christians will find themselves – by the wayside, on stony places, among the thorns and on good ground all determined by their response to hearing the word of the Kingdom.

h). Our first three locations symbolize no fruit production for these Christians whatsoever, as a result of their choices, through the action of the enemy in their lives. And Satan’s purpose in his actions is to stop Christians from producing fruit – fruit which if produced would give Christians a position with Christ in the coming Kingdom when Satan and his fallen angels are overthrown.

i). This is an ongoing and continuous action of Satan that is present even amongst us in this place today.

j). And so we come to the fourth and last location – those sown on good ground - Mt 13:23 *"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word [of the Kingdom] and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

k). Despite Satan’s best efforts there are those who hear the word of the Kingdom, understand it and choose to act upon it, thereby overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil and begin producing fruit after various amounts.

l). This however, is not the conclusion of the matter. For those ‘sown’ by the wayside, on stony places and among thorns, their failure to produce fruit no longer makes them a threat to Satan and his present system of rulership. Those on good ground, who begin producing fruit, who are looking to the prize, are clearly a very great threat to him. And so his efforts, with respect to this group, are to stop them in the midst of their fruit production.

m). Satan’s actions against this group of fruit producing Christians is the subject of our next three parables – Parables that prophetically cover the entire history of the Church over the past 2000 years.

n). And so, in the parable of the wheat and the tares we see the first facet of the picture of Satan’s attack against fruit producing Christians.

o). So let’s read the parable and then look at the Lord’s explanation of it –

2). Mt 13:24 ¶ *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26 "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in*

your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'

29 "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Mt 13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

3). Now let's be absolutely clear as to what we are looking at when we study this parable.

a). We will notice that Jesus begins the parable with the phrase 'The Kingdom of heaven is like' – and although this is a verbatim translation of the original Greek words it does not convey Christ's intent in speaking them; this rather is given through the Greek grammatical structure of these words.

b). A more accurate translation to help us more fully understand what is intended here would be, 'the Kingdom of the heavens has become like'. And although this is much more accurate it is still not entirely exact.

c). Now, we need to understand that 'the Kingdom of the heavens' is a realm that occupies a particular space, in much the same way as Kenya and the USA and the UK have a geographical location. And specifically this realm, this location has to do with rulership over the earth - Da 4:26.....*the heavens* [the kingdom of the heavens] *do rule*.

d). And we know that at the present time this heavenly realm, this particular location is occupied by Satan and his fallen angels as they continue to rule over the present world system - Eph 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

e). 1Jo 5:19 *We know that we are of God, and the whole world [age] lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

f). And as such we would realize that this realm, this particular location itself does not change – in the same way as the physical location of the USA does not change. Now, we are looking forward to the time when there will be a change in the occupancy within this realm when Christ and His co-heirs take control, but the realm, the location itself remains the same.

g). When John, Jesus and then the twelve brought the message we have already seen in - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* [Lit. 'has drawn near'] – clearly the realm itself, the actual location had not physically come any closer, and nor could it – but the prospect of Israel moving into and occupying that realm based on national repentance had drawn near, it was at hand.

h). We can see then that the realm, the location itself does not change only certain things about the realm can change. So when Jesus states at the beginning of the parable of the wheat and the tares that, 'the Kingdom of the heavens has become like', He is talking about something other than the actual Kingdom, the actual location itself.

i). And fortunately for us scripture leaves us in no doubt as to what He is talking about. At both the beginning and the end of the seven parables in Matthew Chapter 13 reference is made to one particular thing - Mt 13:19 *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom,*

j). Mt 13:52 *Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."*

k). Both our scriptures here refer specifically to the word of the Kingdom – the message pertaining to Christian faithfulness during the present dispensation for the purpose of producing fruit, thereby attaining a position as a coheir with Christ, in the realm of the Kingdom of the heavens in the age to come. In other words the word of the Kingdom is a message about the realm presently occupied by Satan and his fallen angels, the realm that will, in the age to come, be occupied by Christ and His coheirs.

l). So it is not the realm, the location, of the Kingdom of the heavens that has become like, this would, as we have seen, be impossible. Rather it is the proclamation and the offer, the message, of the Kingdom of the heavens [the word of the Kingdom], referred to at the beginning and the end of these parables which has become like. And so we could more correctly translate the opening of the parable of the wheat and the tares like this – Mt 13:24 ¶ *Another parable He put*

forth to them, saying: "The proclamation and the offer of the Kingdom of the heavens has become like a man who sowed good seed in his field;

m). And it has become like, 'the proclamation and the offer of the Kingdom of the heavens', with regard to the fourth group from the parable of the sower, those who are producing fruit – And it, 'the proclamation and the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens', has become like for the purpose of stopping their fruit production.

4). Those producing fruit in the fourth section of the parable of the sower are exactly the same as those referred to in the parable of the wheat and the tares as 'the sons of the Kingdom'.

a). Although Christians are awaiting their adoption as sons at a time yet future - Eph 1:5 *having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

b). Those who continue to produce fruit will find themselves in that position in the age to come. It would be the same thought that we find in - Ro 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

c). And the word 'sons' is used to draw our attention to rulership as only sons can rule within the Kingdom of the heavens and only those producing fruit will have a position of rulership, will be adopted as firstborn sons, within that coming Kingdom.

5). And what we see in our parable is that in amongst the wheat, 'the sons of the Kingdom', those producing fruit, have been sown the tares, 'the sons of the wicked one' – sown into the same field by the devil.

a). Tares = Greek – 'zizanian' = false wheat – In the natural the tares as they grow look just like the wheat but are not wheat and would finally be distinguished from the wheat by their lack of grain, their fruitlessness at the time of harvest.

b). As with the natural, so with the spiritual. Those sown amongst the sons of the Kingdom look like them, but are not them, because they produce no fruit. And note also that they appear once a crop is produced - Mt 13:26 *"But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.*

c). And the tares appear for one reason only, to bring a halt to the fruit production.

d). Now here is the really shocking thing – because the tares are indistinguishable from the wheat and they are sown amongst the wheat and are gathered together at the same time as the wheat, at the time of the harvest – it becomes abundantly clear that the tares are Christians and cannot possibly be the lost as some would teach. And this is exactly what scripture teaches us.

e) Ro 14:10b...*For we shall all [all eternally saved individuals from throughout this dispensation] stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

f). And this is exactly what is pictured for us in the Book of Revelation where the complete church, symbolized in seven golden lampstands, is seen in the presence of Christ as Judge - Re 1:12 *Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 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. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 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.*

g). And then 1000 years after the events seen here in Revelation Chapter 1 we find the eternally lost from all generations appearing in Judgment at the Great White Throne - Re 20:11 ¶ *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

6). And so the question we would immediately want to ask is, ‘How can those who are Christians be designated as, “sons of the wicked one”?’

a). Well really the answer is very simple – it is their actions that align them with the wicked one rather than with God. They are ‘sons of the wicked one’ by association.

b). We can see this very clearly through that which the Lord says to the scribes and Pharisees during His earthly ministry, recorded here in - Joh 8:43 *"Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.*

c). Now let's remember that these religious leaders addressed here are eternally redeemed through God's provision for sin at this time through the death and shed blood of the Passover lambs. And clearly the devil cannot possibly be their literal father. But what we see is that their desires, coming out of their carnal nature, align them with Satan's desires thereby making them closer in association with Satan than with the God they professed to serve.

d). A very similar thing can be seen with regards to Peter - Mt 16:23 *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

e). Here in our scripture we see the Lord turning and speaking directly to Peter, His disciple, and He address him, Peter as Satan – 'Get behind Me Satan'. Now quite obviously Peter isn't Satan – Peter is Peter – but in his actions here, according to the Lord's own comment, Peter becomes as Satan. And what is it that brings about this rebuke? It is as the Lord says – 'you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men'. In both instances then it is setting aside the Word of God in favor of carnal desire that results in this association with Satan.

f). And it may be sobering for us to realize that through our own actions we may have a closer association with the enemy of our soul than with the One who died to deliver us from his clutches.

g). So what can we learn here from these examples and from the evidence of the parable of the tares? Well simply, that there are Christians, who through their actions attempt to stop other Christians producing fruit for the Kingdom, thereby aligning themselves with the desire of the wicked one. And in this sense they are 'the sons of the wicked one' and he has 'sown' them.

h). The actions of those we could describe as tares within our present time, for the most part, are no more premeditated than Peter's, but the consequence is just the same.

7). So who are the tares? Well again scripture is its own commentary so that we don't need to speculate. If we go back to Christ's first coming where this same message, the word of the Kingdom, was being proclaimed. And this same message and the Messenger were being attacked and rejected, resulting in Israel being described as a fruitless fig tree, we will find our answer. It was the religious leaders.

a). In John Chapter 8 we saw Israel's religious leaders in view – let's just review the scripture once more - Joh 8:43 *"Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When*

he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.

b). And what is said here is perfectly consistent with what Jesus says about them elsewhere with respect to the Kingdom of the heavens - Mt 23:13 ¶ *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.*

c). The scribes, and particularly the Pharisees who were the largest religious faction of their day, who sat in Moses seat – the very ones who had the responsibility to be teaching the word of the Kingdom to the people in readiness for their Messiah, were the very ones who through their actions were going to make it impossible for themselves and the rest of Israel to whom the Kingdom was offered, to enter in.

d). And so, if we bring this example over into this dispensation we will inevitably see that which was true 2000 years ago in relation to the offer of the Kingdom of the heavens to Israel, is also true today with regards to the church. It will for the most part be Christian religious leaders who are pictured by the tares. These are the ones who have the greatest influence on the members of the churches, and it really makes no difference which denomination or strand of Christianity we are talking about, it will be these leaders who will obstruct, contradict and reject the proclamation and offer of the Kingdom of the heavens. This even goes so far in some cases as to describe the word of the Kingdom as cultic and even Satanic – giving an even more uncomfortable parallel with Christ's earthly ministry.

e). Many of us here have firsthand experience of this very thing, even to the extent of being put out of our churches because of studying the word of the Kingdom.

f). And we should also realize that those who come under the influence of the religious leaders have also become part of the problem - Mt 23:15 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell [Gehenna] as yourselves.*

g). And so for all of us who are church leaders, I hope we might grasp the seriousness of the responsibility we have been given and that we may have Godly fear with regards to the account we will give of our actions with respect to those entrusted into our care. Those very ones to whom the Kingdom of the heavens is on offer.

8). It should be obvious to us I think just how important it is for us all to study so that scripture can interpret itself – whatever we may think about the meaning of scripture is of no importance whatsoever – the only thing that matters is what does the scripture say about itself? Any lack of diligence in this area could put us at serious risk. We need to make sure that we have the foundations of scripture firmly cemented into place so that we may build on them correctly. We need to grasp the big picture of scripture so that we may remain steadfast in the faith. Only in this way will we be able to overcome our enemy - 1Pe 5:8 ¶ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith,*

Resisting him, steadfast in the faith is not an option, but an absolute necessity. And getting to the place of steadfastness is worth any and every sacrifice, realizing that we will have to overcome the first 3 parts of the parable of the Sower and the tares as we move in that direction.

a). I would also caution us all to be careful who we listen to, what we watch and what we read – just because it has the name ‘Christian’ attached to it does not mean that it is automatically good. It may well be more mindful of the things of man than the things of God.

9). There is one line in this parable that may be particularly troubling for us – Mt 13:25 *"but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.*

a). And one phrase within that line, ‘but while men slept’.

b). This might remind us of the night of the Lord’s betrayal - Mt 26:40 *Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

c). And here in the symbolism of sleeping we might see the idea of complacency or carelessness. Rather than keeping focused, we might become casual and let our guard down.

d). We need to watch and we need to pray and keep our attention on the part of the field in which the Lord has placed us, and the best way to maintain focus is to stay in the word and to gather together with other Kingdom seeking Christians to encourage one another to love and good works, and so much more as we see the Day approaching.

e). Some insight into this is given in this scripture from - Pr 20:13 ¶ *Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; Open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with bread.*

f). If we were to love sleep, in the sense of being complacent, then we may well expect to find ourselves in a place of poverty with regards to the coming Kingdom. If however we were to open our eyes, be steadfast and focused then the promise is that we will be satisfied with bread – the bread of life, the word of God; and particularly within the context of our parables – the word of the Kingdom.

g). And then we have this admonition in - 1Th 5:6 ¶ *Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*

10). So what is to be done about the tares? Exactly what the scripture tells us to do – leave them alone - Mt 13:28 *"He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 'Let both grow together until the harvest,*

a). Simply then, those religious leaders who actively oppose the word of the Kingdom, and those individual Christians who do the same are just to be ignored. We do not need to debate with them, get into arguments with them or spend hours writing to them. Just leave them alone.

b). According to the Lord's explanation of the parable the tares will be taken care of at the end of the age through the ministry of angels - Mt 13:39 *"The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

c). This again is another picture of the Judgment Seat of Christ and the events that follow it, with a clear separation being made within the ranks of the Christians appearing there. Those Christians who offend the Lord and practice lawlessness will be separated from the righteous and a striking contrast is made with regards to the outcome for each group. The lawless will be thrown into the furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth and the righteous will shine forth as the sun.

d). It is of course uncomfortable for us to realize that we are dealing with Christians here, but this should not really be surprising for us.

e). We have already seen in the parable of the sower that not all Christians will bring forth fruit with respect to the Kingdom. And barrenness in Christians as it was with Israel, will result in exclusion from the Kingdom.

f). But what we should remember most particularly at this point is that entry into or exclusion from the Kingdom of the heavens has absolutely nothing to do with eternal salvation. Those Christians not producing fruit in the parable of the sower, as with the tares, as with Israel at Christ's first coming will find themselves separated from the Kingdom of the heavens for the duration of the Millennial Kingdom only. Beyond that, at the end of the Kingdom age the situation becomes entirely different.

g). We can see this in Christ's words to the scribes and Pharisees in – Mt 12:32 *"Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*

h). Speaking against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in this age, the period of time that extends from Adam to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. Or in the age to come – the Kingdom age itself. But beyond that? Certainly it is forgiven as sin with respect to what we call eternity is already dealt with and eternal salvation is an absolute that can never be lost.

i). We can also see this in another picture of the Judgment Seat of Christ given in - 1Co 3:11 ¶ *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

j). Those Christians pictured here whose works are burned in the fire [those pictured as fruitless in the parable of the Sower and as tares in the parable of the wheat and the tares] suffer loss, but they are saved, saved unto eternity, yet so as through fire.

k). It is as a result of the work of the tares because of what we will see in our next two parables that the clear teaching of scripture with regards to judgment and separation has become at best cloudy and at worst done away with within the teaching of the churches of the land.

l). Just think about this for a moment - Joh 15:6 *"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

m). And this - Mt 15:13 *But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."*

n). And this - Mt 7:21 ¶ *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"*

o). This of course presents us with the negative side of the matter. For those Christians though who do take to heart the word of the Kingdom, do overcome the world, the flesh and the devil and produce fruit there is the glorious promise that we have seen at the end of our parable - *"Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!* These will be commended and exalted and receive a position of rulership within the Millennial Kingdom of Christ as a coheir with Him and will rule with Him over the earth during that time.

p). These are the ones whose work will remain when tested by fire and receive a reward – Col 3:24 *knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.*

q). These are the ones who through their faithful obedience will receive the crown of righteousness - 2Ti 4:7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

r). These are the ones who will receive the ‘so great a salvation’ talked of in the Book of Hebrews – the greatest, most superlative, most incredible salvation that God could give to redeemed man – the salvation of the soul –

1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 ¶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with*

joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.