

ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

In all wisdom and prudence making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him the plan for the fullness of the times

**TO HEAD UP THE ALL THINGS IN THE CHRIST,
the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, in Him...**

(Ephesians 1:8b-10)

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Article #62

Harvest of the Kingdom of God

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This article is an edited compilation of chapters 12 and 13 of the book *The Ultimate Purpose of God*.

"Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. "You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. "Also you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field. (Exodus 23:14-16 NASB)

God established three feasts for ancient Israel to celebrate commemorating historical events in their wilderness journey into the land of promise. Passover commemorated their departure from Egypt after applying the blood of a slain lamb on their doorposts and lintels. Pentecost commemorated God descending and appearing upon Mount Sinai in Arabia to give them the Law. Tabernacles commemorated the day they were supposed to enter the Promised Land but failed to do so. Today, apparent Jews celebrate these feasts as well as several other holidays.

However, it is important to realize that these feasts are far greater than annual celebrations, for they represent God's plan for all mankind. Thus, we need to see them as prophetic historical events that will unfold until all things come into God's grand creation jubilee when all debts are cancelled and all are set free into the glory of the children (sons) of God. Through these feasts, we understand God's plan for man on an individual level, for the Body of Christ on a corporate level, and for the nations as a whole. This plan is the Harvest of the Kingdom!

In order to put these feasts in the proper perspective, it is best to start with Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians in which he lays out a defense for the resurrection, not only of Christ but of all mankind. In other words, we need to start at the cross (death) and the empty tomb (resurrection) in order to understand the feasts and the harvests associated with them. The key to our understanding is found in these words of Paul: In Adam all die, and in Christ all live, but each in their own order. This is a truth that has been lost and that needs to be recovered in our day. But before looking at what Paul teaches on this matter, there is an equally important truth that precedes this one.

(14) For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that *one died for all, therefore all died; (15) and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.* (2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NASB)

Paul tells us that Christ died for all and in His death, we, meaning all mankind, also died. In other words, when Christ died, He took the old man of Adam that is in all of us with Him into the grave, *legally speaking*. If everyone of the old man died with Christ, how is anyone going to come to life before God? If the old nature has been dealt with, how does anyone come to life? On the surface, this appears to be a hopeless situation, for if all have been made to die in Christ, then how will anyone come alive again, at least in the eyes of God? The answer is in Christ.

Years ago, I had a picture of myself in a grave looking up. How was I going to get out of this grave? There was no way I could do it on my own. But then Jesus showed up. He alone rescued me from the grave. This is the same picture for all mankind. It is not based on whether we believe or not, for all mankind from Adam to the last one born of his race were taken into the grave over 2,000 years ago, whether believer or not. As Paul wrote: **For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly** (Romans 5:6). The helpless cannot help themselves; the dead cannot get themselves up out of the grave, for the dead know nothing whatsoever. There is only one way out of death, and it is through God's Son.

Paul went on to state that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. But on whose behalf did He rise again? Was it not for all mankind? If all died, then He died for all, meaning He died on the behalf of all. However, it is true that in this age, many do not live for Him; nevertheless, this does not change the truth of His death for all. Besides, there are believers walking on earth today that do not live for Christ, just as there are unbelievers. Consequently, faith does not enter into this equation of one death for all and one death leads to the death of all.

Now, the question is, how does all mankind come into life? In some respects, Paul does not make it clear in the above verses. He implies that some live, but what about the rest of the dead? Do they not come alive, or are they stuck in the grave, physically (mortal body) or spiritually (lacking the Holy Spirit)?

Further, if by His one death all were brought into death, then who among the dead has the power to overcome death? How does anyone overcome the power of the grave? No one in history has been able to do this on their own.

What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? Selah. (Psalms 89:48 NASB)

Paul gives us the answer to this riddle or enigma in his defense of the resurrection, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 15, which, perhaps, is one of the greatest chapters in the whole Bible, for here Paul gives mankind the hope of resurrection into immortality. Let us consider his teaching.

Hope of Resurrection

(13) But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; (14) and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. (15) Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. (16) For if the dead are

not raised, not even Christ has been raised; (17) and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. (18) Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. (19) If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:13-19 NASB)

Paul makes the case that everything hinges on the resurrection of Christ from the dead. If He was not raised, then mankind has no hope and believers in this age have a worthless faith. If Jesus was not raised up, then we have no hope of resurrection and the believers that died, that is, fell asleep in Christ are gone, for they will never rise up from the grave in new bodies.

Christ the First Fruits

(20) But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. (21) For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:20-21 NASB)

But here is the good news; Christ is the first fruits of those who are asleep, that is, of the dead. Keep in mind that Paul wrote this after the resurrection of Christ; therefore, according to this great apostle, even those who died in faith are still asleep; they are still in the state of death, asleep and waiting for the promise of resurrection. This is our hope!

Before proceeding, I want to offer a brief word about death. Christians are taught that people either die and go to heaven or they die and go to hell in an afterlife. This is not the gospel. Death is described as a sleep so that all of us, believer or not, upon death fall asleep. Moses, Jesus, and Paul are all in agreement on this. It did not change after the cross as so many teach. Consider what Moses had to say about death.

(3) You turn man back into dust And say, "Return, O children of men." (4) For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night. (5) You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; in the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew. (6) In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew; toward evening it fades and withers away. (Psalms 90:3-6 NASB)

Upon death, man returns to the soil of the earth from which he came in the first place. He might remain dead for a thousand years, but it will seem like it was just yesterday when man awakens from his sleep in either the first or the second resurrection. Jesus told His disciples that Lazarus was asleep and, when they did not understand, He declared he was dead (John 11:11, 14). Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that the dead in Christ sleep (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16).

Now, returning to Paul. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul gives us an equation. Since by the man Adam came death, so also by the man Christ comes the resurrection of the dead, which means all mankind are destined to come out of the state of sleep. We know this is what he meant, for he states it very clearly in verse 22.

When Christ was raised from among the dead, He became the *first fruits* of all the dead. Christ was raised from all the dead and is now immortal, for death has no more power over Him.

Further, Christ is the *firstborn* from among the dead so that He might have the preeminence or first place in all things (Colossians 1:18). Essentially, Christ is first in everything, including being the first to be born again through resurrection from among all the dead that lie in the earth, and, as such, Christ is in a class all by Himself. We could say that He is the first class in all things.

Then, Paul states the same verity that he wrote in Romans 5 that death came through one man but life or resurrection of the dead comes through a Man as well. We should not overlook the import of Paul's reference that the resurrection of the dead comes through Christ. There is a difference between being resurrected *from* the dead and the resurrection *of* the dead. The former means that some are raised up but many remain in the state of death, whereas the latter means no one remains in the state of death. Resurrection of the dead speaks of all the dead rising out of the state of death.

It is fascinating that many Christians in our day do not understand the difference between from the dead and of the dead. They are not alone for the disciples did not understand it either.

(9) As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. (10) They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant. (Mark 9:9-10 NASB)

So, when Paul wrote **by a man also came the resurrection of the dead**, we can be sure that he was not writing of the first resurrection but of the second or general resurrection in which the rest of the dead come alive after 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4-6).

In Adam, All Die

For as in Adam all die... (1 Corinthians 15:22a)

Could Paul state it any clearer? **In Adam, all die** or **all are dying** (CV). Take note of the word *all*. Can anyone dispute that all born of Adam's race, whether one believes in Christ or not, will die one day, unless one happens to be in the company of believers alive on earth when He comes the second time? But, even in reference to the "alive and remain" ones, this verse applies, for all are dying, which is the way the *Concordant Literal NT* translates it: **In Adam, all are dying!** When we are born, we all enter into a process of dying that leads to physical death one day.

Paul makes no exceptions to this death sentence. Notice that Paul does not say all who are in Adam or the lost in Adam. He simply states that in Adam, all are dying, just as through one man death came to all men (Romans 5:12). The fact that all die a physical death places all in Adam in respect to death.

In Christ, All Made Alive

... so also in Christ all will be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:22b)

Next, Paul states that **in Christ, shall all be vivified** (CV) or **made alive**. Again, here is the word *all*. Who are we to exclude from this all? Paul makes no distinction between a believer and an unbeliever. Not one single person of Adam's race had any say in the "death sentence" of all; that is, so-called *free will* never entered into it. Why do we think it is any different with the "sentence of life" through Christ? There are no exclusions in this *all*. If all are *in* Adam, does it not follow that all must be *in* Christ, eventually, as well? Of course, logic dictates that it follows. This is God's "life sentence" for all!

This truth needs to be restored in the ecclesia of God; it is essential for understanding Paul's hope of resurrection for all.

Each in Their Own Order [Troop, Rank]

In the next set of verses, Paul establishes that in reference to being resurrected from the state of death, there are several classes of people and each class will be raised in its own respective order. Christ stands alone in His own class as the first in all things, including resurrection from the dead. However, just as He cannot be the Firstborn without other brethren to follow, so to He cannot be the First Fruit without a full harvest of other crops or fruit to follow.

(23) But each in his own order [*tagma; troop*]: **Christ** [*christos; anointed*] **the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, (24) then comes the end** [*telos; consummation*], **when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.** (1 Corinthians 15:23-24 NASB)

Now, here is an important key to our understanding the revelation given to Paul—mankind will be resurrected according to order or rank. Paul makes an important distinction that all will not be made alive at the same time but each in their own order, class, or troop. It is about TIMING.

Paul brings the same concept into light in reference to Christ being **the ransom for all**, the testimony given at **the proper [appointed] time** (1 Timothy 2:6).

In the Greek, the word for *proper order* is *tagma*, which refers to "something orderly in arrangement (a troop), that is, (figuratively) a series or succession:- order."

In his defense of the resurrection, not only of Christ but of all mankind, Paul likens it to a harvest of crops. Just as a farmer harvests different kinds of crops at different times of the harvest season, **so will God harvest mankind through resurrection**. Consequently, troops or classes of people are raised in order, the first being a first fruits that follow in the likeness of Christ, which is similar to a **barley harvest**, or what could be called the cream of the crop, followed by a more general harvest, which is similar to a **wheat harvest**, and concluding with the final harvest of all that is left, which is similar to a **grape harvest**.

This same picture is given to us by John in his Patmos vision as recorded in Revelation 14. The takeaway from this vision is that John saw the first fruits of God and the Lambkin as signified by the 144,000, the conquerors. Then he saw a harvest of wheat, the rest of the church; and then he saw a harvest or crushing of the grapes, the nations or the rest of mankind.

To reiterate, Christ is in a class or order all by Himself. He is the First Fruit and the Firstborn and, as such, no one else is included with Him. His resurrection is unique in the sense that He is the first Man to put off mortality and put on immortality. As Paul wrote to Timothy: He is **the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality** (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

Three Troops

But each in his own order [*tagma; troop*]: **Christ the FIRST fruits, AFTER that those who are Christ's at His coming, THEN COMES THE END....** [emphasis added]

In verses 23-24, Paul identifies three troops using the words **first, after, and then the end**. The first fruits are the first troop; after them comes the second troop of those who belong to Christ at His coming; and then between His coming and the end is a third troop of the ones who are subjected to Christ. Actually, the end is punctuated by the rest of mankind being changed in to immortality. Paul does not identify the third troop directly in this verse; this is seen in verses 25-27 in the subjection of all things, *ta panta*.

First Fruit Anointed

But each in his own order [*tagma; troop*]: **Christ** [*christos; anointed*] **the first fruits....**

At first glance, it might appear that Paul is simply repeating the fact that Christ is the first in the order, but it is doubtful that this is the proper understanding because he first establishes Christ's unique place and then takes up all being made alive. Follow Paul's logic to see that *each in his own order* refers back to *in Christ shall all be made alive*. In other words, it refers to all mankind that die, not to Christ Himself. Besides, Jesus is an individual, not a troop.

Then, who are **Christ the first fruits**? Some see this as referring to those who were resurrected immediately after Jesus rose from the dead. However, neither Scripture nor the historical record offers proof that this group was raised to anything other than mortal life; thus, they died again and did not enter immortal life at that time. After all, to repeat Paul's words, **the King alone possesses immortality**, and Jesus Himself, as the Son of Man, tells us: **"No one [man] has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man"** (John 3:13).

The answer seems to be revealed in the phrase **Christ the first fruits**.

The word *Christ* can also be translated as the word *anointed*. Rewording the verse yields the phrase "anointed first fruits." This point is made in the *English Sublinear of the Concordant Greek Text*, for it calls the first group in Paul's list "firstfruit anointed."

Also, the Greek word for *Christ* comes from the Greek word *christos*. Generally, when *christos* is not accompanied by the definite article *the*, it could simply mean "anointed" and apply to anyone (e.g., priests, kings) and not specifically to Christ our Lord. It only follows that if Christ Himself is a first fruit, there are other first fruits to follow. In harvesting crops, a farmer picks a crop of several pieces of fruit and declares it to be his first fruits. In fact, each type of crop has first fruits to come forth before the main harvest of the rest of the crop. So then, who is included in the anointed first fruits?

One of the most common interpretations of the identity of this troop is that it comprises all who have believed on Jesus. However, there is another interpretation that seems to be more in line with Scripture.

Those who conquer through Christ and His love are the first fruits. They are the ones counted worthy to attain to the oncoming eon to reign with Christ. They are sons of the resurrection (Luke 20:34-36; Revelation 20:4-6). They are the first called according to the plan of God to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29).

Not all who believe in our age are conquerors. Many have secured immortal life, but not all have secured **eonian life** to reign with Christ in His coming Kingdom. It is a matter of TIMING.

Consequently, *the anointed first fruits*, most likely, refers to those who attain to the *out-resurrection* that Paul sought to attain (Philippians 3:11 WAET), the *first* or *former* resurrection that John saw in his Patmos vision (Revelation 20:5-6), and the *better* resurrection that is accounted to the ones who gained approval through their faith but did not receive what was promised (Hebrews 11:39). Hebrews 11 lists the many that walked by faith and conquered in their day.

Those considered worthy of the *first, better, or out-resurrection* are ones who will have conquered while they lived in their bodies of death. How will they have conquered? They will have conquered through grace, faith, and love.

Paul declared: **We are more than conquering through Him Who loves us** (Romans 8:37 CV). How do we conquer? We do it through love—love for our God and Savior, love for one another, and love for our enemies. If we love, we also forgive, including our enemies that do us much harm, for this is what we are commanded to do (Matthew 5:44; 6:14). If we want to be in the *out-resurrection*, we must love, obey, forgive, and endure, and this is done by laying down our lives even unto death, if necessary.

They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not love their lives in the face of death. (Revelation 12:11 HCSB)

These believers overwhelmingly conquer through the One Who loves us; they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with Christ for 1,000 years. This is the anointed first fruits troop of the Lord. Let us conquer while it is still day and before the midnight shout goes forth that the Bridegroom has come!

After That, Christ's at His Coming

But each in his own order [*tagma; troop*]: ... **after that those who are Christ's at His coming....**
(1 Corinthians 15:23 NASB)

The next troop to be made alive through resurrection is identified by Paul as those who belong to Christ when He comes [*parousia; presence*]. This raises the question of the timing of Christ's coming.

Now, if the *first fruits resurrection* is the *first resurrection*, and this occurs at the end of our present eon, then there must be a second resurrection that occurs 1,000 years later; a resurrection of the just and the unjust when most of mankind must stand in the presence of the Lord at His Great White Throne. This group includes believers (the just) that were not included in the first resurrection or *out-resurrection*. The just will have believed in Jesus but did not conquer through His life; thus, they were not anointed first fruits. They will be **saved, yet so as through fire** (1 Corinthians 3:15), and they will enter into immortality. The unbelievers (the unjust) will be cast in the lake of fire for a season of correction and restitution, but they too, one day, will come out of the second death to enter the glory of God as all mankind, and even creation, enters into the Grand Jubilee of all. Thus, the second group to be resurrected is the rest of mankind that must appear in the presence of Christ.

Many acknowledge that there are two resurrections separated by about 1,000 years. However, many also see the general resurrection for only the unbeliever or the wicked, based on Jesus' words in the gospel of John.

(28) "Do not marvel at this; for *an hour* is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, (29) and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28-29 NASB)

It is often assumed that this refers to the two resurrections, separated by the millennial reign. But Jesus clearly referred to an hour, which in Scripture refers to a specific point in time; and at that hour, all who are in the tombs, meaning they are dead, which is a state of unconsciousness, will be awakened from their sleep. Those who have done the good deeds will be resurrected to life and those who have done the evil deeds will be resurrected to judgment.

This is in keeping with what the Jews of Jesus' day believed. Jesus was not trying to correct them but confirming what they already knew. The Jews believed that there was one general resurrection in which both the righteous and the wicked will be resurrected at the same time but with different outcomes. We see this in the conversation between Jesus and Martha when Jesus said Lazarus would rise again. **Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day"** (John 11:23-24). Paul, in defense of his evangel, also referred to the general resurrection.

(14) "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written

in the Prophets; (15) having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked." (Acts 24:14-15 NASB)

To Paul, it was *a* resurrection, which means he referred to only one resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. Both Daniel and John saw this resurrection.

(9) "I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. (10) A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:9-10 NASB)

(11) Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. (12) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ... (15) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-12, 15 NASB)

Thus, the first resurrection is only for those who have conquered; they will come to life and reign with Christ, with the second death having no power over them (Revelation 2:11). But the resurrection Daniel and John saw is unto judgment, judgment by the fiery law of God. Some of those appearing before the Great White Throne, which was ablaze with flames and with a river of fire flowing forth into a lake, were seen as destined for judgment through the second death. For them, it is a resurrection of judgment. But there are obviously others standing before the throne whose names are recorded in the **Book of Life**. For them, it is a resurrection of life, immortal life for all who believe.

It is recognized that mainline thinking says that none of the righteous can or will appear before the Great White Throne because all the righteous must rise in the first resurrection. But they fail to see that believers are not promised **eonian life** in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. Entering the coming Kingdom and reigning with Christ for 1,000 years is a reward for all who conquer through Christ, but not all who believe in Jesus in this eon conquer (Luke 12:45-59; 14:13-14). Everyone is promised **immortal life**, but this does not mean that all will receive it at the same time. Some will have to wait *in* death until the end of the oncoming eon when the great and small are resurrected.

Again, as Paul wrote, they will be saved, yet so as through fire. All their carnal, fleshly works will be burned up, for God is a consuming fire, but they will be saved to enter the Day of God and the Holy City because their names are recorded in the Book of Life; they are accounted as righteous because of Christ, but they were not counted worthy to reign over the nations with Christ in His Kingdom 1,000 years before. They will receive immortal life as promised and enter the eon of the eons, the last eon revealed to us in Scripture; thus, they too will experience eonian life. However, it is life in the last eon, not the one that is coming soon. This is not the better resurrection! But, let us not lose sight of the fact that all will eventually enter into the presence of God.

Then Comes the End [Consummation] — Subjects all

(24) ... then comes the end [telos; consummation], when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. (25) For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. (26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death. (27) For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. (28) When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28 NASB)

Paul defines the end in two ways by referring to what could be called controlling entities or influences over mankind. First, it comes when Jesus has abolished all rule and authority and power. Second, it comes when the last enemy, death, is abolished. Take note that these entities are abolished but all others, specifically, a troop of enemies (people), are subjected.

The key to identifying the third troop is discovered in how the Son of God abolishes all rule and authority. He does it by subjecting all things under His feet so that the Kingdom can be delivered up to the Father, so that He may be all in all. The verb *subject* means to place things in order, to make an orderly arrangement. It is not about casting many into hell, a place of chaos. When this occurs, it is called **the consummation of the eons [ages]**.

This third troop will be resurrected but, most likely, not into immortal bodies at this time. Resurrection does not always automatically lead to **transfiguration (metamorphic change)** at the same time. For example, Lazarus was resurrected but later died. I believe they will be much like believers are today. We have passed out of death into life, but we have yet to attain to immortal bodies. They will require immortality, but to receive this, they must be chastened and purified in the lake of fire, which represents God's divine law, the standard by which their works will be judged. They will enter into a second type of death (not physical and definitely not for torture) that is designed to purify them, so that one day they too will enter into immortality. If they are not brought out of this second death, then it cannot be declared that death is abolished. The first death refers to mortality of our physical bodies; the second death refers to death of works and speaks of Christ's death on the cross, the second Adamic death.

See article #61 *The Second Death*. <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art61.pdf>

As long as the second death is active, death in all its forms has not been abolished. If this were allowed to continue, the Son would not accomplish the work given to Him by His Father. Thus, His work of the cross would end in failure. But the good news is that once it is abolished, all creation and all mankind will be beyond death.

But how do we know that the unjust one day will be brought into immortal life? We know it because Paul declared that Christ must reign until He has subjected all things to Himself. The ones being subjected to Christ are the unjust or the wicked. In other words, His purpose of reigning is to subject all things in heaven and on earth to Himself, so that He can then subject all things, including Himself, to His Father, so that God may be *All* in all. Notice that the mission

of the Son of God is not to destroy all things but to subject all things, **for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them** (Luke 9:56 NASB). It is not His purpose to destroy or annihilate the unjust but to subject them, so that the Word of God, which does not return void, is fulfilled.

Scripture is abundantly clear that **the all** or **all things** will be subjected to Christ. If we agree that **all** is truly all, then there will be nothing excluded from this subjection or, worded in the positive, everything is included in **all things**.

Consider this: Paul declared that the creation will be set free from its slavery to corruption (Romans 8:21). Most people acknowledge this. However, if creation is to be set free, do you think that God will not set free all mankind that has been in slavery to sin and death; a race created to be in His image and likeness and to have dominion over the earth? The whole earth will be filled with the glory of God.

Again, do you think that most of mankind is destined to be left out of this glory, a race that began in the glory of God? The lion and the lamb will be brought into peace with each other. Do you think that if God is going to do this with the animal kingdom, He will not do it with mankind that was created to have dominion? Will He forever be at enmity with what He created to be in the image of His Son when Paul tells us that He is not reckoning their (the world's) offenses against them but is reconciling all things in the heavens and on the earth to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross? May God be **all in all!**

He Purchased the Whole Field

There is more proof along these lines. In the parables of *the mysteries of the reign of the heavens*, the Lord Jesus explained that He, as the Son of Man, sowed the good seed in the field, which He purchased. To redeem the treasure hidden in the field, the Lord bought the entire field, which is the whole world (Matthew 13:44).

The Lord not only purchased His treasure, which I believe refers to the first fruits anointed ones, but He also purchased all the crops in the world, which, more than likely, refers to the rest of mankind. Thus, He purchased the whole world, the field, which means that He possesses not only His treasure hidden in the field but also all else that the field contains, which must refer to all mankind.

Psalms 2 confirms this, as the Father decreed to His Son: **'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession'** (Psalms 2:8 NASB). Christ possesses all the earth.

The good news is that just as a farmer harvests different kinds of crops at different times of the harvest season, so will God harvest mankind through resurrection and transfiguration. Again, there are troops or classes of people raised up in order, the first being a first fruits, a barley harvest, followed by a more general harvest, a wheat harvest, and concluding with the final harvest of all that is left, a grape harvest.

Now, this leads to the three feasts and the harvests associated with each.

As we have seen already, Paul describes three troops of people that will be resurrected, each in their own order. The first troop is the anointed first fruits or the conquerors from among the Body of Christ; the second troop is the rest of the Body of Christ, *saved, yet so as through fire*; and the third troop is the bulk of mankind that must be subjected under the reign of Christ through the lake of fire or second death, which is the judgment of their carnal nature and works through the fiery law of God.

By identifying the anointed first fruits as the first troop, Paul likened the resurrections of the troops to an agricultural harvest, starting with the first of the grains, namely, the barley, followed by the wheat, and concluding with the fruit of the vine.

The first mention of *first fruits* is found in the second of the three national feasts that the ancient sons of Israel were called to celebrate unto the Lord after they were delivered out of Egypt.

"Also you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field. (Exodus 23:16 NASB)

In this case, the first fruits of the harvest pertained to agricultural products. However, first fruits also pertained to the first to come from the womb of man and animals. The primitive root word *bakar* (*Strong's H1069*), which means "to bear new fruit, to constitute as first-born" is the source word for *first fruits* as well as *firstborn* or *firstlings*, which first appears in the account of Cain and Abel.

Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering.... (Genesis 4:4 NASB)

In the New Testament, both Paul and James used the term *first fruits* to convey the thought of being the first of a much larger whole.

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:23 NASB)

Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints).... (1 Corinthians 16:15 NASB)

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. (James 1:18 NASB)

The key to understanding the first fruits is to realize that they represent the first of a large crop to follow. Simply, it means more are to follow. The first fruits could be called the **pioneers**, the ones who go before all others, forging a way for others to follow.

Those not called among the troop of the first fruits might think jealously of the first fruits as if they are the privileged ones. However, this is the wrong way to view the first fruits. The fact of the matter is that, according to God's divine law, they are essential for all the crops to be brought into the house, to the glory of God. After all, as Paul reminds us: **And if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump: and if the root is holy, so are the branches** (Romans 11:16 ASV).

Pioneer

What is a pioneer? A pioneer is one who opens the way or prepares the way for others to follow. A pioneer could be called a trailblazer or one who cuts a way through the bush so that others may follow—one who goes forth into territory not trodden by others, into uncharted territory. The pioneer leaves the comfort and security of home and willingly pays the cost to go in and occupy new territory; he puts down his feet and declares that this is a new possession. There is great cost, peril, danger, and even perplexity for pioneers. But they are obsessed to make it through to the new land so that others may follow. They are not concerned that those who follow will not have to pay the same price. They are more concerned that others may enter into what they have occupied. Pioneers have vision, courage, faith, and a sense of destiny. Their very life is a testimony. They go out, not knowing where they are going because few, if any, have gone their way before.

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 11:8 NASB)

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (Hebrews 11:13 NASB)

Hebrews 11 reveals that God has had pioneers down through the many centuries. They were spiritual pioneers who were pioneering a way into *the Kingdom of the Heavens*—pioneers of the Kingdom of God. They were so captivated by *the heavenly vision* that they confessed they were strangers and exiles on earth. They were no longer an earthly people but a heavenly or celestial people of whom the world was not worthy (Hebrews 11:32-40). They were wanderers on earth, always seeking for and reaching toward the goal and the promises of God. They were looking for God's city, for His country, for His purpose, for His end.

Of course, the Pioneer of all pioneers is our Lord Jesus. Although it may not render the best translation of the Greek word *archegos*, which is generally translated *prince*, *leader*, or *founder*, the *James Moffat Translation* (JMT) captures the heart of the matter by using the word *pioneer* in relation to Jesus.

"Pilate had decided to release him, but you repudiated the Holy and Just One; the boon you asked was a murderer, and you killed the pioneer of Life. (Acts 3:14 JMT)

"God lifted him up to his right hand as pioneer and saviour, in order to grant repentance and remission of sins to Israel." (Acts 5:31 JMT)

In bringing many sons to glory, it was befitting that He for whom and by whom the universe exists, should perfect the Pioneer of their salvation by suffering. (Hebrews 2:10 JMT)

To run our appointed course with steadiness, our eyes fixed upon Jesus as the pioneer and the perfection of faith.... (Hebrews 12:2 JMT)

It is in this vein that Paul reminds us that Christ, the Anointed Son of God, is **the firstborn from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep** (Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:20). Having suffered the agony and the shame of the cross and being the first man raised from among the dead to ascend to the throne of God, our Lord Jesus is truly the Pioneer of Life, of Salvation, and of Faith.

All who willingly lay down their lives daily, dying to self, even suffering in their flesh so that Christ might live through them are in the likeness of the Christ within them (Colossians 1:27), and they will be found worthy of the Kingdom to reign with Christ for a thousand years in the age to come and then in the age(s) beyond (1 Corinthians 9:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; Revelation 20:4-6).

Truly, Paul had the heart of a pioneer.

(8) More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, (9) and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, (10) that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; (11) in order that I may attain to the resurrection [out-resurrection] from the dead. (Philippians 3:8-11 NASB [WAET])

The point that needs to be underlined is that the first fruits signify the very beginning of the harvest season. **When the first fruits are called forth, it is truly good news for the rest of mankind, for it means that God is about to harvest the rest unto Himself, that is, to bring the rest into His house, each in his own order.** Some might have to be harvested in a way that causes some pain to them individually, but even this is good, for it is God's good and perfect intention that His entire (*the* all) crop be suitable for His house.

Significance of the Three Feasts

A basic understanding of the significance of the first fruits or pioneers is essential, for it proves that God is going to bring in a large crop, so large that, by the consummation of the eons, it will encompass *the all* of God's creation. Miss this point and the whole of God's ultimate purpose is missed.

Now, to further understand what could be called the "resurrection" harvests, we need to consider the three feasts given to ancient Israel. These feasts are also known by other names: the Feast of Unleavened Bread is **Passover**; the Feast of the Harvest is **Pentecost**; and the Feast of the Ingathering is **Tabernacles**. Leviticus 23 further explains the feasts and adds the **Wave-Sheaf Offering**, the **Feast of Trumpets**, and the **Day of Atonement**.

(14) "Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. (15) "You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. (16) "Also you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field. (Exodus 23:14-16 NASB)

As revealed through the following charts, each is significant on several levels, specifically, in the national history of ancient Israel, in the corporate history of the church, starting in the wilderness, and in the history of individual believers, joined together corporately as **a holy temple in the Lord**, built into **a dwelling of God in Spirit** (Ephesians 2:21-22).

National Level – Ancient Israel

Passover "Feast of Unleavened Bread"	Commemoration of the day Israel left Egypt under Moses as they journeyed to the Promised Land. Coming out of Egypt symbolized the coming out of bondage (the world and sin) and into a new life of liberty under God.
Pentecost "Feast of the Harvest"	Commemoration of the law given at Mount Sinai in Arabia when fire came down upon the mount and God spoke to all the people who feared for their lives. The law was to be written on their hearts; but, due to their fear of hearing the Lord directly, it was written on literal stones.
Tabernacles "Feast of the Ingathering"	Commemoration of the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness and the time Israel was supposed to cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Living in booths symbolized coming into a new life in the Promised Land.

Corporate Level – Ecclesia, Body of Christ

Passover Church
"In the Wilderness"
"Blood-Bought"

Blood-bought Church. When Moses delivered the sons of Israel out of Egypt, after applying the blood, they began their sojourn as *the church in the wilderness* (Acts 7:38), which ended with Jesus' death on the cross about 1,500 years later. The Holy Spirit was with them but not in them. *Christ the Rock followed them*, but He did not reside in them (1 Corinthians 10:4). God met them in a physical tabernacle of wood and cloth, later a temple of wood and inorganic stone.

Pentecost Church
"In Spirit"
"Leavened"

Leavened Church (Leviticus 23:17). Seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit began to take up residence in a new temple of living, organic stones. The people of God became *the temple of God* (1 Corinthians 3:16) with *an earnest of the Spirit* residing in them (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14), yet imperfect as they occupy mortal bodies, for this feast was celebrated with leavened bread (Leviticus 23:17).

Tabernacles Church
"In Glory"
"Perfected"

Glorious Church. It will take shape in the 7th month, signifying the Millennial Reign of Christ, the Tabernacles Age, which is the 7th day or the last 1,000-year day for this present heaven and earth. The greatest revival of the ecclesia of God will occur during this age. Through them, the nations will learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9), and *the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea* (Habakkuk 2:14).

Individual Level – Believers

Passover
"Justification"

Justification by faith in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus' blood is applied to the door of one's heart, meaning one puts his faith in Jesus' shed blood and is delivered out of bondage to the world and sin (signified by "Egypt").

Pentecost
"Sanctification"

Sanctification by the infilling of an earnest of the Holy Spirit. God begins to write His law on one's heart and, through this process one begins to learn obedience and how to be led by the Spirit of God during the journey to the Promised Land.

Tabernacles
"Glorification"

Glorification of members of Christ's Body. This occurs through resurrection, either in the first or second resurrection, which is the redemption of the body into an immortal, celestial, spiritual body in the image of Christ (Romans 8:23; 1 John 3:2). This is the believer's Promised Land, coming into the fullness of the Spirit as a son of God, conformed to the image of the Son of God; no longer bound by death but beyond it in all its forms.

Three Crops

Now, each feast is also associated with a harvest of crops – barley, wheat, and grapes. Obviously, the first two are grains and the last one is the fruit of a vine. The first feast relates to **barley and Passover**; the second feast relates to **wheat and Pentecost**; and the third feast relates to **grapes and Tabernacles**.

Barley is the first grain to ripen and be harvested around the time of Passover. Jesus was crucified during this harvest season and typifies the first fruits of the barley.

In *The Ryrie Study Bible* (Moody Press, 1978), a footnote for Leviticus 23:10-14 states: "The first fruits involved presenting to the Lord a sheaf (lit., an *omer*), about two quarts of the barley harvest on the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (16th of Nisan). ... First fruits symbolized the consecration of the entire harvest to God and were an earnest, or pledge, of the full harvest yet to be gathered."

Again, from the same reference, a footnote for Exodus 9:31-31 states: "That *barley* was ripe and the *flax* in blossom indicates the plague of hail was in January. ... The *wheat* and *spelt* (an inferior kind of wheat) were not harmed at this time because they ripen a month or so later."

Wheat is the next grain to ripen and be harvested during Pentecost, 50 days later. Saul was crowned king on Pentecost (1 Samuel 12:17), and the embryonic Pentecostal-era ecclesia was formed on Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus' resurrection. This has led some to describe the Pentecostal-era ecclesia as the "Saul Church," since it has been mixed with leaven (corruption) just as King's Saul's kingdom was leavened. This fact was memorialized in the feast, for Moses was commanded to prepare two loaves of bread baked with leaven (Leviticus 23:17).

Grapes, a fruit, not a grain, are the last to ripen and be harvested during the feast of the Ingathering or Tabernacles. They are harvested for the juice that is pressed out of its pulp. In type, this speaks of the wine for God's communion table, lives poured out as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). This is signified in the Feast of Tabernacles as each day of the feast grape juice from the fall harvest was poured out before the Lord as a drink offering (Numbers 29).

In terms of harvesting, it is important to understand that crops vary in what a farmer must do to harvest them or bring them into the barn or storehouse as a useful product. Some crops are easier to harvest than others, meaning some require greater work. In terms of these three crops, barley is the easiest, since it is winnowed by blowing on it to release the grain from the chaff; wheat is next, since it is threshed or beaten to release the grain from the hull; and grapes are the more difficult, since they are trodden under foot to break the hull and squeeze (press on) the pulp in order to release its tasty juice.

In type, the chaff, the hull, and the pulp signify the fleshly, carnal nature of man that must be broken or crushed in order to release the good grain and juice that is pleasing to the Lord.

Just as the feasts represent truths on several levels, so do the crops represent certain truths, as presented in the following charts.

Ancient Israel**"Barley"**
[Out of Egypt]

Ancient Israel was called out of Egypt during the barley season [Passover]. They applied the blood and were released, which could be likened to being winnowed. However, they left Egypt unchanged in character, i.e. their heart was unchanged.

"Wheat"
[At Mt Sinai]
[Wilderness, 40 Years]

The sons of Israel arrived at Mt Sinai during the wheat season [Pentecost] to receive the fiery law of God by hearing the Word of God, which was meant to give them the faith to enter the Promised Land. *Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ* (Romans 10:17). However, they feared God's fire and refused to hear from Him directly, so they sent Moses up the mount to receive the law written on stones rather than have it written on their hearts. They were leavened, which was memorialized in the fact that Pentecost was celebrated with leavened bread (Leviticus 23:17). The only way to stop leaven is to put it in fire to heat it up. By refusing God's fire, their leaven continued to rise.

Consequently, they spent 40 years being threshed in the wilderness in order to break their chaff (carnal nature). The first generation was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, so they fell in the wilderness and did not ripen to produce a harvest of grapes. They died on the vine, so to speak.

"Grape"
[Promised Land]

Due to their faith, Joshua and Caleb were the only ones found worthy to enter the Promised Land with the second generation. In type, Joshua and Caleb could be likened to the grape harvest. They were ready to enter the land 40 years earlier, but because of the faithlessness of their brethren, they too had to suffer by wandering in the wilderness. They were trodden down during this dusty journey in order to produce grape juice for God's communion table. Their flesh was trodden under foot to produce the sweet fruit juice of the grape to be presented to God. In other words, they typify coming into the presence of God as conquerors.

However, the second generation entered the land during Passover (Joshua 5:10), not during the grape harvest. This means that although they were allowed to enter the Promised Land, they were not allowed to enter into the full experience of Tabernacles. In typology, the grape harvest is seen 40 years earlier when the twelve spies went into the Promised Land to see that it truly was a land of milk and honey. To prove that it was a land of fruit, they came out with a cluster of grapes, meaning that it was grape harvest time [Tabernacles]. If all the sons of Israel had had the faith to enter the land, they would have been likened to the sweet juice crushed from the grapes and would have experienced Tabernacles.

Troops**"Barley" "Conquerors"**

First fruits company of conquerors, the first of the Lord's people to mature spiritually and, as such, the first to be found worthy to reign with Christ during His millennial Kingdom. They are the first to come into glorification, to rise up in the **first resurrection** and be **transfigured as sons of God** into the image of the Son of God; the first from among the Body of Christ to receive redeemed bodies – spiritual, immortal, celestial, and glorified. They are the first to receive the fullness of God, full of His Spirit as signified by the fact that they are the *anointed* first fruits. The first fruits of the barley harvest were *mixed with oil* (Leviticus 23:13), which signifies anointing. Gideon's army was likened to a loaf of barley bread, and they conquered the Midianites (Judges 7:13). The entire account of Gideon's victory is a type of the resurrection of the conquerors.

**"Wheat"
"Church"**

Rest of the Body of Christ, *saved, yet as through fire* (1 Corinthians 3:15). They will rise up, along with all the remaining dead, to appear before the Great White Throne. They are the leavened company that will receive their inheritance in the Kingdom through the second resurrection. The fire of God will stop and remove the leaven from them so that they, like the anointed first fruits that rose up 1,000 years earlier, will come into the redemption of their bodies and immortality.

**"Grape"
"Nations"**

Nations; the rest of the dead of mankind that will rise up in the second resurrection to face the Great White Throne Judgment and the lake of fire. Just as it takes much more effort to break the thick hull of a grape, so too will it take much more effort to break the hull of man's carnal flesh. The fiery law of God is God's consuming fire (not literal fire) that exposes all the carnal nature and works of man in order to remove all sin and right all wrongs, so that, at the consummation of the eons, all debts are resolved.

Believers**Barley**

When one first believes, there are things (sins, leaven) that are easily winnowed out of his or her life. It takes very little effort to be released from these things.

Wheat

However, some of the leaven is more entrenched and requires threshing to remove the chaff. It requires the disciplining of our Heavenly Father to release these things (Hebrews 12:4-11).

Grapes

Unfortunately, some things are so entrenched that they are like the thick hull of a grape. These things must be trodden under foot, a more severe crushing. *He scourges every son whom He receives* (Hebrews 12:6).

This, and much more, serves as background material to understand Paul's unveiling of the three troops as presented in 1 Corinthians 15. However, Paul was not the only one of the apostles to

employ the metaphor of a harvest of people, for John was given the same understanding as presented in Revelation 14:1-20 (below).

(1) Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ... (4) These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.

The 144,000 signify conquerors and, as such, are first fruits. They could be called the cream of the crop and, most likely, signify a barley harvest or, perhaps, a kind of first fruits of first fruits. After all, Paul tells us that Jesus Himself is a first fruit of first fruits to follow Him in resurrection.

(14) Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. (15) And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." (16) Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Clearly, this is a picture of a harvest, specifically one that follows the barley, which means it has to be a wheat harvest.

(17) And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. (18) Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe." (19) So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. (20) And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

The great wine press is meant to break the thick hull of the carnal nations in order to release the sweet wine for God.

First Fruit is Holy

All doubt that there are three harvests in view is cleared up by the fact that the last harvest is of grapes, meaning that the barley and wheat harvests must precede it; all are destined to be harvested into God's house, holy unto the Lord. How do we know? **And if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump: and if the root is holy, so are the branches** (Romans 11:16 ASV). If the first crop or harvest is holy, then the remaining crops or harvests are holy as well. This is a vital point to keep in mind in understanding God's ultimate purpose for all mankind. The Son of God and of Man is Holy, and He is the first fruit and the root. All that follow Him in the resurrection harvests, whether of the lump or branches, must eventually be holy as well.

1,600 Furlongs of Love

Now, this leads to the last verse of Revelation 14 that is so often described as if it will be manifested literally. The New American Standard Bibles (NASB) does a disservice to the meaning of this verse, for it uses 200 miles (not 180) instead of 1,600 furlongs or stadia.

And the winepress was trodden [trampled] without [outside] the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs [1,600]. [*stadia*; about 180 miles or 300 kilometers] (Revelation 14:20 ASV [ALT])

Most of us have been taught that this scene of blood rising to the bridles of the horses for 1,600 furlongs (*stadia*) will be literally fulfilled as the Lord rides out of heaven to slay all His enemies with a physical sword. Some have tried to calculate how many bodies it would take to accomplish this. There is no width given, only the length, so assumptions have to be made. Someone has calculated that there could be from 3,580 to 30,810 bodies, but not millions as so many assume. And yet, others have stated that even if every person on earth were placed in the space, it still would not achieve this result. Frankly, I do not have the skill to prove it one way or the other.

I recall listening to preachers with near glee in their voices as they expounded on this verse as, according to them, God gets His pound of flesh from rebellious man at the end of our present age. They spoke of the Lord as if He were "mad as hell" and determined to wipe out thousands upon thousands in His anger for their rebellion and rejection of Him. They described how massive amounts of blood will flow in that day, so much of it that it will rise to the bridle of a horse and for a distance of 180 miles, which is nearly the length of the present state of Israel.

Strangely, I never sensed the preachers were broken-hearted over such a thing happening to our fellow humans. There was no love or compassion in their words. It was almost as if they thought these ones will deserve what they get, and that this is exactly how God views the matter as well. When I heard such oration, I was left wondering whatever happened to **God is love**, which leads to the heart of the matter.

Let us put aside the literal interpretation and consider another possibility on the basis of what it signifies. After all, Jesus declared that He came to save the world, not condemn it (John 3:17). Why? Because **God so loves the world!**

Again, let us be reminded that the barley and wheat harvests pertain to the ecclesia of God being gathered into His barn, after which, God turns to the rest of mankind, as depicted in the grape harvest, with the number 1600 referring to the full impact of the winepress of God upon the grapes, which is revealed in the meaning of the numbers 16 and 100. The number 100 is important because the number 1600 is the number 16 intensified 100 times.

The number **16** signifies **love**, and the number **100** often indicates something that has come into **fullness**. Thus, it is proposed that the number **1600** signifies **the fullness of God's love for all**.

Could it mean that as John was in spirit he saw the fullness of God's love in action? Although he described it as a grotesque result of a physical battle, could it be interpreted as something gloriously positive, something only seen in spirit? A winepress is designed to produce wine from the fruit of the vine. The end product is a good thing, not a bad thing, for wine is for pleasure and communion. The vine that the grapes hang on signifies the nations.

The parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5 reveals that vines are nations. The nation in view was the nation of Judah that had produced bad grapes. Another example of vines representing nations is discovered in the parable of the trees in Judges 9.

(1) Let me sing now for my well-beloved a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. (2) He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it and also hewed out a wine vat in it; then He expected it to produce good grapes.... (Isaiah 5:1-2 NASB)

At any rate, the grapes on the vines signify the people of the nations. The flesh of the grapes signifies the flesh of carnal man. The carnal flesh must be crushed so that new life can and will come forth.

Metaphorically speaking, the blood comes from the grapes being harvested and signifies the soul of man, **for the soul of the flesh is in the blood** (Leviticus 17:11 DNT). He who loses his soul shall gain it. The people of the nations represented in John's Patmos vision did not lose their soul (carnal life) during our present eon or the age to come (if they live and/or die during this age), so they must lose it through the winepress of the wrath of God.

But remember that God's wrath is not like man's wrath. His wrath is for the purpose of restoration and correction, not for destruction. As a father disciplines his child, so does the Father discipline mankind. The heart of wrath is love. Thus, the wine represents the product that will progressively and eventually come forth from God's love; God and man in communion, which is an intimate spiritual relationship, a necessity for God to be all in all.

Thus, we are given a glorious picture of a harvest of love as the Lord, through His conquerors, turns to the nations to lead them into His Kingdom of Love. How will He do it? Not by the physical sword but by the much sharper sword of the Word of God that divides soul and spirit, both joints and marrow (Hebrews 4:12). He will do it by His Word, which is the very law of God. It is the Word of God that will crush the flesh of carnal man, not to destroy or annihilate the man but to save him.

Fulfilled in the Ages to Come

One final thought: Generally, Revelation 14 is seen unfolding entirely at the end of our present age; however, there is the possibility that it depicts the entire spectrum of God's harvest that will begin at the end of our age and proceed throughout the age to come and come to its full conclusion at the consummation of the ages.

We have to keep in mind that when our present age ends and the Kingdom of Christ takes root a great revival will spread throughout the whole earth. The **Gospel of the Kingdom** will be taken to the nations and many, but not all, will become kingdom nations. As such, there will be many new believers during the Kingdom Age that will remain in mortal bodies. As I see it, there will also be believers from the previous age that were not counted worthy as conquerors (Revelation 2-3) to be transfigured into immortality to reign with Christ. If so, they too will be part of the great revival led by the conquerors.

As presented in the previous charts, new believers and ones that did not conquer or overcome in our present age, more than likely, will follow the same path of the three feasts (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles) and the three crops (barley, wheat, grapes) that the conquerors followed. In other words, they will follow the path trod by the pioneers.

Further, when the resurrected unbelievers from the nations appear before the Great White Throne, they too, most likely, will have to follow the same path, except that their experience of being trodden under foot, likened to the winepress of grapes, is going to be far more painful than believers experienced while in mortal bodies. But even this will end, for God's judgments are never eternal; they are eonian.

The good news for all mankind is that the winepress will produce **1600 furlongs of love**, which signifies **the fullness of the love of God**. When all is said and done at the consummation of the ages, which will occur at Creation's Grand Jubilee, all will be in love with God as all are filled with **God is love**.

In the end, God will have a huge communion table of bread and wine as all enter into the joy of the love of God, and the Father's ultimate purpose of being all in all is fulfilled. Absolutely nothing will be lost.

"Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost." (John 6:12)

This is the harvest of the Kingdom of God!