

Study Series 13a: Walking Worthy **BEFORE** the End of the Old Covenant and in the New Covenant Kingdom (Ed Stevens)

I. HOW did they walk worthy? Lifestyle of the Pre-70 saints:

II. WHY did they walk worthy? What motivated them to live so holy and endure all things faithfully and patiently? It was their expectations, worldview, and afterlife hope:

- A. **Gospel proclamation** reasons (great commission) good testimony – adorn gospel.
- B. **Kingdom-building** reasons (worthy to inherit the Kingdom) (some uniqueness to the first century saints here, but it still applies to our Kingdom expansion efforts after AD 70).
 - 1. The saints had a great reward to inherit, experience, and enter into at the *Parousia*.
 - 2. But the Apostles had an even greater reward awaiting them (special provision) in view of their greater sacrifices and suffering for the establishment of the Kingdom.
- C. **Persecution** reasons (godly discipline was required to fortify them to endure persecution).
- D. **Hardship** imposed by the Changing of the World Order (Present Distress).
- E. **Eschatological** reasons: (once for all, never to be repeated, no longer applicable).
 - 1. Fear of punishment, judgment, and wrath and the desire to escape it.
 - 2. Hope for seeing Christ at His return and gaining the heavenly reward.

III. WHAT were their Expectations and Hope which Created their Worldview, and which Motivated and Empowered Them to Live Worthily?

IV. HOW were their expectations realized? (Nature of Fulfillment) and How does the fulfillment of their hope impact our hope and our lifestyle (See section below: **Study Series 13b Walking worthy **AFTER** the End of the Old Covenant world**)?

INTRODUCTION:

In this first section, *Walking Worthy BEFORE the End*, we will look at HOW they lived and WHY they lived that way. We will see the most important factors that shaped their worldview and motivated their worthy lifestyle. It was their expectations of a glorious experience of the *Parousia*, and their hope for an immortal afterlife in heaven afterwards, which propelled their zealous missionary work and stimulated their godly lifestyle.

We will look at some of their expectations, and examine their hope. We will note that while their experience of the *Parousia* was indeed unique to that first century generation, their afterlife hope is something that Christians of all generations share in common. We have the same hope for an eternal immortal life in heaven, and we share their same vulnerability to persecution and the socio-politico-economic pressures of living in a world that hates God and rebels against everything His Word teaches.

It was their holy lifestyle which empowered them to survive and thrive through the great tribulation that came upon them. And it is that same holy lifestyle that we saints today need in order to weather the storms of persecution and the difficulties of living in a world that hates Jesus and all those who follow Him.

But as we shall see in this section, the pre-70 saints had an additional layer of expectations about what they would see, hear, and experience at the *Parousia* which explains their intensity, their extreme sense of urgency, and the radical holiness of their lifestyle. While Christians of all ages are expected to live devout and holy lives, those first century Christians felt that need more intensely and urgently, not merely because they knew the *Parousia* was at hand, but even more because *they knew they needed to be spiritually strong in order to endure the great tribulation that was about to come upon them. Only a radically strong faith and holy lifestyle would prepare them and strengthen them for that ultimate challenge.* Jesus and the apostles knew that, and that is why they strongly urged those pre-70 Christians to be holy.

Let's look at how they lived in order to get the gospel proclaimed to their world while enduring the most inhumane persecution and tribulation the world has ever seen. HOW did they *walk worthy* of the Kingdom, and WHY did they live that way?

I. HOW and WHY the Pre-70 Saints Walked Worthy:

Bib. Ref.	HOW they lived	Why they lived that way
Matt. 10:5-42	<p>“Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for <i>your</i> journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; ... they will hand you over to <i>the</i> courts and scourge you in their synagogues; ... brought before governors and kings for My sake ... Brother will betray brother to death ... you will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. ... he who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me ...”</p>	<p>This means the same thing as storing up treasures in heaven rather than on earth (Matt. 6:19-20). Free from the love of money and pursuit of wealth (Matt. 6:24; 1Tim. 3:3; 6:10; Heb. 13:5). Jesus urged them to sacrifice houses, lands, property, possessions, relationships, and even their lives in order to get the great commission accomplished during the great tribulation of that generation. This kind of holy lifestyle would strengthen them spiritually in order to endure all those things that were coming upon them.</p>
Luke 14:33	<p>“So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” Let him who has property live as though he didn't. etc. Give up what they could not keep. Once the persecution started, all of those things would be taken away. Sell it now while they still could.</p>	<p>This is where Socialists and Communists get their ideology. They do not realize that this lifestyle was only for times of great distress, such as the social, political, economic, moral, ethical, and spiritual upheaval at the End of the Age, NOT for the normal peaceful times of the Eternal Kingdom.</p>
Luke 14:26, 32; Matt. 12:48-50; Gal. 6:10	<p>“Who is my mother and who are my brothers? ... Whoever does the will of My Father is my brother, sister and mother. If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”</p>	<p>This detachment from certain relationships in limited ways was for the advancement of the Kingdom. They did not neglect their physical families, but rather added new even more important spiritual fellowship with fellow Christians. Paul told the Galatians to “do good to all people, especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Gal. 6:10).</p>
Matt. 5-7; Matt. 6:19-21, 24-34, esp. <u>Matt. 6:33</u>	<p>Sermon on the Mount: Jesus gave many principles to guide them toward "life indeed" (eternal life in heaven), and said not to be anxious about food, clothes, and shelter, and noted that if we seek His Kingdom and righteousness as our top priority, all the rest of our needs will be supplied.</p>	<p>Jesus gave all that instruction not only for their life during the transition period, but also for life in the Kingdom after it arrived. And since it arrived at the <i>Parousia</i>, that instruction directly and fully applies to us today. It is always right to seek the Kingdom first, and trust God to supply all of our needs.</p>

<p>Matt. 9:15</p>	<p>And Jesus said to them, “The attendants of the groom cannot mourn as long as the groom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”</p> <p><i>Fasting was another part of their sanctification which fortified them spiritually to endure the coming tribulation. They gave up food and other pleasures in order to preach the gospel and build the Kingdom. During the transition period (AD 30-70) the disciples also fasted as an expression of their intense longing for His return, just as Jesus taught here in Matt. 9:15.</i></p> <p>The ascetic and monastic practices (such as fasting) continued into the second century and beyond. We have to wonder why they did not notice the <i>Parousia</i> and stop their fasting for eschatological reasons.</p>	<p>The Essenes and the Pharisees both fasted at least twice a week. But they did it for different reasons than the Christians (i.e., “to be seen by men” Matt. 6:18). Both the <i>Didache</i> and the <i>Epistle of Barnabas</i> urged saints to fast. <i>Christians deprived themselves of earthly things in order to focus on spiritual things.</i> Fasting helped them intensify their devotion to Christ, and express their longing for His return. They fixed their hope completely on the grace that was about to be brought to them at the <i>Parousia</i>. We would have expected this fasting for eschatological reasons to cease after AD 70, but for some strange reason it did not. They failed to realize that the <i>Parousia</i> occurred, and thus continued their fasting in anticipation of it. But even though that eschatological reason for fasting no longer applies to us today, we still need to regularly fast (abstain) from worldly things and strengthen our devotion to Christ.</p>
<p>*Matt. 19:21; <u>Mark 10:21</u>; <u>Luke 12:32-36</u>; * Luke 18:22; 1 Tim 6:17-19 * Same parallel as Mark 10:21</p>	<p>Sell property and give it to the poor, or to the apostles for redistribution to the needy in the church. They sacrificed houses, lands, property, possessions, relationships, and even their lives for the sake of fulfilling the great commission and establishing the Kingdom.</p>	<p>They could not keep their property in Israel after AD 70, nor even after the Neronic persecution began in AD 64. The unbelieving Jews and Romans confiscated their property. When Christ returned they were taken to heaven, where owning property on earth was meaningless. They gave up all their earthly possessions in order to secure their spiritual treasures in heaven where nothing could corrupt it or take it away from them (Matt. 6:20; Luke 12:33). That principle applies to us today when we find ourselves in a similar situation of persecution.</p>

<p><u>Matt. 19:27-30;</u> <u>Luke 22:30;</u> <u>Rom. 8:18;</u> 1 Tim. 6:18-19</p>	<p>“... everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake ... to do good, be rich in good works, be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”</p>	<p>Jesus urged them to trade all their material things, which they could not keep, for spiritual things that they could never lose. The only kind of life that is worth pursuing “does not consist in the abundance of things possessed” (Luke 12:15).</p>
<p><u>Acts 2:43-46;</u> <u>Acts 4:32-37;</u> * Luke 12:33-34; * Matt. 19:21; * Luke 18:22; <u>Acts 11:28-29;</u> <u>2 Cor. 9:1-9;</u> cf. Barnabas in * Acts 4:36-37; Jam 1:27</p> <p>* Already read in section above.</p>	<p>Sold all their possessions and gave it to the leaders of the Church for redistribution to the poor and needy among them. Had all things in common. Had a common purse. Broke bread from house to house, took meals together.</p>	<p><i>Redistribution of wealth.</i> Socialists and Communists use verses like these to support their ideologies. The pre-70 saints believed the End was near and the Kingdom was about to arrive (Acts 14:22). That was one of the reasons why they pooled their resources. Even though that eschatological reason no longer applies, it does not relieve us of our responsibility to care for our fellow saints, especially when they suffer persecution and hardship. The church in Jerusalem was a very tight-knit, interdependent community (support group) within the city. They took care of each other, provided for the needs of their widows, orphans and needy.</p>
<p><u>Matt. 24:34, 37</u></p>	<p>Would be killed, stoned, crucified, scourged in the synagogues, persecuted from city to city. Jesus warned them about what would happen to them after He ascended.</p>	<p>This kind of persecution and tribulation forced upon them a pure and holy lifestyle that would fortify them to endure the persecution and remain faithful.</p>
<p><u>1 Thess. 5:6;</u> <u>Rom. 13:11-14</u></p>	<p>“not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober; knowing the time, it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. Night is almost gone, the day is near. ... Let us behave properly, not in carousing, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, sensuality, strife, and jealousy, but put on Christ and make no provision for the flesh and its lusts.”</p>	<p>Paul exhorted them to holiness in view of the coming test of their faith. Do not doze off or zone out – stay alert, stay awake, stay diligent, and stay focused on the task at hand (great commission and building the Kingdom). Why was it so urgent for them to do that? Because “it is already the hour to wake up, and our salvation is drawing near.” This is still a proper lifestyle, regardless of whether the End has already come.</p>

<p><u>Luke 23:28-30;</u> cf. <u>Luke 19:41-44</u></p>	<p>“But Jesus turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. “For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ “Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘cover us.’”</p>	<p>Jesus warned His disciples about what was coming in their generation. These are the very things that happened during the Neronic persecution and the Jewish-Roman war. Josephus records some similar lamentations from the Jews during the war and afterwards (<i>Wars</i> 6:205). <i>This was why it was better to remain single and childless in view of that coming tribulation.</i></p>
<p><u>Matt. 19:12;</u> <u>Acts 8:27-39;</u> cf. <u>Isa. 56:3-5</u></p>	<p>Became Eunuchs (either literally, or practically-speaking)</p>	<p>They did this for the sake of the great commission and the Kingdom. This is still good advice whenever we are under the same kind of persecution and tribulation.</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 7:1-8</u></p>	<p>“... it is good for a man not to touch a woman. ... I wish that all men were even as I myself am. ... But I say to the unmarried (divorced or previously married) and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.”</p> <p>– Widows were unencumbered and undistracted by marriage, and were more able to serve and help the apostles in their evangelistic and missionary efforts. Cooking meals, cleaning, and doing laundry was a great help to them. They probably also helped with the children, so that their parents could listen to Jesus and the apostles. Evidently some Christian women who were unmarried or widows chose to remain single in order to help advance the Kingdom in that way.</p>	<p>Notice the contrast here with Gen. 2:18 where God said “it is NOT good for the man to be alone.” Paul notes that celibacy was appropriate at that time because of the “present distress” (1Cor. 7:26). But it was not a requirement even then. And it can apply to us if we are in persecution.</p> <p>The divorced and widowed were encouraged (but not commanded) to remain single in view of the present distress, so that they would be unencumbered and undistracted in their labors to fulfill the Great Commission and establish the Kingdom. It seems that this was what <i>Mary</i> the mother of Jesus chose to do. After Joseph died, she evidently remained single and traveled with Jesus, “ministering to Him” (Matt. 27:55). There were other women who also traveled with Jesus and the disciples, especially when they were in Galilee, and also on some of His trips to Jerusalem for the festivals (Matt. 27:55; 28:5; Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:1-2; 23:27, 49, 55; 24:5-7). One of them was <i>Salome</i>, the mother of James and John. Was she a widow like Mary, or was she simply taking care of her two sons as they traveled with Jesus?</p>

<p><u>1 Cor. 9:5;</u> cf. <u>Acts 21:8-9;</u> 1 Cor. 7:8, 26-40</p>	<p>“Refrain from marriage and/or having children.”</p> <p>Voluntary celibacy for the sake of accomplishing the great commission and establishing the Kingdom.</p>	<p>There is no evidence that Peter ever had children with his wife. Paul, Barnabas, Mark, Timothy, Titus, and many others evidently did not marry. However, Philip was married and had 4 virgin daughters (Acts 21:8-9).</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 7:17-24;</u> and * 7:28-40</p> <p>* See sections below.</p>	<p>“Was any man called <i>when</i> circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised ... called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised. ... Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that.”</p>	<p>Changes to their social status or relationship to the Jewish religious establishment would only bring more distractions, hardship and persecution during that present distress, and even more so when the great tribulation arrived (with its intense persecution and the birth pains of the new world that were associated with it).</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 7:26-28;</u> <u>Matt. 24:19-21;</u> <u>Luke 21:20-23</u> *<u>Luke 23:28-30;</u></p> <p>* Already read in section above.</p>	<p>“It is good for a man to remain as he is. ... But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Those who marry and have children will “have trouble (tribulation) in this life,”</p> <p>And Paul was trying to spare them from that. Jesus prepared His disciples for this lifestyle when He noted that fleeing from Judea would force even greater hardships on women and children, especially women who were pregnant or had nursing infants.</p>	<p>This is good advice in view of the present distress (necessity, constraint, pressure). Paul is only reiterating what Jesus had already hinted at in His instructions to the disciples about their lifestyle in the transition period and during the great tribulation (see <u>Luke 23:28-30;</u> <u>Luke 21:20-23</u> and Matt. 24:19-21).</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 7:29</u></p>	<p>“Time is short.”</p> <p>The <i>Pillar New Testament Commentary</i> says that this language is similar to some of the Jewish apocalyptic writings: cf. 2Esd. 16:1-78; <u>Zech. 12:12-14;</u> <u>Jer. 16:2-9</u></p>	<p>This is like the two-minute warning in a basketball game. The last desperate attempts to win the game now ensue. Nothing motivates like a rapidly approaching end with everything at stake! Would they be found worthy at the end? The remaining time was getting short. Only seven more years until the Neronic persecution. This was strong motivation to finish the great commission and live holy lives, so that they would be found faithful and gain their great reward.</p>

<p><u>1 Cor. 7:29</u></p>	<p>“From now on.”</p> <p>This means "from now on until the <i>Parousia</i>." If the <i>Parousia</i> is still future, then to be consistent, futurists should be living this way! For the rest of the time from AD 57 onward until the <i>Parousia</i>, this was how they should live, especially in view of the great tribulation (Neronic persecution AD 64-66), which was only seven years away.</p>	<p>From here onwards the distress would only increase, making it necessary to detach themselves from the things of the world, and focus on building the Kingdom. These exhortations braced them for the soon-coming great tribulation. This kind of godly lifestyle strengthened them to endure that tribulation and remain faithful to the end. These exhortations can apply to Christians of all ages whenever we face the same kind of distress, persecution, economic hardship, and tribulation.</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 7:29</u></p>	<p>“... those who have wives should be as though they had none.”</p> <p>The married man should think and act like a celibate or eunuch! What would this have meant to Peter and the other apostles and the Lord's brothers who had wives (1 Cor. 9:5; Matt. 8:14)? We are not aware of any of them having children except Jude and Philip with his four virgin daughters.</p>	<p>When the persecution intensified, it seriously affected their marital relations and family-making activity. It was difficult to flee quickly with pregnant women and nursing children, and even more traumatic for the men to watch their wives and children abused and killed in front of them. So, Paul urged the married men to abstain from family-making “from now on” until the End.</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 7:30;</u> cf. <u>Jam. 5:1-5</u></p>	<p>“those who weep, as though they did not weep; those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice.”</p>	<p>Both mourning and rejoicing were restrained because of the persecution and the soon-coming tribulation.</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 7:30;</u> cf. Luke 6:20-21, 24-25 and Jam. 5:1; There is similar language in <i>2 Esdras 16</i> (OT Apocrypha) which is similarly connected with a time of judgment and national downfall.</p>	<p>“... those who buy, as though they did not possess.”</p> <p>See the various commentaries on this. This was a reversal of fortunes at the End. It would be tougher on the rich and powerful because they had so much to lose. Attachment to the world would only increase suffering. The rich Jewish aristocracy tried to maintain their wealth and positions of power, but it was not possible to do that. They clung tenaciously to their cozy relationship with Agrippa and Rome, but the Zealot rebellion forced them to lose it all.</p>	<p>Economic issues. Relates to “buying and selling.” Owning property in Israel after the Romans conquered it would not be possible. They should sell it now while they could get a fair price for it. Time was short. The apostles were exhorting Christians to detach themselves from the things of the world, because those things were about to be destroyed or taken away from them. Since they were going to lose all that stuff anyway, why keep clinging to it? This was good advice in view of the present distress and the great tribulation that was about to come, to minimize the impact.</p>

<p><u>1 Cor. 7:31</u></p>	<p>“those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it.”</p> <p>This is like Apostle Paul who used his Roman citizenship to facilitate his Kingdom-building activities, rather than using it to amass a great fortune for himself. And he used his tent-making skills to support himself and his co-workers in their mission work.</p>	<p>Limited engagement with the commercial-economic-industrial world. Only enough involvement to supply their needs. There was not enough time left before the End to take on long-term leases or mortgage obligations or start a new business. They had to focus all their energies on finishing the great commission and establishing the Kingdom. It is like harvest time on a farm. Every other activity is laid aside in order to gather in the crops before the storms destroy them. They gave up educational or occupational pursuits, and lived like they were the terminal generation (because they were)!</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 7:31</u>; cf. <u>Matt. 9:17</u>; <u>Mark 13:8</u> and <u>Rom. 8:22</u> (birth pains of the new creation)</p>	<p>“The form of this world is passing away.”</p> <p>One commentary said this language was used in reference to the pageantry of a parade where one group passed by and another took their place, or like the changing of the scenes during a drama onstage. As the old song says, "the times, they are a changing." And nothing could prevent that change from happening. God had decreed it. It was just a matter of time, and that remaining time was growing short. It was only seven years until the Neronic persecution.</p>	<p>The form (Gk. <i>schema</i>) of this world (Gk. <i>Kosmos</i> = an orderly system. This word is used for gov't, philosophy, even a <u>theological system</u>) was passing away. This schema refers to the style or fashion of this world. The old forms would not work in the new world. Jesus alluded to this when he talked about new wine bursting the <i>old wineskins</i> (<u>Matt. 9:17</u> and parallels), and the <i>birth pangs</i> of the new world that was about to be born (<u>Mark 13:8</u>). Paul said that the whole creation was groaning and suffering those birth pangs in AD 58 (<u>Rom. 8:22</u>). Things were already in the process of change. The old world order was about to be replaced by a new one. The rich wanted to keep the old forms in place, since their wealth and power came from using those forms to their advantage. But retaining those old forms was futile, and even dangerous, since it pulled them down to destruction with it. Josephus talks about the destruction of Jerusalem occurring at the "revolution of ages" or the turning from one age to another (<i>Wars</i> 6.250).</p>

1 Cor. 7:32-35

“But I want you to be **free from concern**. One who is unmarried is concerned about the **things of the Lord**, how he may **please the Lord**; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his/her spouse, and *his **interests are divided***. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. This I say **for your own benefit**; not to **put a restraint** upon you, but to promote **what is appropriate** and *to secure **undistracted devotion** to the Lord.*”

Paul wanted them to be “**free from the cares of this world**” so that they could more easily focus (**undistracted**) on the things of the Lord and be pleasing to Him. He wanted them to be holy in both body and spirit, and live **appropriately** in view of the *present distress* that they were under. Paul says this not to put undue restrictions on them, but rather to help single Christians **stay free of the concerns and distractions of married and family life, so that they could more easily focus on preaching the gospel and building His Kingdom.**

The **Neronic persecution** was coming soon, and it would be a **terrifying test** of their faith. Their faith and hope needed to be as strong as possible before that test came. This lifestyle would strengthen them spiritually and enable them to endure it. During the Neronic persecution it was tough on married men to watch their wives and children tortured and killed. And fleeing from the persecution was extremely difficult with women and children. Plus, feeding and caring for a family did not leave much time or ability to evangelize. *Since time was short, and the persecution was heating up, they needed to remain single and spend their remaining time building the Kingdom.* The cares of this world were distracting them and dividing their attention. Jesus said that they could not serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24). It was a conflict of interests. If they seek the Kingdom first, the rest of their concerns would take care of themselves. They had to make some tough choices. The things of the world could not be retained anyway. They were about to pass away. And clinging to them when they were ripped out of their hands would only injure them worse. It is better to let go now when it would not hurt as much. The tribulation was about to get much worse. It was like lifeboat survival decisions. Jettison anything that is not needed for survival. Give away what you cannot keep, in order to gain what you can never lose.

<p><u>1 Cor. 7:36-38;</u> 7:25-40</p>	<p>“But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry. But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, he will do well. So then both he who gives his own virgin <i>daughter</i> in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.”</p> <p><i>It is interesting to note that Philip followed this advice and kept his four virgin daughters single (Acts 21:9).</i></p>	<p>Letting daughters get married and start families would drastically increase their suffering not only in the present distress, but far more in the coming great tribulation. Thus, Paul recommended that single women and virgins continue to remain unmarried, and that fathers not give their virgin daughters in marriage. However, it was not an absolute requirement. The lack of self-control and the strong desires of the flesh made it difficult to remain single. In such cases it was not sinful to marry, but their marriage ran the risk of greater suffering when the tribulation came, and it limited their time for evangelism and building the Kingdom at this critical time.</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 7:39-40</u></p>	<p>“A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But in my opinion, she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.”</p> <p>Jesus prepared His disciples for this kind of lifestyle when He noted that fleeing from Jerusalem and Judea would force even greater hardships upon women and children, especially women who were pregnant or had nursing infants (Matt. 24:19-21).</p>	<p>Paul encourages widows to remain single. But if they could not resist the strong fleshly desire for married life, they could remarry, but only to a Christian. However, Paul says that widows would be “happier” (or less burdened) if they remained single, especially when the present distress intensified to full-blown tribulation. <i>The Neronic persecution would be horrible enough without having to watch their wives and children being abused and killed. It was simply not a good time to get married and start a family.</i> They needed to follow a lifestyle that would minimize the suffering, and make it easier to remain faithful and not deny the faith when trouble came.</p>
<p><u>1 Cor. 9:5</u></p>	<p>“Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?”</p>	<p>Unlike Peter and some of the other apostles, Paul chose not to marry (or remarry), so he could travel and do mission work unencumbered and undistracted, and so that his persecutors could not use his family as weapons against him to force him to deny the faith.</p>

<p><u>1 Cor. 9:6-12</u></p>	<p>“...have a right to refrain from working ... but we did not use this right so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.”</p>	<p>Even though he had the right to be fully supported in mission work, he did not always use that right when it might hinder the gospel. He worked with his own hands on numerous occasions to cover his own expenses to expedite the gospel.</p>
<p><u>Acts 14:22</u></p>	<p>“strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and <i>saying</i>, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”</p>	<p>The reason they needed to be strong in the faith was so that they could endure the coming tribulations and be found worthy of entering into the Kingdom when it arrived.</p>
<p><u>Rom. 8:18-25</u>; cf. 2 Tim. 3:1; <u>Rom. 13:11-12</u>; (time of distress; difficult times; the days are evil; the day is at hand)</p>	<p>“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us.”</p> <p>This was an eschatological motivation for living holy lives and remaining faithful even during intense hardship. Those last eight years (AD 58-66) before the End were full of persecution and tribulation. Paul refers to it as the "sufferings of this present time" and shows how his fellow saints should view those sufferings from a Christian perspective. The book of Acts shows that Paul's suffering was horrendous. And the saints were only six years away from the outbreak of the horrifying Neronic persecution. Yet Paul raises their heads and points their eyes to see the even greater glories to be gained by enduring all things and keeping the faith.</p>	<p>Keep in mind to whom Paul is writing here: the Roman Christians who would be the first to face the Neronic persecution in only six more years. Paul is not brushing off those sufferings as insignificant, but rather showing how much more glorious their rewards would be. The sufferings were intense and hard to handle, but their glorious reward at the <i>Parousia</i> would more than compensate. The glorious things they would experience at the End were infinitely greater than all of the sufferings combined. This changed their motivation from the fearful dread of suffering to an indomitable hope for an even more glorious reward. What does that tell us about the glories they would see, hear, and experience at the Parousia? It certainly would not arrive without their awareness! They would know about it, and experience those blessings in a cognitive way. Surely, they got those rewards at the <i>Parousia</i>, so why didn't they talk about it afterwards? And if they did not experience the things that they were expecting, why weren't they complaining about it afterwards? Yet all we hear from them after AD 70 is deafening silence. Why did they not talk about it?</p>

Rom. 8:19	“the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ”	They waited anxiously and eagerly for what? A revealing of who were the true sons of God! Did they get what they were longing for? Did they know they got it? Did they see their sonship revealed?
<u>Phlp. 2:12-16</u>	“ Holding fast the word of life . . .”	There are a bunch of exhortations to godly living here in view of the nearness of Christ's return (Phlp. 4:5).
<u>Heb. 10:25</u>	“ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another all the more as you see the day drawing near.”	Encouragement was essential to their endurance to the End, and meeting together with other Christians was a great place to find that encouragement.
<u>Heb. 12:14</u>	“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. ” That holy lifestyle strengthened them to endure the tribulation and thus “ see the Lord ” at His coming.	Notice the connection here between sanctification (living pure and holy lives) and seeing the Lord at His Parousia . Their heavenly rewards depended on their holy lifestyle on earth. And the greater those rewards are, the more motivation there is to be holy. Which hope would motivate them more? Going to heaven and seeing the Lord, or remaining on earth not even aware He had come?
<u>1 John 3:2-3</u>	“And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself , just as He is pure.” Purity gave them the strength to endure the present distress and the coming great tribulation.	Everyone who has this (same) hope of receiving a new immortal body and dwelling forever in heaven purifies himself. And only a great reward like this could outweigh their fear of persecution and death, and motivate them to live worthily of it. John wrote this in AD 62, a mere two years before the Neronic persecution. The persecution was already heating up. It would take a huge hope of experiencing a glorious reward to motivate them like this.
<u>Luke 14:27;</u> cf. Luke 9:23; <u>Phlp. 2:5-8</u>	“Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”	What does “carry his own cross” mean? It is following the self-denial example of Christ. Although he could have asserted His rights, he denied himself instead (Phlp. 2:5-8). This principle applies to us just as much as it did to first century saints.

<p><u>1 Pet. 1:13-16</u></p>	<p>“do not be conformed to the former lusts, but be holy in all your behavior.”</p>	<p>Peter exhorted them to abandon their former lifestyle and be holy in all of their behavior (walk worthy) by fixing their hope completely on the grace that was about to be brought to them at the <i>Parousia</i>. <i>Their fixed hope motivated their holy lifestyle.</i></p>
<p>1 Pet. 1:13; Rom. 8:19</p>	<p>fixed their hope completely on the grace that was about to be brought to them at the <i>Parousia</i> (1 Pet. 1:13), and they "waited anxiously and expectantly for it" (Rom. 8:19)?</p>	<p>They lived in expectation of experiencing the <i>Parousia</i>, and fixed their hope completely on the grace that would be brought to them then. Those expectations were a very significant factor in their motivation to live holy lives. It was not the only factor, but it was a major factor. And those first century saints desperately needed those promises of great reward to bolster their endurance in the face of such a great tribulation. Peter wanted to know what kind of reward he would get in exchange for "leaving everything behind to follow Jesus" (Matt. 19:27-29). And Jesus exceeded Peter's expectations by promising the twelve that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes. And when Paul was caught up to the third heaven and heard indescribable things, he was forever afterwards aware of the incomparable glory that was about to be revealed to them at the <i>Parousia</i>. The apostles knew the reward would be worth infinitely more than all the sufferings they would go through. That is why they fixed their hope completely on it. Their holy lives were significantly motivated by their expectations and their hope. Did they get what they were hoping for? Did they know they got it? Did they experience it in any cognitive way? Why did they not talk about it afterwards?</p>

<p><u>1 Pet. 4:1</u></p>	<p>“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”– Purified himself and become sanctified.</p>	<p>This reference to suffering in the flesh is not just referring to death, but to all forms of fleshly suffering that was inflicted on them during the persecution. That suffering had a soul-purifying and faith-strengthening effect on the saints. Prosperity tends to corrupt and weaken us spiritually, but suffering purifies and strengthens. Like the old saying, “Difficult times bring out the best in people.” Godly discipline and righteous character are formed in the crucible of suffering. No pain, no gain. The right way to respond to persecution and suffering is to cease from sin. Quit our love affair with it, and draw close to God. Suffering forces us to do that. This strengthened them to endure and overcome the suffering and death of the great tribulation (Neronic persecution).</p>
<p><u>2 Pet. 1:2-11</u></p>	<p>“He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature ... For this very reason, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, brotherly kindness, and love. ... For as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom ... will be abundantly supplied.”</p>	<p>These are the characteristics of a godly lifestyle. Notice what Peter said about their hope of entering the Kingdom at the <i>Parousia</i> and how it should motivate their behavior and their devotion to godliness. It was their diligent faith, moral excellence, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love which rendered them useful and fruitful in their Kingdom work, kept them from stumbling, and guaranteed their entrance into the eternal Kingdom when it arrived at the <i>Parousia</i>. Did they know they entered into it?</p>
<p><u>2 Pet. 3:11-13;</u> <u>Phlp. 1:10</u></p>	<p>“...what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God ... and the new heavens and earth, in which righteousness dwells.”</p>	<p>Holy conduct and godliness ... so that they would be found sincere and blameless at His Coming. This was certainly an eschatological reason to be holy, but it does not mean that we no longer need to be holy after the Kingdom arrived.</p>

II. WHY Those Pre-70 Saints Walked Worthy (Summary):

What motivated them to live holy and endure all things faithfully? It was their **expectations**, **worldview**, and **afterlife hope**. Throughout our look at those texts, we saw that their motivation was complex. It was not just eschatology which moved them toward sanctification. There were a lot of factors, most of which still apply to all Christians of all generations:

- A. **Gospel proclamation** reasons (great commission) good testimony - adorn the gospel.
- B. **Kingdom-building** reasons (worthy to inherit the Kingdom) (some uniqueness to the first century saints here, but it still applies to our Kingdom expansion efforts after AD 70).
 - 1. They had a great reward to receive, inherit, experience, and enter into at the *Parousia*.
 - 2. But the Apostles had an even greater reward awaiting them (special provision) in view of their greater sacrifices and suffering for the establishment of the Kingdom.
- C. **Persecution** reasons (godly discipline was required to fortify them to endure persecution)
- D. **Hardship** imposed by the changing of the World Order (Present Distress).
- E. **Eschatological** reasons: (once for all, never to be repeated, no longer applicable).
 - 1. Fear of punishment, judgment, and wrath and the desire to escape it.
 - 2. Hope for seeing Christ at His return and gaining the heavenly reward.

They wanted to be **found worthy at the End**, having accomplished the **great commission** and **established the Kingdom** while suffering great tribulation and hardship, and were expecting to **experience the great reward** that was promised.

III. What Kind of Reward Were They Expecting and Hoping For?

After hearing Jesus say that they were going to suffer the loss of all things, be heavily persecuted, and perhaps even killed during the coming generation, Peter and the other disciples asked Jesus what they *would they get at the End after accomplishing the great commission under such extreme tribulation?*

Matt. 19:27 Then Peter said to [Jesus], “Behold, we have **left everything** and followed You; **what then will there be for us?**”

Matt. 19:28 And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, **you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes** of Israel.

Matt. 19:29 “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will **receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.**

Luke 22:28-30 “You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may **eat and drink at My table** in My kingdom, and you will **sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes** of Israel.”

Those disciples needed a powerful reward to motivate them to endure that kind of hardship. And Jesus promised it to them. If they had even suspected that this reward would not be seen, heard, or experienced in any cognitive way, they would have backed away from Jesus. They would never have signed on to the great commission if they doubted whether there would be a significant reward at the End. Yet some preterists would have us believe that the rewards Jesus promised were merely spiritual, metaphorical, and non-experiential. I can just hear the conversation between two of the disciples after hearing Jesus promise that they would feast at His kingly table and sit on thrones at His side judging the twelve tribes of Israel:

One disciple says: "Wow, did you hear that? We are going to sit on thrones with Christ, and help Him judge the twelve tribes!" The second disciple says: "Now don't read too much into that. It is only figurative language, you know. We are not going to sit on literal thrones. We are merely going to participate in that judgment by proxy. Christ will do all the judging. We will only participate in a spiritual sense, because we are in Him positionally, relationally, and covenantally." The first disciple pipes up again: "You mean that all we are going to get for our hard work under this heavy persecution, after giving up everything and risking our lives, is merely an enhancement of our covenantal relationship with Christ, with no tangible or experiential benefits? Is that enhancement to our covenantal status going to happen without us even being aware of it?" What good is that if we do not experience it, nor even know that it occurred?"

Here are some more of their expectations:

What Did Jesus Promise? <i>What Did They Expect?</i>		
Biblical Text	Their Expectations	How Fulfilled?
<p><u>1 Pet 1:4-9, 13</u>; <u>2 Thess 1:4-11</u>; <u>Rom 8:17-23</u>; <u>2 Pet 3:11-15</u>; <u>2 John 1:8</u>; <u>2 Tim 4:6-8</u>; <u>Matt 19:28-29</u>; 1 Pet 5:4, 6, 10; 1 Thess 1:10; 2 Pet 2:9; Heb 10:35; Rev 3:10; 11:18; Luke 21:28; 21:34-36</p>	<p>They were promised relief, rescue, escape, reward, glory, exaltation, crowns, thrones, be revealed as sons of God, adoption, salvation, grace, redemption, and inheritance at the return of Christ.</p>	<p>Did they get these things? Did they KNOW they got it?</p>
<p><u>2 Thess 1:10</u>; <u>1 John 2:28 – 3:2</u>; <u>1 Thess 2:19</u>; <u>2 Cor 4:14</u>; <u>Luke 21:36</u>; <u>Col 3:4</u>; <u>Jude 24</u>; <u>Col 1:22</u>; <u>1 Pet 4:13</u>; <u>5:1-4</u>; <u>Rom 8:18-25</u>; <u>1 Thess 4:17</u>; <u>2 Pet 3:12-18</u>; <u>1 Cor 13:12</u>; Phil 2:16; 1 Pet 1:7-13; 2:12; Matt 16:28 (Mk 9:1); 1 Jn 4:17; Matt 25:1, 6-10, 21, 23; Matt 19:28-29; Luke 13:25-30; Luke 22:28-30;</p>	<p>They would actually know about His return, and see Him revealed, and not shrink away from Him, but draw near to meet with Him, glorify Him, marvel at Him, stand before Him, and have great joy in His Presence at His return. They would eat and drink with Him at His table in the Kingdom in heaven.</p>	<p>Did they experience these things at the Parousia? These were life-changing events. Life would never be the same afterwards. How could they experience all of this and keep quiet about it afterwards, especially when post-70 writers started saying the Parousia was still future?</p>
<p><u>1 Cor 15:51-54</u>; <u>2 Cor 5:1-4</u>; <u>Phil 3:21</u>; <u>1 Jn 3:2</u>; Rom 8:17-23; 1 Thess 5:23;</p>	<p>The mortal bodies of the living and remaining saints would be changed, or transformed, to be like Christ's glorious body.</p>	<p>What was this bodily change, transformation, putting on immortality, and redemption of their mortal bodies?</p>
<p><u>1 Thess 4:15-17</u>; <u>John 14:1-3</u>; <u>2 Thess 2:1</u>; <u>Matt 24:31</u>;</p>	<p>Caught up and reunited with their departed loved ones, received to Him; gathered by the angels.</p>	<p>What was this gathering by the angels, the catching up, and being received to be with Jesus where He was?</p>

CONCLUSION

- Jesus recognized their need for a clear and empowering experiential hope. He knew they would never accomplish the great commission, suffer all that persecution, and remain faithful to the End without some very high expectations of a huge reward. It does not do justice to Jesus, nor to their expectations, to suggest that they lived through those events without experiencing that reward, nor even being aware that the *Parousia*, Resurrection, and Judgment had taken place.
- They knew what was supposed to happen. Jesus and the apostles had given them plenty of signs to look for, so that they would not miss it. They “fixed their hope completely on it” (1 Pet. 1:13) and “longed for His return” and “waited anxiously, eagerly, and expectantly for it” (Rom. 8:19)?
- Those expectations were one of the things that motivated their godly lifestyle. If their expectations were fulfilled, they would have been glorifying God with great exultation (shouting from the rooftops and dancing in the streets). But if they were not fulfilled, they would have been disillusioned and complaining about it. Either way, fulfillment or not, they would have been saying something about it. *Anything but silent*. Yet, silence is all we have.
- Are Christians of every age supposed to emulate the example of those pre-70 saints? The answer is YES, especially if we find ourselves under that same kind of persecution and tribulation that they had to deal with.
- But because of the unique way in which they were to receive their rewards (*resurrection, bodily change, and rapture*), they had **even more motivation** to walk worthy than we do. *The greater the reward, the greater the motivation to live worthily of receiving it.*
- And even though those pre-70 saints received their rewards in a different way than we do, it is still the same kind of *immortal body afterlife hope* that we get. They received that hope at the *Parousia*, whereas we receive it when we die. But it is the same afterlife hope nevertheless.
- And that motivates us to live that same kind of worthy lifestyle, knowing that we have the same hope of eternal life in heaven in our new immortal bodies. Those who fail to live worthily will not receive that kind of glorious afterlife.
- This is a *worthy hope* that can firmly anchor our souls here in this life, and motivate us to live *worthily* of that far better afterlife that is waiting for us in heaven after we die.

Apostle John explained the motivating power of hope when he said, “Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him *purifies himself*, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).

And Apostle Paul took it further when he exhorted us to “Pursue after *sanctification*, without which *no one will see the Lord*” (Heb. 12:14).

- That is what *walking worthy* is all about: *purifying* and *sanctifying* ourselves! If we have the same hope that they did, it will motivate us to *walk worthy* of such a great salvation.

Sub Study: Romans 8:20-22 → The Old Creation Was About To Be "Set Free"

Note what Paul said was "about to (*mello*)" happen to the whole creation:

- Creation would **no longer be subjected to futility**, so that it finally fulfills its purpose and destiny, which was to serve and benefit the human creation (who would have dominion over it), rather than be a curse and frustration to mankind (by not serving him fully) (v. 20) (cf. Rev. 5:13)
- The creation itself will be **set free** from its slavery to corruption **into the freedom** of the glory of the children of God (to finally be all that it was designed to be) (v. 21)
- The whole creation groans and suffers the pains of **childbirth** together until now – implying that the old creation is going to **give birth** to something new (v. 22)

This would happen in connection with (or at the same time as):

"the glory that is about to be revealed to us" (v. 18) [Also see: 2 Thess. 1:7-10]

"the revealing of the sons of God" (v. 19)

"the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (v. 21)

"our adoption as sons" (v. 23)

"the redemption of our body" (v. 23)

The New Creation Was About to be "Revealed:"

I (Ed Stevens) read over a dozen commentaries on this section of Romans (8:18-25), and almost every one of them took the position that the creation referred to here is the non-human or sub-human creation, both animate and inanimate, but does not include the human or angelic creation. They note that Paul is personifying the creation here, and giving it personal characteristics, just like we see in several Old Testament texts, particularly the Psalms, where the subhuman creation is personified.

However, even though they rightly identified what this creation is, they all failed to connect the release from its subjection to futility and its liberation from its slavery to corruption with the arrival of the New Creation in Christ. Their futurist hermeneutic simply blinded them to the typological connections here. But the following texts show what Romans 8:18-25 is alluding to. The old creation was the *type* for the new creation (antitype/fulfillment).

There is a typology involved here, which was prophesied in Isaiah especially, as well as in Hebrews, 2 Peter 3, and the book of Revelation. But notice how the old creation is **restored, regenerated, refreshed, rebuilt, transformed, renewed, and reformed** into a **New Creation and New Heavens and Earth**:

Matt. 17:11 And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will **restore all things**; [cf. Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6; Matt. 3:1-12; Luke 1:16-17; 3:2-9]

Matt. 19:28 And Jesus said to **them**, "Truly I say to **you**, that **you** who have followed Me, **in the regeneration** when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, **you** also shall **sit upon twelve thrones**, judging the **twelve tribes of Israel**. [Isa. 56:3; 65:17; 66:22; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10]

Definition: "regeneration" (Greek = *palingenesia*) – literally = begin again, restart, start over, new beginning, or recreate. This is talking about the new creation after the *Parousia*. This appears as a strong allusion to the *restart of the church* on earth after the pre-70 saints were taken to heaven. It is something which happens after the *Parousia* when the twelve apostles had been received into their prepared dwelling places (John 14:3).

Mark 9:12 And He said to them, “Elijah does first come and **restore all things**. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

Acts 3:19 “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that **times of refreshing** may come from the presence of the Lord;

Acts 3:20 and that He may **send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you,**

Acts 3:21 whom heaven must receive until *the* period of **restoration of all things** about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

Acts 15:16 ‘after these things I will return, and I will **rebuild the tabernacle of David** which has fallen, and I will **rebuild its ruins**, and I will **restore it**’

Rom. 12:2 And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what **the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [i.e., righteousness]**.

2Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our **outer man is decaying**, yet our **inner man is being renewed** day by day. [Eph. 2:10-15; 3:13-16; 4:23-24]

Gal. 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creation**.

2Cor. 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a **new creature**; the **old things passed away**; behold, **new things have come**.

Eph. 2:10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus** for **good works** [i.e., the **righteousness** of the new creation], which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Eph. 2:11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” *which is* performed in the flesh by human hands —

Eph. 2:12 *remember* that you were at that time **separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel**, and **strangers to the covenants** of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Eph. 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who **formerly were far off** have been **brought near by the blood of Christ**.

Eph. 2:14 For **He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one** and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.

Eph. 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might **create the two into one new man, thus establishing peace**.

Eph. 3:9 and to bring to light what is the administration of **the mystery** which for ages has been hidden in God who **created all things**.

Eph. 4:23 and that you be **renewed in the spirit of your mind**,

Eph. 4:24 and put on the **new self**, which in *the likeness of* God has been **created** in **righteousness** and holiness of the truth.

Col. 3:10 and have put on the **new self** who is being **renewed** to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who **created** him —

Col. 3:11 a **renewal** in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

Heb. 9:10 since they *relate* only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed **until a time of reformation**.

Heb. 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of **the good things to come [or to be born/created]**, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, **not of this creation**;

James 1:18 In the exercise of His will He **brought us forth** by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of **first fruits among His creatures**.

2Pet. 3:13 But according to His promise we are looking for **new heavens and a new earth**, in which **righteousness** dwells.

[Isa. 1:26; 51:16; 54:1-14; 65:17; 66:22; Dan. 12:3; Mal. 3:3-4; Matt. 5:18-19;]

Rev. 21:1 Then I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**; for the **first heaven and the first earth passed away**, and there is no longer *any* sea.

[Isa. 51:16; 65:17; 66:22; Rev. 20:11; 1 Cor. 7:31; 1 John 2:17; 2 Pet. 3:10-13;]

Rev. 21:5 And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, **I am making all things new**.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.”

The books of **Hebrews** and **Revelation** provide a lot of support for this Old and New Creation typology, as do the OT prophets like **Isaiah**. The old creation was redeemed from its Fall, and renewed-recreated spiritually, and had a new beginning or fresh start. It is a new heavens and earth, not just a new earth or a new heaven. There is both a **heavenly aspect** of the New Creation, as well as an **earthly aspect** of it (i.e., the **visible and invisible** church or Kingdom).

As full Preterists, most of us are very familiar with looking at and understanding the spiritual and heavenly side of this subject, so what I want to do here is to delve deeper into the understanding of this passage from the perspective of the “earthly seen realm” of the reunited One eternal Kingdom.

When trying to understand this Romans 8 passage, I believe a lot of the confusion for many people, stems from not understanding the “full scope” of what “*the creation*” is that Paul is speaking about, and thus what is meant by “*the whole creation groans and labors.*” It needs to be remembered that in Genesis 1:1 that God created BOTH the heavens (unseen realm) and the earth (seen realm). When Adam and Eve sinned, it affected “ALL OF CREATION”—both the spiritual heavenly unseen realm AND the earthly seen realm. The original purpose and function of both were altered.

Included in Christ’s redemptive work would be to “**restore and reunite**” the heavenly unseen realm with the earthly seen realm into His ONE eternal Kingdom (Eph 1:10).

Part of the “full scope” I wanted to add to this topical study was to include some further understanding into the “earthly literal” aspect of both what the original earth creation was supposed to do in its service to God, and how, once it was “*delivered from the bondage*” (in Christ), it was again able to accomplish what it was made to do—bring glory to God.

An aspect of “the whole creation” to remember is the condition of “the whole creation” **before** Adam fell. Heaven (unseen realm) and Earth (seen realm) were **united**. God, a resident of the heavenly unseen realm, could walk with Adam and Eve in the earthly realm of the Kingdom in the garden in “full fellowship” – unseen and seen realm of the Kingdom united and in full harmony. There wasn’t any sin—there wasn’t any separation from the Tree of Life. Creation was all around Adam and Eve, and everything reflected God to them. Everything was just about innocence, peace, purity, and knowing God in intimacy. Adam named all the animals in the Garden, so every time He saw an animal, it reminded him of God. Every time he heard a bird sing, it reminded him about God. Every time he would smell the perfume of a

flower, it would remind him about the majesty and glory of God. The stars and moon at night would speak of the glory of God, and the Sun in the day would touch the soul as the warmth touched the skin. Nothing was hindering the full language of creation from “speaking the language” it was meant to, as everything pointed to something glorious and incredible about the Creator who created it. The creation story in Genesis chapter 1 is full of imagery of how creation speaks of the creator and His majesty and glory.

So, in the beginning before sin entered the world, everything of creation was working in harmony to draw man’s awe and give glory to God. Adam and Eve couldn’t go through their day without walking by a babbling brook, or seeing a squirrel collecting nuts, and not be reminded of how God is taking care of the flowers, and the bees, and everything, and His creation was doing what it was created to do **which was to draw man in awe to His Creator, to worship Him in glory, to give Him the glory that He deserves.** That is why we were created—to be in fellowship and relationship with God, and to give Him glory.

But once sin came, humanity became “self-centered,” and everything was “all about us now.” Adam and Eve immediately started blaming each other or blaming the serpent. Later, Cain kills Abel. And there is greed, and there is lust, and everything is shifted and altered in the world, and the whole purpose of creation— “to draw man to constantly reflect” on God, and His goodness, and give Him glory—was ruptured and corrupted.

Recall in Romans chapter 1 how Paul writes in verse 18 that *“the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”* Truth, which is supposed to draw them to God. Truth is supposed to be expressed in everything around them in creation. Creation is supposed to reflect God to them and draw them to Him. But they’re suppressing it. It isn’t that creation is not reflecting the truth and glory of God, but the ungodly are suppressing it *“in unrighteousness,” “because what may be known of God is manifest in them,”* (v. 19). They have a conscience, and they have an intellect, and they have the call from God to *“come let us reason together”* to know that He is the Creator of all that they see around them (Isa 1:18), and that they did not evolve, and that they are *“without excuse.”* Since creation, God’s eternal attributes are said to be clearly known by man, including the eternal power and the divine nature, but they *“suppress the truth.”*

A child is not born in this complete hardened state, but rather, as the passage states, they “become” futile in their thoughts. That is where the battle is—in the mind. They become hardened through a process in their lives by the things they see, and hear, and the filth that they allow into their minds. They **become** futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts are darkened. It is a process, because the thoughts become bad—therefore the hearts become hardened; the conscience becomes dull—therefore it leads them into further and further darkness.

So, reflecting on the “earthly” aspect of the whole creation, Paul is explaining that since the Fall, creation was subjected to futility, and it is metaphorically “groaning” because man has grown hard in sin and futile in their thoughts and creation has not been able to do what it was created to do—draw man to reflect upon God’s goodness and to draw us to have awe and give Him glory.

So, metaphorically, creation’s purpose was subjected to futility and had lost the ability to do what it was created to do. And when we come to Romans 8, Paul says that creation is groaning, it is in sorrow, it is in agony, and the time has come right to the verge of giving birth—a **new creation**. No matter how much (or how little) someone may understand about all of this, Paul clearly states that this was on the verge of consummation right there in the first century. Very helpful for us to remember is that there is a “seen and unseen realm” to all of this (earthly/seen and heavenly/unseen), and much was to take place in the spiritual unseen realm.

For the earthly realm on which we are focusing, as a “born-again” believer, a Christian is a “new creation” (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). A born-again Christian has “new life.” They have God dwelling in them. They have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). The unbeliever’s mind has become darkened and futile in their thoughts, but the believer’s mind has been transformed and renewed (Rom 12:2).

The believer’s mind has been transformed—they have a new mind. They have entirely new thought patterns. Romans chapter 8 gives us a simple and clear description of this. In Romans 8:5 it says, “*for those who live according to the flesh* (that is, unregenerate people; non-Christian people) *set their MINDS on the things of the flesh* (To put it simply: unsaved people have an unsaved mindset. Fleshly people think about fleshly things), *but those who live according to the Spirit* (those born-again), *the things of the Spirit.*”

A believer has a NEW MIND: Romans 8:6 *“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is LIFE and PEACE.”* They have a whole new mind—this is incredible! The Greek word here *“Froneema”* means *“mindset.”* An entirely NEW way of THINKING is what it means. Not a new brain, but a new way of thinking. As Christians they now have the Holy Spirit and think on the spiritual level and not the fleshly level.

Look at 1 Corinthians 1:30 *“But of him who are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God . . .”* Look at this—all of a sudden it says Christians have the wisdom of God! And the Psalmist declares in Psalm 92:5, *“. . . thy thoughts are very deep.”* Now, suddenly, a Christian (born-again **“new creation”**) can plunge into the deep thoughts of eternal God. They think in ways they never thought before. They are able to think receiving God’s thoughts.

1 Cor 2:11-12, *“**11** For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. **12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”*

So, a Christian has the wisdom of Christ, and they have the knowledge of God granted to them by the Holy Spirit. Look at v. 15 – *“**15** But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. **16** For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”* We have the MIND of Christ! A Christian is NOT like the natural man in v. 14—it is all foolishness to him. A Christian now has the mind of Christ—they now understand the wisdom of God—the Spirit of God brings them wisdom about God that they would otherwise never ever have. A Christian is someone who is “born-again”—a **NEW CREATION.**

Since the beginning, after God had finished creation on the sixth day, nothing new has been created—but then, in the first century, you have “born-again” man called a **new creation**. A “new creation” which had the wisdom and mind of Christ—indwelt by God Himself, now with the ability to understand creation from the way it was created, and for what purpose it was created for—to create awe in man and bring glory to God.

The visible realm of the Kingdom on earth (in the Church), was about to be reunited with the heavenly realm by Christ at His imminent *Parousia* in AD 66-70. The New Heavens and Earth would be consummated and it would grow forevermore saving souls from every nation, tribe and tongue (Isa 9:7; Eph 3:21). The “leaves of the Tree of Life” (the gospel) would bring healing to people from all nations (Rev 22:2; Ezek 47:12). The power of the gospel would change hardened sinners into “new creations,” as children in meekness.

The creation around us comes alive in power and majesty to the born-again believer. Prior to being saved one could go through life and take no knowledge or thought of a full moon, a flower blooming, the cycle of the seasons, or the song of a bird in the morning, whereas, upon new “born-again” life, all of creation becomes as “new” in its life and purpose—no longer “subjected to futility,” but now in “new meaning and life” able to bring us in awe to God where we give Him glory for His majestic creation we enjoy all around us.

The “born-again” believer’s mind is now thinking with the wisdom from God because we are a NEW CREATION, with a new heart, new spirit, and the “mind of Christ.” Recall all of those verses above which tell us what happens to someone when they’re regenerated and have the Spirit of God living within them. Creation is now able to accomplish what it had been groaning for since the Fall—to draw a regenerated heart in awe to God to bring Him glory.

God had created everything around us to bring us in awe to Him. To draw us to Him in awe of seeing how all these creatures work together in an amazing eco-system designed by the Great Designer. Now a born-again believer can be in awe at a sunrise, the changing seasons, the birth-death cycle of so many things, such as a seed sprouting on the forest floor that had laid dormant for years waiting for the death of other growth around it allowing for space to clear for its new life to begin, and countless things each day, month and year that we will now see “anew” in creation around us that we wonder how we did not see before.

Paul was saying they were living on the cusp of a new birth. The “new creation” would not be a “literal” recreating of better bugs and snakes, but was metaphorical, typological, and spiritual, and would have **both** an earthly and heavenly aspect. Man himself was literally, spiritually a “NEW CREATION” upon being born again. Physical creation would have its purpose **restored, regenerated, refreshed, rebuilt, transformed, and renewed** in its ability to bring the “born-again” believer in awe to give glory to its Creator. And at Christ’s imminent *Parousia* all of those remaining living believers would be raptured into their own individual, new, perfect, immortal, spiritual bodies and enter the New Heavens to live with God forevermore in the heavenly unseen realm of the reunited Kingdom. All subsequent born-again believers after the *Parousia* populate the seen realm of the “forever increasing” (Isa. 9:7) consummated reunited “One Kingdom.” Forevermore, when each believer takes their last breath in this physical realm of the Kingdom they immediately step into the unseen realm of the reunited Kingdom and receive their individual, perfect, immortal, spiritual body, as Christ has, which is able to dwell in the heavenly spiritual Kingdom as the angels and all the other individual believers currently are.

At the *Parousia* in AD 66-70 the New Heavens and Earth eternal Kingdom was fully consummated. From then on, every believer who physically dies leaves this earthly realm (in the Church) of the Kingdom, and steps right into the unseen heavenly realm of the Kingdom. There is no longer the waiting place of *Hades/Sheol*—the final resurrection took place at the *Parousia*. The born-again believer enters into the heavenly realm where there are no more tears, no more sorrow, no more dying.

For a born-again believer, they have the wisdom of God and mind of Christ and the Spirit of God indwelling them to enable their “new man” to understand the earthly physical aspects of the NEW CREATION and NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH, as well as the Heavenly aspects of Christ returning with His Kingdom in the heavenly realm at the *Parousia*, which had been cleaned out and access barred to Satan, the demonic beings, and anything unclean.

Will we understand it all while living life in the earthly realm of the Kingdom? No. But once we leave this world and go to heaven we will have all of eternity to be in awe as we grow in understanding of the great depths and riches of the majesty and holiness of YHWY and His glorious redemptive history.

Study Series 13b: Walking Worthy **AFTER** the End of the Old Covenant and in the New Covenant Kingdom

The pre-70 saints walked worthy of the great reward they were expecting to receive at the *Parousia*. They lived holy lives for many reasons, some of which apply to us today. But the reason they were so urgent and extreme about it was the approaching great tribulation which would severely test their faith. They needed to live holy lives in order to endure that persecution. And they also knew there was a great reward for them after that persecution ran its course. So, there was double incentive for them to live worthily of the Kingdom which was about to come within their generation.

This part of our Study Series lesson will apply the biblical principles to us, and show how we are supposed to live in the Kingdom now after it arrived in AD 70. One of the biblical texts which establish this theme is 1 Thess. 2:12. I am going to read that text out of the New American Standard version. Read along with me and make sure I read it accurately: Apostle Paul exhorted the saints in Thessalonica to “so that you would **walk in a manner worthy** of the God who calls you into His own **Kingdom** and glory [but only until the Kingdom arrives. After that, you will no longer have to walk in a worthy manner.]” (1 Thess. 2:12).

You noticed that I added something in there. Paul obviously did not intend for them to only walk in a worthy manner up until the arrival of the Kingdom, and then cease living that way after the Kingdom came! Paul is saying that this worthy lifestyle is not only appropriate **before** the Kingdom arrives, but also for our life in the Kingdom **after** it arrives! In order to show that this is what Paul meant, we will look at what Jesus and the apostles taught about the Kingdom and our life in it **AFTER** it arrived. The Old Testament prophet Daniel is a good place to start:

Daniel Predicted the Eternal Kingdom:

Dan. 2:34-35 “...**a stone was cut out without hands**, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. ... Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue **became a great mountain and filled the whole earth**.”

Dan. 2:40-43 “Then there will be a fourth **kingdom** as strong as iron ... it will be a divided **kingdom**... inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay ... some of the **kingdom** will be strong and part of it will be brittle ... they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.

Dan. 2:44 “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a **kingdom** which will **never be destroyed**, and *that kingdom* will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but **it will itself endure forever**.

Dan. 2:45 “Inasmuch as you saw that **a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands** and that **it crushed the iron**, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place after this [i.e., *at the end of days*, cf. Dan. 2:28-29]; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

Several things to note here in Daniel 2:34-45:

- This new eternal Kingdom would be set up in the days of the *fourth empire*, which is referring to the Roman Empire.
- The small stone was cut out without human hands, implying that it was *all God's doing*, and not by human military or political efforts.
- The small stone was cut out of "THE *mountain*" (2:45), which seems to be referring to the southern kingdom of Judah or David's dynasty. That was the *mountain* of the house of Yahweh (cf. Isa. 2:2; Mic. 4:1; 5:2). It was a small stone from that mountain, and it became the spiritual re-creation or restoration of that great mountain out of which it came, and the fulfillment of all the prophecies given to David about his dynasty.
- It started out as a real small stone, but became a great mountain.
- This Kingdom was destined to crush all the other kingdoms (spiritually).
- It will endure forever. It did not end in AD 70, but rather it had only just begun at that time. It was taken away from the Jews and given back to Yahweh to whom it belonged.

When Did the Eternal Kingdom Arrive?

John the Baptist, Jesus, and His disciples all announced that the arrival of **the Kingdom was at hand**(Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:15; Matt. 10:7). Jesus even claimed that the Kingdom had already “come upon them” (Matt. 12:28) in a provisional or proleptic sense during His earthly ministry and through the work of the apostles (Matt. 16:19), but it was still clear from what Jesus and the apostles said about it that it did not fully **come in power** (Mark 9:1; Matt. 16:28) until the *Parousia*, when it was **taken away from the Jews** (Matt. 21:43, 8:11-12; Luke 13:22-29) and **given back to God** (1 Cor. 15:25-28), so that He could give it to the **new nation of true spiritual Israel** (Matt. 21:43, 8:11-12; Luke 13:22-29).

After the crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea was still “waiting for the Kingdom of God” to arrive (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51). During His post-resurrection appearances, Jesus was still instructing them about the **coming** Kingdom (Acts 1:3), and at the ascension the disciples asked Jesus if the Kingdom was going to be restored to Israel at this time (Acts 1:6). During his first missionary journey (AD 45-49), Paul implied that the Kingdom was **still future** when he said that "through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22; 2 Thess. 1:5).

In one of His parables, Jesus described the nobleman who went to a far country to receive a Kingdom (Luke 19:11-15). Upon his return, he destroyed all of the rebellious subjects who did not want him to reign over them (Luke 19:27). It is clear from the context that Jesus is alluding to His ascension and return. *He ascended to receive the Kingdom, and then returned to reign over it.* Jesus also explains in His Olivet Discourse that **when they saw all the end time events happening, they would be able to "recognize that the Kingdom of God is near"** (Luke 21:31). That clearly places the arrival of the Kingdom at the End of the Age when Christ returned.

During His **transition period reign** (AD 30-70), which was His millennial reign (1 Cor.15:25) or His provisional Kingdom, Christ was putting down His enemies and preparing to take the kingdom away from them (1 Cor. 15:25-28). **All the enemies were finally crushed** by the time Jerusalem was destroyed (Luke 19:27; 20:43), and Jesus took that kingdom away from them and gave it back to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28), and then **sat down on the throne next to Him to reign with Him forever** over the eternal Kingdom (Rev. 5:6, 13; 6:16; 7:9–10,17; 11:15; 22:1, 3).

Jesus and the Apostles taught that the Eternal Kingdom would not come in power until the *Parousia* (Mark 9:1; Matt. 16:27-28). Apostle Paul alludes to this same idea when he wrote to Timothy (AD 63-64), saying that Christ was about to judge the living and dead at His appearing with the Kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1; cf. Matt. 25:31). Paul knew that Christ was already **reigning in a provisional sense** during that transition period, but that there were some enemies that had to be put down first before His **eternal reign** with the Father was **fully established**(1Cor 15:25-28)

Furthermore, after Peter listed the main moral, ethical, and spiritual virtues of the Christian life, he noted that by living this way their **entrance into the Eternal Kingdom** would be abundantly supplied (**read** 2 Pet. 1:2-11). Not only does this fix the date of the arrival of the Eternal Kingdom at the *Parousia*, but it also shows what kind of lifestyle they needed to live in order to be **worthy of entering the Kingdom**. *And if this lifestyle was needed to get them into the Kingdom, it must also be appropriate for us living in the Kingdom afterwards.*

The eternal Kingdom did not end at AD 70, but instead it just began then. It is an eternal Kingdom. It is here now, and will remain forever. We are in the earth life visible realm of that Eternal Kingdom now! Just like the Cross did not lose its applicability to us at the *Parousia*, neither did the Eternal Kingdom suddenly become irrelevant to us after it arrived.

So, we need to look at what our New Testament says about life in the Kingdom. Especially relevant in this regard are all the things that Jesus and the apostles taught about how the saints were supposed to live in the Eternal Kingdom after it arrived.

In His parables and discourses, especially here in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5 – 7, Jesus paints a spiritual picture of what life is going to be like in the Kingdom both during the Transition Period, as well as after it fully arrives. In Matthew 5:3-9 He says:

1. ‘Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.’ What does that say about life in the Kingdom? It's not going to be arrogant or proud, like life in Judaism was. It's going to be of a different nature.
2. The poor in spirit, those who humble themselves, are the ones who exhibit the true characteristic of the Kingdom.
3. Blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted, blessed are the gentle, they shall inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the peacemakers.

Do you get the impression that these are qualities or characteristics or virtues that will be characteristic only of life in the Transition Period? Is there any indication here that Jesus expects these things to come to an end and cease being a part of our lives after the Kingdom fully arrived at AD 70? Not at all. Instead, He is explicitly saying that these are the true virtues and characteristics of life in the Kingdom, both during the Transition Period and afterwards when the Kingdom had fully arrived. These are moral, ethical, and spiritual principles that apply to Kingdom life **both** BEFORE the *Parousia* and AFTERWARDS.

There was an overlap of ages or covenantal worlds. Paul talks about "this age" as still being present (in some sense) and "the age to come" as being "about to" arrive → 1 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 1:21; 2:7; Heb. 2:5; 6:5; 9:11, 13:14.

Notice what Jesus said in Matt. 5:10, "blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs IS the Kingdom of Heaven." Persecution was something that was characteristic of those who would inherit the Kingdom.

1. The Kingdom was reserved for the kind of people who were willing to live worthy of it.
2. In Matt. 5:21-22 Jesus said, *"You have heard that the ancients were told you shall not commit murder, whoever commits murder shall be liable to court, but I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court. Whoever says to his brother, you're good for nothing, shall be guilty enough to be cast into the fiery hell."* Notice he says over and over, "you heard that it was said, but I say to you."
3. Nowhere does He say, "but I say to you only for the transition period – but after the transition period and after the Kingdom arrived, this will no longer be applicable." What's the implication? This lifestyle is applicable forever, throughout all ages of the Kingdom, after it has arrived.

This principle is useful not only here in the Sermon on the Mount, but in all of Jesus' teaching (parables and discourses). Many of his parables were about the Kingdom. He says constantly references such as, "the Kingdom of God may be compared to a landowner, or a nobleman who went to a far country, or a sower who went out to sow." All of those parables are about the Kingdom. And they are not just about the transition period phase of the Kingdom. They are fully applicable to our lives now after the Kingdom fully arrived in AD 70.

All of that teaching that Jesus and the apostles gave to the Gentile Christians to guide them in their lives after the Kingdom arrived, now fully applies to us. They were already living by those principles in the transition period, and they apply to us even more so since the Kingdom has fully come.

- All those principles of moral, ethical, and spiritual behavior discussed in the New Testament writings, now apply to us.
- We have the same afterlife hope that those first century saints did. And we have to go through similar sufferings and persecution which forces us to purify our lives in order to be strong enough to endure faithfully.
- We have just as much reason to walk worthy of the Kingdom today, as they did in the first century.
- The New Testament writings are chock full of moral, ethical, and spiritual exhortations, all of which directly and fully apply to us.

How to Live Worthily in the Eternal Kingdom:

Most (if not all) of the parables and discourses of Jesus are talking about **what life would be like in the Kingdom when it arrived.**

Since the Eternal Kingdom has arrived, and we are living in the earth life visible realm of it, all of that teaching about life in the Kingdom fully applies to us now. Preterists do not deny that Jesus' Kingdom teaching applies during the transition period. But its applicability does not stop there. The Kingdom did not fully arrive until AD 70 when Jesus put down the rest of His enemies, especially in His defeat of Death (condemnation under sin to eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire) by the Resurrection of the Dead (1 Cor. 15:23-28)(Those departed souls who were separated from God waiting in the Hadean/Sheol realm for Christ to defeat the power of death which kept them separated from their God (Heb. 2:14-15)). So, if these teachings applied to the transitional stage of the Kingdom, then they will apply in an even greater and fuller sense once the Kingdom fully arrived in AD 70.

Everything that Jesus and the apostles taught about **how the saints were supposed to live in the Eternal Kingdom after it fully arrived applies directly to us now.** All of those moral and ethical and spiritual principles that they taught to the saints during the transition phase of the Kingdom now apply to us in the eternal phase of that Kingdom.

Apostle Paul refused to bind anything on the Gentiles that was destined to pass away at AD 70. Therefore, anything he taught to the Gentiles (unless clearly predicted to cease at the *Parousia*) was intended for the Eternal Kingdom after the *Parousia*.

What Goes and What Stays?

Some Principles That Help Us Decide What Goes and What Stays:

1. Anything mentioned by Jesus and the apostles as being a part of the coming Kingdom (Sermon on Mount & Parables). What will life in the Kingdom be like? Much (if not all) of Jesus' Kingdom teaching was focused on defining what life in the Kingdom would be like, and what was required of anyone to be allowed to enter it and dwell in it when it arrived.

The beatitudes (Matthew 5) and the virtues that are characteristic of life in the Kingdom after the Kingdom arrives. The beatitudes define the character of those who are Kingdom dwellers. They stand in stark contrast to the life of the Jews under the Law. Notice the contrast between "you have heard" versus "but I say to you."

All of the parables were about the Kingdom ("the Kingdom may be compared to"). All the apostles gave a lot of teaching about what life was supposed to be like in the Kingdom, and what the nature of the Kingdom would be. And they got this straight out of the OT prophets and Moses himself who constantly emphasized the spiritual nature of our relationship with God.

2. Anything given to the Gentiles by Christ and the Apostles (and by Paul especially) has to be considered applicable AFTER AD 70, unless it is specifically said to cease at the *Parousia*, or "restricted" to the transition period, such as the gifts of prophecy and tongues which included speaking and writing by inspiration (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

Since Paul said that those gifts and callings of God are *irrevocable* (Rom. 11:29), how could those gifts cease being practiced at AD 70 if the people who had those *irrevocable* gifts were still alive on earth after the Perfect arrived?

The cessation of the practice of those gifts at the *Parousia* (when the Perfect arrived) implies that all of the folks who had those *irrevocable* gifts must have been taken to heaven where those gifts were no longer needed, because of the better things that they now had in heaven (“knowing fully” and “seeing Him face to face” – 1 Cor. 13:12).

Those gifts ceased being practiced by those *irrevocably* gifted saints simply because those saints were no longer on earth to practice them. However, the gifts were not revoked, but simply replaced by the better things of “knowing fully” and “seeing face to face.”

3. Apostle Paul was the champion of Gentile liberty, so anything given by him to the Gentiles can be considered eternal, since he would not allow the Gentiles to be brought into bondage to anything that was destined to pass away at AD 70.

And anything which the apostles forbid to the Gentiles must be considered things that would not be included in the Kingdom when it arrived.

In fact, Paul says they would be under a curse (and severed from Christ) if they tried to bind upon the Gentiles anything that was destined to pass away at AD 70 (cf. Galatians and Romans).

What passed away, changed, or continued after the Transition Period?

- The Physical Types and Shadows of the Old Testament were fulfilled and converted to their spiritual realities in Christ.
- The Church passed from its building phase into the finished Temple.
- The Bride was espoused (engaged) during Transition Period, with the marriage supper at AD 70. Jesus did not abandon His bride after the AD 70 marriage. They live happily ever after raising up a godly family. We are the spiritual children of that marriage made in heaven.
- The Church (both invisible in heaven and visible on earth) is here to stay (Eph. 3:21).

The New Creation breaking into the old creation → NC Kingdom living post AD 70:

The Purpose, the Goal:

- (**Read**) Rom. 8:29, “For whom He foreknew, He also **predestined to be conformed** to the **image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

How → A **New Creation**:

- (**Read**) 2 Cor. 5:16-17, “Therefore **from now on** we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new **creature (or creation in the NKJV)**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” (NASB)
- (**Read**) Gal. 6:15, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a **new creation.**”

What is our life to be about → how are we to live:

- (**Read**) Rom. 13:11-13, “...let us walk properly, as in the day...”
- (**Read**) Rom. 14:16-17, “...for the **kingdom of God** is not “eating and drinking,” but **righteousness** and **peace** and **joy in the Holy Spirit.**”
 - Not like the Old Covenant rules and regulations (do and don’t).
- (**Read**) Gal. 5:19-23, “Now the works (fruit) of the flesh...those who practice such things will **not** inherit the **kingdom of God.** **But** the fruit of the Spirit...”

- **(Read)** Eph. 4:17-24, “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind...**that you put off**, concerning your former conduct, **the old man** which grows corrupt...be **renewed** in the spirit of **your mind**, and that you **put on the new man** which was **created** according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”
- **(Read)** Eph. 2:19-22, “Now, therefore, you (Gentiles) are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household** of God, having been built on the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief **cornerstone**, in whom the **whole building being fitted together, grows** into a **holy temple** in the Lord, in whom you are also **being built together** for a **dwelling place of God** in the Spirit.”
 - Growing spiritual temple.
- **(Read)** 1 Cor. 6:9-20, “...the unrighteous will not inherit the **kingdom of God**...and such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified...**your bodies are members of Christ...your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you**...”
 - Each member affects the whole corporate body.
- **(Read)** Rom. 6:12-19, “Therefore **do not let sin reign in your mortal body**...do not **present** your member as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but **present** yourself to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God...for just as you **presented** your members as slaves of uncleanness...**now ‘present’ your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.**”
- **(Read)** Rom. 12:1-2, 5, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by all the mercies of God, that you **present** your **bodies** a **living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your **reasonable service** (worship). And do not be conformed to this age, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God...so we, being many, are **one body in Christ**, and **individually members of one another.**”

- **(Read)** Col. 3:1-10, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above...set *your mind* on things above...for **you died...therefore put to death** your members which are on the earth...in which you yourselves once walked...put off...since you have **put off the old man** with his deeds...**put on the new man** who is **renewed in knowledge** according to the image of Him who **created** him.”
- **(Read)** 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1, “...**you (it is plural = we) are the temple** of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell **in** them and walk among them...’ Therefore...do not touch what is unclean...let us **cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**”
- **(Read)** Phil. 1:6-11, “...being **filled with the fruits of righteousness...**”
- **(Read)** Isa. 32:1, 6-8, 16-19, “Behold, a king will **reign in righteousness**, and princes will **rule in justice...**for the foolish person will speak foolishness, and **his heart will work iniquity; to practice ungodliness, to utter error against the Lord...also the schemes of the schemer are evil; he devises wicked plans to destroy the poor with lying words...but a generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand...then justice will dwell** in the wilderness...the **work of righteousness will be peace, and the effort of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.** “**My people**” will dwell in a **peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places, “though hail comes down”** on the forest, and the city is brought low in humiliation.”
- **(Read)** John 17:3, “And **this is eternal life**, that they may **know You**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

Worldview Which Empowers Us to Walk Worthy:

Isaiah 9:6-7—"of the increase of his government there will be no end." This verse states that it is going to go on increasing without ever coming to an end. It is talking about an ever expanding Kingdom. Isaiah 9:6-7 says that it never stops growing; he says it continues to increase without an end.

Humanity continues in the physical universe to spread its dominion throughout the infinite universe forever, while an "ever increasing" number of Christians keep coming into heaven throughout all generations of eternity to come. No end, forever increasing.

Ezekiel 47 – talks about a little trickle of water coming out from the temple that was built in the last days, and as it goes a thousand cubits it gets deeper and wider until after four thousand cubits it becomes a river overflowing its banks filling the whole world.

Some futurists think it will only continue to grow until it reaches perfection here on earth. But Ezekiel 47 shows that it never reaches perfection here on the earth. There will always be some stagnant backwaters where the River of Living Water does not reach. Perfection is only found in heaven.

Nevertheless, things will continue to improve here on earth, as we see it described here in Ezekiel 47, and just like we have seen over the past two thousand years. Ezekiel 47 paints a picture of the **growth** of the Kingdom as it continues to increase throughout eternity.

That Little Trickle of Living Water becomes a mighty river which purifies the nations, and heals the nations. Revelation 21 and 22 picks up on that theme and carries it further. It talks about all the nations bringing their glory into this new Kingdom and walking by its light (walking worthy) and being healed by the leaves of the Tree of Life on the banks of the River of life. (We will study more into this in **Study Series 16 Lesson 9 and 10**)

Those two texts (Ezek. 47 and Rev. 21 – 22) talk about that **continual ongoing growth of the Kingdom**, and the overwhelming of every culture on the globe by its spiritual principles, its eternally long-term optimistic worldview, and its godly lifestyle. The way Christianity changed Western Civilization and America is a good example of what it will do in every culture eventually. It may take another 2,000 years, but it's happening, it's already begun. And it is unstoppable.

However, we need to remember that history goes in cycles – two steps forward, one step back, and then two more steps forward again. We may be in one of those periods when we are forced to take one step backward, but before we know it Christianity will leap two steps forward again. There's no way Islam and Hinduism and Buddhism can ever stop the advance of the gospel in their culture. It's already working like leaven in an unstoppable way. They hate it, they resist it, and they kill Christians, but they cannot stop the eternal growth of the Kingdom.

The gospel will prevail. Christ said He would build His church and the gates of Hades would not be able to overcome it, overpower it, or stop it. If Satan could not stop it, then there's no nation on this earth that can stop it either. That Kingdom **has come**, and it will continue **growing** and **spreading throughout all of eternity**. Therefore, walk worthy of it:

- *“Rise up O men of God! Have done with lesser things. Give heart and mind and soul and strength to serve the King of Kings!”*