Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem, determined to lay down His life a ransom for many, and take it up again — as His Father had determined (John 10:17-18). However, even when focusing on His mission, He teaches along the way. In this text all the people were rejoicing “for all the glorious things that were done by Him.” Rather than being turned aside by the accolades of men, He begins to teach them about the Kingdom of God, concealing His teaching in the wrapping of a parable. It tells them of the expansive nature of “the Kingdom of God: — that though it begins small, it does not stay that way. Without providing any details, the Spirit simply says, “And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem” (Luke 13:22). Just a few details are provided, but they are enough to show us the nature and determined destiny of the Kingdom of God. It provokes an inquiry concerning if only a few will be saved. Jesus insightfully responds.
A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Luke 13:18 “Then said He, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? 19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. 20 And again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 22 And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 24 When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. 25 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. 26 But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity. 27 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. 28 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. 29 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.”

Jesus expounds the Kingdom of God, and declares what is required to enter it – Given O. Blakely

The Kingdom of God and Entrance -- 1 of 10
through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem” (Luke 13:22). Just a few details are provided, but they are enough to show us the nature and determined destiny of the Kingdom of God. It provokes inquiry, and a question concerning if many will be saved? After challenging the questioner with an arresting statement, the Lord Jesus delivers a parable depicting the rejection of local people, but the eventual gathering of a mass of people from all directions and places.

It is apparent that Jesus has a preference for speaking about the Kingdom of God—a subject that dominated the preaching of John the Baptist before Him (Matt 3:2), and of Jesus’ own matchless ministry. In the Gospels there are ninety-eight references to “the Kingdom of God” or “the Kingdom of heaven” (the manner in which Matthew most often refers to it). The Epistles provide teaching concerning “the Kingdom of God” in eight places (Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9-10: 15:50; Gal 5:21; Col 4:11; 2 Thess 1:5). It also refers to “the Kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph 5:5), “the Kingdom of His Dear Son” (Col 1:13), “His Kingdom” (1 Thess 2:12; 2 Tim 4:1), “the heavenly Kingdom” (2 Tim 4:18), “Thy Kingdom” (Heb 1:8), “a Kingdom which cannot be moved” (Heb 12:28), and “the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 1:11).

If you are going to walk with Jesus, you will confront a lot of teaching about the Kingdom of God—the Kingdom over which Jesus is presently presiding. This is the Kingdom that governs the affairs of this world.

**WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD LIKE?**

LUKE 13:18 “Then said He, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?”

Matthew also mentions these likenesses, referring to them both as “another parable” (Matt 13:31-33). Mark records them in Mark 4:30-32, referring to them as “such parables” ( Mk 4:33).

Parables were not intended to clarify, but to conceal the truth being taught. When Jesus’ disciples asked Him why He taught the multitude in parables He replied, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given” (Matt 13:11). Other versions read, “He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.” NIV

First, we see that God Himself determines who is to understand His Kingdom and who is not to understand it. This is based on His perception of them—a perception seeing some as having no interest in what God has to say and do. From the lowest view, this is because Satan has blinded them. From the highest view, it is strictly owing to God’s determination, which is wholly righteous. We know there is such a thing as “the children of the wicked one” (Matt 13:38). Jesus said to some of His critics, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (John 8:44). Saul, who later was referred to as “Paul,” said to a sorcerer named Elymas, “O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10). Paul spoke of those who were “enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction” (Phil 3:18). John wrote of those who were “the children of the devil” (1 John 3:10).

God would not divulge to these “children of the devil” the secrets of His Kingdom, He would not enable them to identify or appreciate it.

These “children of the devil,” as I understand it, cannot be changed. Only God knows who they are. Prior to be “added to the Lord” (Acts 5:14), the people of God were not known as “children of the devil,” or “tares” (Matt 13:25-26, 30, 41-42). Their unregenerate identity is described as follows.

- “Servants of sin” (Rom 6:17,20).
- "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:9-11).
- “. . . were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1).

Jesus expounds the Kingdom of God, and declares what is required to enter it – Given O. Blakely


The word “like” means similar to, resembling. Introducing similarity. This does not mean equal to, but refers an facet or trait of the Kingdom of God that can be seen in something in the earth. It is not intended to set forth a precise duplicate, for there is only one “Kingdom of God.”

WHEREUNTO SHALL I RESEMBLE IT?

“. . . and whereunto shall I resemble it?”

This comes from the same root word, but with a slightly different emphasis. Something like the Kingdom of God speaks of a fact, revealed or not. “Resemble” means a revelation of the similarity, spoken, in this case, by the Son of God.

Other versions read, “compare it,” “what shall I compare it to?” “how can I illustrate it?” As in the previous word, this is a partial comparison, not an entire or complete one.

LIKE A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

“19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.”

The Kingdom of God is not merely like a mustard seed, but like a mustard seed which grew! The emphasis is that it begins small, but does not remain that way. Further, it is the nature of the Kingdom to grow.

God gave a dream to Nebuchadnezzar, which was interpreted by Daniel, that depicted the Kingdom of God as a small stone that became larger and larger as it progressed, finally filling the entire earth (Dan 2:31-25). That was the Kingdom of God from the perspective of Divine purpose, or intent.

Matthew observes that the mustard seed “is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree” (Matt 13:31). From a tiny herbal seed to a great tree! Remarkable!

Now, Jesus says, the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. In fulfillment of Daniel’s vision, it was being “set up” on the earth during the time Jesus walked among men: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan 2:44).

Jacob was given a dream quite similar to this. He saw a ladder “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it . . .” (Gen 28:12-13).

In all three – the parable of Jesus, the dream of Jacob, and the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the point was that God Almighty was going to work out
His “eternal purpose” (Eph 3:11) in the world. His wisdom and power would be employed in which His Person and will would be made known to both men and angels.

In the Kingdom of God, growth implies purpose, and an appointed objective. In men themselves, it implies the fulfillment of responsibility and productivity.

So it is with the Kingdom of God. It is not merely to exist, like a valuable relic, to behold. It is not for simple observation, or for a mere gathering point. God’s Kingdom is the context in which He is accomplishing something that will bring glory to Himself, and demonstrate more fully who He is.

Because God’s Kingdom is not a mere impersonal tree, its growth and advance spans centuries, and even millennia of time. There have been lengthy periods when it did not appear to be advancing. But that is from the topographical point of view. While it did not appear that much was taking place above found, a lot was being accomplished beneath the surface. Firm roots were being established that could sustain a large growth above ground. Growth is really from the root upward. (Isa 37:31). The Lord Jesus Himself was described as a “root out of dry ground” (Isa 53:2). As Zechariah wrote, “Do not despise these small beginnings” NLT (Zech 4:10). The Kingdom of God has survived spiritual famines, and floods of delusions – and it is still growing.

IT IS LIKE LEAVEN

20 And again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

Perhaps you have heard it said that “leaven” is always a type of wickedness. That it is likened to wickedness cannot be denied – but only it is particularly “old leaven” that bears that likeness (1Cor 5:6-7). There is also “the leaven of the Pharisees” (Matt 16:6). Whether speaking of good leaven or old leaven, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal 5:9). That is, it tends to spread until the whole of the thing into which it is found is impacted by the influence of the leaven.

Leaven is yeast, which is placed in small measure in a batch of dough, and finally pervades the entire batch, producing a loaf of bread.

Both wickedness and sincerity with truth are likened to “leaven” – “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:8). Both of these leavens spread – it is their nature to spread. In this text, Jesus is speaking of the leaven-like nature of the Kingdom of God. It tends to increase and expand. The presence of “the leaven of malice and wickedness” neutralizes and finally stifes this good leaven. That is why the church must be purged of “old leaven” (1 Cor 5:7).

THESE PRINCIPLES SEEN IN THE EARLY CHURCH

22 And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.”

CITIES AND VILLAGES
“And He went through the cities and villages . . .”

The distance between Galilee and Jerusalem is estimated to be about seventy miles. The cities and villages along the way number in the hundreds. At the very least, we are talking about quite a few cities and villages along the way, and Jesus was probably saying something in all that He passed through. He was a prodigious preacher and teacher, and was always noted for what He said – either by his enemies or those who gladly heard Him.

TEACHING
“... teaching . . .”

The word translate “teaching” means No hold discourse with others in order to instruct them; to impart instruction,
instill doctrine into one; to explain, expound, a thing. Teaching postulates the communication of a certain body of knowledge – in this case “the Kingdom of God.” When teaching the multitudes He couched the truth in parables so they would not be able to discern the true nature of what He said. However, by employing parables He provided for understanding to be appropriated once their eyes were enlightened, and their ears circumcised.

In the Gospels the words “teach, teaches, teaching, taught, taught” are used fifty-four times. In Romans thru Revelation they are used thirty times.

THE ENTIRE GODHEAD TEACHES US

God (John 6:45; 1 Thess 4:9), Jesus (Eph 4:20-21; 1 John 5:20), the Holy Spirit (Lk 12:12; John 14:26; 1 Cor 2:13; 1 John 2:27). They all teach us.

God has places teachers in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:18; Eph 4:11). Exactly how do we account for those who profess to be Christians for long periods, yet remain fundamentally ignorant of God, Christ, the Spirit, and the Kingdom of God? You may be sure that during the day of judgment a strict account will have to be given for the existence of such a condition. If Jesus took time to teach while journeying to the place where He would “lay down His life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28), what possible reason can be cited for the people of God not being taught today?

It ought to be noted that the subject being taught pertains directly to God and Christ, and the so great salvation” that was initiated, and is being maintained, by Them. Search and see! Jesus did not give extensive teaching about family life or strictly social matters. ALL OF His teaching had to do with Divine purpose, with the ultimate confrontation of God in the day of judgment being a fundamental consideration.

JOURNEYING TOWARD JERUSALEM

“. . . and journeying toward Jerusalem.”

Other versions read, “proceeding on His way to Jerusalem,” NASB “as He made His way to Jerusalem,” NIV “always pressing on toward Jerusalem,” NLT “making progress toward Jerusalem.”

The time when He would “offer up Himself” (Heb 7:27) now began to dominate the Lord’s mind. It was a time when the iniquities of us all would be laid upon Him (Isa 53:6), He would be made to be sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), would be made a curse for us (Gal 3:13), and would “taste of death for every man” (Heb 2:9). It would take every thing that He had to accomplish this sacrifice. In fact, angelic assistance would be required in readying for the appointed occasion (Lk 22:43).

Just before His transfiguration Jesus, ”From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19; Mk 8:31; 9:31-32; 10:33-34; Lk 9:22; 18:31-33). This spanned a period of a little less than one and a half years. Most of His ministry during this time was to His disciples. Miracles He performed during this time included healing a demon-possessed boy (Lk 9:37-43), a blind man healed when Jesus put clay on his eyes (John 9:1-41), Lazarus raised from the dead (John 11:1-45), and the healing of ten lepers (Lk 17:11-19).

The significant reduction of is miracles, and the increased time spent with His disciples, confirmed that in coming into the world, His focused mission was not alleviating conditions related to life in this world. He was merciful and tender, and considerate, but His focus was on accomplishing the mandate to lay down His life, take it up again, and return to heaven commence up-holding and bringing “many sons to glory” (Heb 2:10).

Human illnesses and hardships are the result of sin, not the cause of it. Jesus came primarily to address the cause of sin by making an “end of sins” (Dan 9:24), taking away the sin of the world (John 1:29), destroying the devil (Heb 2:14), plundering principalities and powers (Col 1:15), and ending the Law as a means to righteousness 9ROM 10:4). That would clear the way for the justification of sinners to be done by God righteously. It would also free Jesus to ready us for the world to come. His purpose was not to clean up this world, for it is already targeted for destruction. His work would enable us to clean escape the world. His grace would enable us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live righteous in this world (Tit 2:11-13).

ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?

“23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, 24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

We now enter into an area where men are guilty of a remarkable amount of speculation. Some hasty statements that are made by men, but not specifically stated in Scripture, are “God wants to save everyone,” “God does not want anyone to be lost,” “God loves everyone.” While it cannot be denied that there is an element of truth reflected in these statements, they are not precise enough for God to have spoken them. All of them are actually conclusions that are seemingly based upon what God has actually said. Let
us briefly examine some of these inspired statements.

-GOD IS NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH. “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9). This text is not about the world, but about the saved. His longsuffering is not here said to be toward the ungodly, but is “to us-ward.” Other versions read, “toward us,” NKJV “toward you,” NASB “is patient with you,” NRSV and “but He is long-suffering (extraordinarily patient) toward you.” The phrase “not willing that any should perish,” means not willing for any of the saints to perish. That is precisely why He bears long with them, not striking them down at every offence.

-“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4). In this context believers are exhorted, “that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth!” (1 Tim 2:1-4). First, note that Paul is not speaking of individual men, but of classifications of men: “all men,” including “kings and all that are in authority.” These prayers are not that the people may be saved, but “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Tim 2:2). So far as this text is concerned, we are not admonished to consider God’s election, which is emphatically taught elsewhere. Rather the scope of salvation is as broad as the circumference of sin. The effects of redemption reach as far as sin reached. The truth of election, Divine choice, and predestination is expounded ONLY to those who are in Christ Jesus (Matt 20:16; Rom 8:18-33; 9:11; 11:5-7,28; Eph 1:4-5, 11; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:4; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2; 2:9; 5:13; 2 Pet 1:10; Rev 7:14). Election, then, is the explanation for God’s acceptance of us in Christ, and provides the assurance that the work He has begun will be finished for His glory. That is how the Holy Spirit uses the language.

ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?

“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? . . .”

Other versions read, “Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?” = NASB “are only a few people going to be saved?” = NIV “will only a small number have salvation?” = BIB “and will only a few be saved (rescued, delivered from the penalties of the last judgment, and made partakers of the salvation by Christ).”

The only place this subject is directly addressed is in the Revelation—and there it views the end, or outcome, of God’s great salvation: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” (Rev 7:9-10).

There you have an answer as to whether or not only a few will be saved. However, Jesus does not provide this information to the inquirer. It was too early to speak of this matter. While He was with them, neither did He inform His disciples of the final number of the “saved.”

The final outcome of the salvation wrought by Christ will not be divulged until the greatness of the work He accomplished is discerned. Even then, it would be revealed only to those who were satisfactorily participating in that great salvation. Of what value would such information be to those who were unstable, and being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Eph 4:14).

Jesus will stifle this request, informing the inquirer where his focus ought to be.

STRIVE TO ENTER

“. . . And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate…”

Other versions read, “Make every effort to enter through the narrow,” NIV “Struggle to get in through the narrow door,” CJB “Strive with earnestness to enter in through the narrow door,” NASB “Try your hardest to enter by the narrow door,” RSV “Strive to enter by the narrow door [force yourselves through it],” Amplified

How does this match up with statements like, “Anyone can be saved.” “It is easy to be saved.” “Repeat this simple prayer after me.” The answer of Jesus clarifies that, from a human point of view, it is not easy to be saved. It is like squeezing through a gate that is extremely narrow. That is precisely why Peter, —after telling those who asked what they should do (Acts 2:37), and were told precisely what to (Acts 3:28) — “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40). Only when they had “gladly received” that word were they baptized (Acts 2:41).

The word Jesus delivered is a very real requirement. People who are casual about salvation will not participate in it. People should be able to figure this out. Those outside of Christ are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1), are living “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air,” and he is now working “in the children of disobedience” (Eph 2:2). They are “alienated from the life of God” (Eph 4:18; Col 1:21), “enemies” of God (Rom 5:10), and “without God and without hope in the world” (Eph 2:12). How can anyone possibly be casual about that situation, and imagine they will be saved? Their casualness and mediocrity is evidence Satan is at work in them.

MANY WILL SEEK TO ENTER
“. . . for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.”

Other versions read, “many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to,” NIV “A number will make the attempt to go in, but will not be able to do so,” BBE “many will be demanding to get in and won’t be able to,” CJB “will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough.” NAB

There are, I am persuaded, a great number of people who do not believe this statement is true – that some would try to enter, yet not be able to do so. The word of Jesus, however, is absolute truth, and is to be told to the people. Those who are dawdling around in the vestibule of neglect must be told they will not always be “able to enter.” There is coming a time when the door will be shut! Those who are “at ease” – even “in Zion” – are told, “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!” (Amos 6:1). Even “the heathen” are told, “And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction” (Zech 1:15). The NIV reads, “but I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they added to the calamity.” Some people are making God angry.

Now, Jesus will affirm that the door of salvation will eventually be shut, and no others will be saved.

WHEN the MASTER OF THE HOUSE IS RISEN UP

“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets.”

But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.”

WHEN THE MASTER RAISES UP

“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door . . .”

This will mark the conclusion of “the day of salvation.” It is the time when He will thrust His sickly into the earth, and reap His own wheat (Lk 3:17; Rev 14:15). It is when the holy angels will gather in all of the saints (Matt 24:31; Mk 13:27). This is the time when the heavens and the earth shall flee from before His face (Rev 20:11). It is when all of the dead will be raised to appear before the Lord to be judged (John 5:28-29). This is “the end,” when the heavens and earth shall pass away in a fiery holocaust (2 Pet 3:10-13).

In the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus depicted this as the time when the Bridegroom came, and the door was shut (Matt 25:10).

SOME WILL BEGIN TO KNOCK

“. . . and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets . . .”

These will be people among whom Jesus walked, ministered, and called out for the weary to come to Him. That time could have been an advantage to them, but when the door is shut, it will prove to have been their greatest disadvantage.

THE MASTER WILL SAY

“. . . But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity . . .”

To the chagrin of the slothful and dilatory, Jesus will acknowledge that He never did know them, never did recognize them, and never did receive them. They thought His presence in their streets equated to His approval, but it did not.

When I think of the staggering number of people who have been offered access to God, given the opportunity to come to, and be received by, Jesus Christ, and to grow up into Him in all things, it is almost more than I can bear. But our concern for such people will abruptly terminate when the door is shut! When Jesus no longer seeks them, we will, no longer weep for them.

Believe me when I say, the coming of the Lord is not the time to begin knocking! Now, in this world, while Jesus is enthroned in glory at the right hand of God, is the time to knock – and you can do it with this promise in mind: “to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Luke 11:10) – but only if one knocks while the door is opened!

THERE SHALL BE WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TRUTH

“. . . There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.”

Other versions read “weeping and cries of sorrow,” BBE “cry and grind your teeth,” CJB “cry and be in extreme pain,” GWN “wailing and grinding of teeth.” NAB

The word “gnashing” comes from a word meaning “fused” to denote extreme
anguish and utter despair of men consigned
to eternal punishment in hell.Ø

The gnashing of the teeth denotes
great sorrow and pain, over which the
condemned have no power. Also, there
is no expectancy of ever being relieved
of this dreadful situation. In this
teaching, such woe is the result of not
availing oneself of salvation. O, that
men were aware of the dreadful
outcome of not coming to Christ!

**THEY SHALL, COME FROM THE EAST, WEST, NORTH, AND SOUTH**

"29 And they shall come from the
east, and from the west, and from
the north, and from the south,
and shall sit down in the kingdom of
God."

Jesus knows that His own people
– the ones of that generation – would
mostly reject Him. At least forty years
after Jesus ascended back to glory,
John wrote, “He came unto His own,
and His own received Him not” (John
1:11). While Jesus was still ministering
to His disciples He said to them, “the
blood of all the prophets, which was
shed from the foundation of the world,
may be required of this generation”
(Luke 11:50). “For as the lightning,
that lighteneth out of the one part under
earth, shineth unto the other part
under heaven; so shall also the Son of
man be in his day. But first must he
suffer many things, and be rejected of
this generation” (Luke 17:24-25).
Again He said, “And He sighed deeply
in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this
generation seek after a sign? verily I
say unto you, There shall no sign be
given unto this generation” (Mark
8:12).

That generation was so bad, that
the Queen of Sheba and the city of
Nineveh would testify against it on th
day of judgment: “The men of Nineveh
shall rise in judgment with this
generation, and shall condemn it:
because they repented at the preaching
of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than
Jonas is here. The queen of the south
shall rise up in judgment with this
generation, and shall condemn it: for
she came from the uttermost parts of
the earth to hear the wisdom of
Solomon; and, behold, a greater than
Solomon is here” (Mat 12:41-42).

He also pronounced this arresting
judgment against that generation:
“Therefore also said the wisdom of
God, I will send them prophets and
apostles, and some of them shall slay
and persecute: That the blood of
all the prophets, which was shed from
the foundation of the world, may be
required of this generation; From the
blood of Abel unto the blood of
Zacharias, which perished between the
altar and the temple: verily I say unto
you, It shall be required of this
generation” (Luke 11:49-51).

In what kind of generation are we
living? Most people know it is radically
different from previous generations, but
how is it regarded in heaven? There are
really only two generations. Solomon
described the evil generation this way:
“There is a generation that curseth
their father, and doth not bless their
mother. There is a generation that are
pure in their own eyes, and yet is not
washed from their filthiness. There is a
generation, O how lofty are their eyes!
and their eyelids are lifted up. There is
a generation, whose teeth are as
swords, and their jaw teeth as knives,
to devour the poor from off the earth,
and the needy from among men” (Prov
30:11-14).

David wrote of “the generation
of the righteous” (Psa 14:5), and “This
is the generation of them that seek Him,
that seek Thy face, O Jacob. Selah” (Psa
24:6). He also wrote of “the generation
to come: and the people which shall be
created shall praise the LORD” (Psa
102:18), and “the generation of the
upright” (Psa 112:2).

Now, the question is, whose
generation will be the largest – that of
Jesus, or that which is not of Jesus?
Speaking of the Messiah, who had no
physical generation. Isaiah answers,
and his answer follows the fifty-third
chapter of Isaiah, which speaks of the
Lord Jesus bearing the iniquity of us all.
“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not
bear; break forth into singing, and cry
aloud, thou that didst not travail with
child: for more are the children of the
desolate than the children of the
married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge
the place of thy tent, and let them
stretch forth the curtains of thine
habitations: spare not, lengthen thy
 cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For
thou shalt break forth on the right
hand and on the left; and thy seed
shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the
desolate cities to be inhabited.” (Isa
54:1-3).

Our text speaks of this sudden
and pervasive expansion: “And they
shall come from the east, and from the
west, and from the north, and from the
south, and shall sit down in the
kingdom of God.”

Paul also speaks of this when he
writes of God lifting the veil now over
their faces of understanding. When He
does, it will have an arresting impact on
the Gentile world. The prophets spoke of
it, and it is most apparent they were
not referring to Christ coming into the
world to lay down His life. They spoke
of a time when they – Israel – would
impact the world.

 contrario

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in
all My holy mountain: for the earth
shall be full of the knowledge of the
LORD, as the waters cover the sea.
And in that day there shall be a root
of Jesse, which shall stand for an
ensign of the people; to it shall the
Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be
glorious” (Isa 11:10).

 contrario

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come,
and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isa 60:1-3).

“Thus saith the LORD, The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabæans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. Verily Thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols” (Isa 45:14-16).

“And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be My people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the LORD shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again” (Zech 2:11-12).

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of his ways: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:1-2).

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD” (Zech 8:20-22).

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech 8:23).

In The Revelation, John saw the whole house of Israel sealed by God. Final judgment was withheld until; this was done (Rev 7:1-4). The commanded sealing was accomplished (Rev 7:5-8). Immediately after this, John saw a “great multitude which no man could number,” and they were singing of salvation (Rev 7:9-10).

This is a summation of the God-ordained spread of the truth through believing and converted Israel. It is also what Jesus is affirming in our text. Israel would not be going to nations, but “they shall COME from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.” There is no possibility that this Divine purpose will not be fulfilled!

THERE ARE LAST WHICH SHALL BE FIRST

“30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.”

THERE ARE LAST WHICH SHALL BE FIRST

“And, behold, there are last which shall be first . . .”

He does not say all that are last will be first, but “there are [some] last which shall be first.” For example, the apostles were first in this world (1 Co 12:28), and are also associated with the foundations of the New Jerusalem there (Rev 21:14).

However, the Jews as a nation were the first to hear the Gospel preached to them, yet, as a nation, will be believe at the last, when they insightfully embrace it. On the other hand, the Gentiles were the last to hear the Gospel, and the first to embrace it extensively, for the Gospel “is the power of salvation to everyone that believer, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16).

The first fruits were reaped in Jerusalem (Acts 2-5), but the full harvest will be reaped from the world, “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev 5:9).

Only Jesus is “the First AND the Last” (Rev 1:17; 2:8; 22:13).

THERE ARE FIRST WHICH SHALL BE LAST

“. . . and there are first which shall be last.”

Particularly as regards earthly stations, where dignitaries are converted, they will not be dignitaries in heaven. Those designated “kings and priests” will not be those who occupied those offices on the earth. Those who are kings and priests in the glory shall have commenced their work in the world, but it will be seen as full-fledged in the world to come.

Stephen stood before the Jewish council in this world, but in the world to come, the council condemning Him will stand before him. Jesus stood before Pilate, but on the day of judgment, Pilate will stand before Jesus.
When Jesus said “there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last,” He is speaking of something that will be perceived. God shall have considered such people “first” all along, and those whom are “last” were seen as such by the Lord. In the world they did not appear to be those upon whom God’s eye rested, and those to whom His ear was opened (Psa 34:15; 1 Pet 3:12). It did not look as though they had access to the throne of grace (Heb 5:15-16), or that angels were their ministers (Heb 1:13-14), or that Jesus was interceding for them in heaven (Rom 10:34; Heb 7:25), and the Holy Spirit was making intercession for them from within (Rom 8:26-27). They did not look that important – but they were!

To briefly summarize what the Lord said, our hearts and minds must be set on the time when everything will be revealed as it really is. We must live in view of that day – the day when Jesus confesses to God and before angels that we are His.

This is precisely why we are admonished, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col 3:1-2). It why Jesus said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt 6:33). This is also why we are to be in a waiting posture (1 Thess 1:10). It is why we refuse to live to please men, or to receive accolades from them.

Jesus expounds the Kingdom of God, and declares what is required to enter it – Given O. Blakely