

The Life and Teachings of JESUS CHRIST

by Myer Pearlman

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CHAPTER III

THE YEAR OF THE GATHERING CROWDS

For a whole year JESUS pursued His work in Galilee with incessant energy, moving among the pitiable crowds that solicited His miraculous help and seizing every opportunity of pouring His words of grace and truth into the ears of the multitude or of the solitary anxious inquirer. In hundreds of homes, to whose inmates He had restored health and joy, His name must have become a household word; in thousands of minds, whose depths His preaching had stirred, He must have been cherished with gratitude and love. Wider and wider rang the echoes of His fame. For a time it seemed as if all Galilee were to become His disciples, and as if the movement so set agoing might easily roll southward, overbearing all opposition and enveloping the whole land in an enthusiasm of love for the Healer and of obedience to the teacher.

-- James Stalker

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I. THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST

This chapter deals with some of the teachings of CHRIST.

CHRIST is the Prophet, Priest, and King of humanity. As Prophet He teaches the way of GOD; as Priest He dies for mankind; as King He rules over men. CHRIST's ministry before the crucifixion was that of Prophet, bringing GOD's message to His people, and demonstrated by healing. **"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people"** (Matthew 4:23).

THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS MESSAGE

It may be summed up as follows:

1. Concerning the kingdom. Israel had been given a glorious calling, and many promises in the Old Testament assured her of a destiny equal to her calling. But for centuries she had been under foreign rule. Why was that people whose true king was Jehovah subject to the Caesar? wondered devout Israelites. The answer to this question was the hope of the kingdom of GOD, which to the Jew meant that perfectly righteous state in which GOD would rule as completely as He does in Heaven. It was this kingdom that JESUS proclaimed from the beginning of His ministry. The old order was presently to pass and give place to a new order, in which GOD's will would prevail. Though the consummation of the kingdom was in the future, it was a present power, transforming men's lives, breaking the hold of Satan and assuring them of a never-ending life in the presence of GOD. **"Behold, the kingdom of God is within you."** (Luke 17:21).

JESUS called men to prepare themselves for this kingdom by breaking with the past and following His way of life. **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of GOD is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."** (Mark 1:15).

2. Concerning the nature of GOD. Our Lord taught that GOD is a Father whose love and care extends to every creature who trusts Him. JESUS, because of His unique relationship to GOD -- because He is the very Son of GOD -- has come to reveal GOD to mankind. His life, ministry, death, and resurrection are a supreme revelation of the invisible Father.

3. Concerning salvation. Each individual is so precious in the sight of the Father, that He has sent His only begotten Son into the world to die for all. So great in value is the soul of man that the entire world would not compensate for the loss of it. Salvation depends upon a loving trust in the Father, and in the One whom He has sent into the world as His representative.

4. Concerning the way of life. This may be summed up by saying that the controlling power and motive in all of man's conduct and relations is love to GOD and love to man.

THE AUTHORITY OF HIS PREACHING

The preaching of rabbis, or scribes, consisted for the greater part, of dry quotations from the comments and legal interpretations of past teachers. But every word spoken by CHRIST carried the driving force of divine authority. A modernistic writer and ex-rabbi, Lewis Browne, admits that JESUS spoke in His own name as one invested with almost divine authority, for He did not use the expression "**Thus saith the Lord,**" as did the old prophets; and that His tone was not of a mere prophet but almost that of GOD Himself.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

After JESUS and His disciples had been preaching the nearness of the kingdom of GOD for some time, Jews began to ask, What are the laws of this kingdom? What kind of people compose it? How does one enter? What is its relation to the law of Moses?

To answer these questions, and thus set forth the foundation principles of the kingdom He was proclaiming, JESUS delivered this "keynote" address.

It is truly a revolutionary message. As one writer has said:

"On first reading you feel that it turns everything upside down, but the second time you read it, you discover that it turns everything right side up! The first time you read it, you think it is impossible; but the second time, you feel that nothing else is possible".

As a guide to study we present an outline of this discourse.

THE SCRIPTURE (Matthew 5:1-48)

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy

cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

THE SCRIPTURE, Con't: (Matthew 6:1-34)

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be

full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

THE SCRIPTURE, Con't: (Matthew 7:1-27)

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

I. MEMBERSHIP (Matthew 5:1-16).

1. The characteristics of the members of the kingdom. They are "blessed" people, their inward blessedness consisting of humility, penitence, meekness, spiritual hunger, mercifulness, heart purity, peaceableness, and willingness to suffer for righteousness' sake.
2. Their influence. To a world astray in darkness, they are as lights. To a world spiritually stale and morally corrupt, they are as salt.

II. MORALITY (Matthew 5:17-48)

The summary of this section -- and of the sermon as a whole -- is found in the words in 5:17-20. JESUS has come, not to destroy the law, but to give it its deepest meaning. Indeed, His standard of righteousness is higher than that of the popular teachers of His day. CHRIST's interpretation of the law is contrasted with that of the scribes in regard to the following matters:

1. Murder vs. anger -- 21-22
2. Adultery vs. lust -- 27-28
3. Life-long marriage vs. divorce -- vs. 32
4. Oaths vs. affirmations -- vs. 37
5. Retaliation vs. forbearance -- 38-39
6. Hatred vs. love -- 43-44

III. RIGHTEOUSNESS (Matthew 6:1-18).

Formality condemned and reality demanded in regard to --

1. Almsgiving -- 1-2
2. Fasting -- 16-18
3. Prayer -- 5-7

(All of these were found in Cornelius in Acts 10:4: "**And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.**")

IV. POSSESSIONS (6:19-34)

Members of the kingdom are to avoid --

1. Covetousness -- v. 20
2. Care -- 25-34

V. ATTITUDES (7:1-12)

Members of the kingdom are also to avoid --

1. Censoriousness -- 1,2
2. Carelessness in the dispensing of sacred truths -- vs. 6
3. Prayerlessness -- 7-11
4. Selfishness (the Golden Rule) -- vs. 12

VI. CONCLUSION (7:13-27)

With three parables JESUS emphasizes the need of obedience to His teachings:

1. The Two Ways (broad and narrow)
2. The Two Trees (good and bad)
3. The Two Foundations (sand and rock)

III. TEACHING IN PARABLES

JESUS made frequent use of parables, by which He illustrated the deepest truths of Heaven with the simplest things of earth.

Mourning and weeping, laughing and dancing, wealth and poverty, hunger and thirst, health and sickness, children's play and politics, gathering and scattering, the leaving of home, life in the inn, marriage and funeral, the splendid house of the living and the grave of the dead, the sower and the reaper in the field, the lord of the vintage among his vines, the ideal workman in the market place, the shepherd searching for the sheep, the dealer in pearls on the sea, and, then again, the woman at the home, anxious over the barrel of meal or leaven, or the lost piece of money, the surly official, the earthly food that perishes -- all these pictures enliven His discourse and make it clear even to those who are children in mind.

For further study we add the following arrangement of CHRIST's chief parables:

I. PARABLES ILLUSTRATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM

- The Sower ---- Matthew 13
- The Tares ---- Matthew 13
- The Mustard Seed ---- Matthew 13
- The Leaven ---- Matthew 13

The Hid Treasure ---- Matthew 13
The Pearl of Great Price ---- Matthew 13
The Dragnet ---- Matthew 13
The Seed Growing Secretly ----Mark 4

II. PARABLES DEALING WITH WEALTH

The Rich Fool ----Luke 12
The Unjust Steward ----Luke 16

III. PARABLES OF PRAYER

The Pharisee and the Publican ----Luke 18
The Friend at Midnight ----Luke 11
The Unrighteous Judge ----Luke 18

IV. PARABLES REVEALING GOD'S GRACE

The Lost Sheep ----Luke 15
The Lost Coin ----Luke 15
The Prodigal Son ----Luke 15

V. PARABLES OF BROTHERHOOD

The Unforgiving Servant ---- Matthew 18
The Good Samaritan ---- Luke 10
The Rich Man and Lazarus ----Luke 16 ** (Not a parable)

VI. PARABLES OF SERVICE

Laborers in the Vineyard ----Matthew 20
The Two Debtors ----Luke 10
The Talents ----Matthew 25
The Pounds ----Luke 19
The Uncompleted Tower and the Rash Warfare ----Luke 14

VII. PARABLES OF JUDGMENT

The Barren Fig Tree ----Luke 13
The Two Sons ----Matthew 21
The Wicked Vinedressers ----Matthew 21
The Great Supper ----Luke 14
The King's Marriage Feast ----Matthew 22
The Ten Virgins ----Matthew 25
The Ambitious Guest ----Luke 14
The Unwatchful Servants ----Matthew 24

IV. THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST

Considering the miracle of His birth and of His spiritual endowment, it would have been a miracle if JESUS had not performed miracles! In every one of the Gospels He is set forth as a Wonder-Worker, exerting His power over diseases, sin, demons, death and nature. Consider the purposes of His miracles.

*** By the way, reader, this should also explain why most of the so-called Charismatic movement is an abuse of the doctrine of the HOLY SPIRIT ***

They were the Lord's credentials, giving evidence of His Messiahship. They did not compel belief; but they did indicate that JESUS was an extraordinary person having a right to be heard. Like road signs, they pointed out the way without forcing people to travel in that direction. **"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."** (Luke 16:31).

They were signs (so the apostle John describes them), revealing CHRIST's true nature and mission. For example, the feeding of the multitude points to Him as the BREAD OF LIFE; the healing of the blind man reveals Him as the LIGHT OF THE WORLD; the raising of the dead sets Him forth as the RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. Or we might remember His words, **"I am the bread," "I am the light,"** and **"I am the resurrection and the life"**.

They were the natural outflowings of His personality revealing His compassion for mankind. He was no magician, performing wonders in order to dazzle the multitude, or healing for a price. In His life as well as in His death it was true that He **"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."** (Matthew 8:17).

And it was a needy land in which the Lord ministered:

It was needy physically; there were no hospitals and little sanitation.

It was needy mentally; Kastein, a Jewish writer states that the stress of those days had produced many nervous wrecks.

It was needy spiritually; Josephus, the Jewish historian, states that before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 the nation acted as if possessed by 7,000 devils.

Against this background we see how meaningful was CHRIST's invitation, **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."**

*** Does this not bear a remarkable parallel to our own day? But then, Solomon wrote that there is "nothing new under the sun."

V. THE CALL AND MISSION OF THE APOSTLES

THE PURPOSE OF THEIR CALLING

According to prophecy, the Messiah's first work was to be a Prophet to His own people, in order to fulfill GOD's promise to send the world's Saviour through Israel. Following this, the Messiah would become GOD's salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth: "**Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.**" (Romans 15:8,9)

In the Gospels we see JESUS fulfilling this ministry by proclaiming the good news throughout the Holy Land.

But during the days of His flesh, JESUS was subject to earthly limitations and could visit only one place at a time. The need was great, the calls many, and the time short. Therefore JESUS appointed twelve apostles (missionaries) to help Him in His work of evangelizing the people of GOD. To these men He gave special training, not only for this immediate mission, but in order to prepare them for leadership in the church of the future. Their ministry was limited to "**the lost sheep of the house of Israel,**" because it was GOD's plan that the gospel should be preached to the Jews first, in order that Palestine might become a missionary center for all nations.

THEIR MISSION

"That they should be with him." The number of CHRIST's disciples had grown to such proportions that He could not permit all of them to be with Him in a literal sense. He therefore selected a certain number to be His constant companions and to receive special training.

"**That he might send them forth to preach.**" The word "**apostle**" means literally "*one sent forth on a mission,*" or "*a missionary.*" They were to be fellow laborers with CHRIST and eventually His chosen agents in spreading the gospel over the world. They were entering on their apprenticeship for their future work.

The word "**disciple,**" meaning "*learner,*" is applied to all followers of CHRIST. All the apostles were disciples, but not all disciples were apostles.

CHRIST was limited during His earthly life in that He could be in only one place at a time. By sending out the apostles, He could multiply Himself, so to speak, both during the days of His flesh and after His return to the Father. The ultimate purpose in the calling of the Twelve was that they might be prepared to become the future leaders of the church: "**And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone**" (Ephesians 2:20). They were to have a testimony that was essential at the beginning of Christianity -- the testimony that the CHRIST who had poured out His SPIRIT upon them was the ascended CHRIST whom they had seen after His resurrection; and the ascended CHRIST was the same CHRIST with Whom they had walked on the roads of Palestine. Before the New Testament was written these twelve men stood forth as living witnesses to the truth of the gospel facts. They were the highest authorities on all matters pertaining to Christian faith and practice. Their witness is recorded in the New Testament writings which, as apostolic documents, become the authoritative guide to faith and practice.

THEIR NUMBER

Why were twelve chosen? The number would indicate that JESUS claimed to be not merely a local teacher but the founder of a movement having national importance. The fact that He had announced the nearness of GOD's kingdom and had chosen twelve apostles would suggest that He claimed to be Israel's Messiah, the One whose mission was **"to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel."**

"And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:5, 6). Compare with Matthew 19:28, **"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."**

Twelve is the number of GOD's people in the New Testament as well as in the Old: **"And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."** (Revelation 21:12-14)

Thus the number of the apostles would point to the future leadership of the church. In the words of one scholar: "As the sons of Jacob were the fathers of Israel according to the flesh, so are the twelve apostles the fathers of Israel after the Spirit."

THEIR INSTRUCTIONS

Their message was simple: the kingdom was at hand, and men should prepare themselves for it by repentance. Since the call was urgent and their needs were simple, they were to make no elaborate preparations for their journey. On entering a city or town, they were to enquire for those who were sympathetic with their message, and there they would receive instruction. If rejected, they were not to become discouraged, for the loss would not be theirs but that of the rejecters. Persecution, and even death, might be their portion, but these could not harm their true life, which was safe in GOD's hand. All loss for CHRIST's sake would be gain in the end.

~ end of chapter 3 ~
