

The Discovery of the Creator's First Alliance

We are living at a critical juncture in the evolution and history of humans. We know more about the ancient world than any generation has ever known. We also are the first generation of “**inforgs**” – ***informational organisms***, *mutually connected and embedded in an informational environment (the Infosphere), which we share with other informational agents, both natural and artificial, that also process information logically and autonomously*. To put it another way, our sensory perception organs are directly receiving massive amounts of information from digital devices linked to “*the cloud*.”

Technologies are contributing to the trend of increasing numbers of individualized, disconnected, and isolated people. Humans are genetic, memetic, social creatures that depend on others to live fulfilled lives. Social collectives that have been some of the strongest binding forces among peoples of the world, such as religions, are decreasing in influence also. However, Christianity is still a very large and powerful group of religions, and the Bible is valued by over 2.4 billion Christians globally.

*Exploring the Bible and Biblical Heritages combines
new knowledge about the ancient world with our new inforg capabilities.*

We now know more about the histories of the Bible and Christian Biblical Heritages than any generation before us. It has transformed our understanding of Jesus, his teachings, and his movement – *and other movements based on beliefs about him*. Facts about Biblical Heritages are exposing the dangerous mutually exclusive theological beliefs that have polarized Christians for many centuries. In addition, a large body of ancient wisdom has emerged that can be a mutually inclusive binding force in lives today. This new knowledge allows people to transform their Biblical Heritages into sources of time-tested values -- *love, compassion, equality, loyalty* -- and a standard that elevates human lives above everything else.

This is truly an exciting time to be alive!

The Parable that Revealed An Alliance of the Creator with the ADAM

For many years, we studied, analyzed, and explored the *Parable of the Great Day of Judgment* (Matthew 25:31-46). It is one of the most important and well-known and least understood teachings of Jesus.

Part 1 (verses 31-33)

- *The Son of Man arrives with angels and sits on a throne.*
- *All nations are gathered before him.*
- *He separates nations from one another, like a shepherd separates sheep from goats, putting the sheep on the right and goats on the left.*

The **Son of Man** is an apocalyptic figure, which means his appearance signals the beginning of the day the prophet Isaiah calls, **The Day of Vengeance of our God**.¹ The prophet Malachi describes it as “*the day, burning like an oven, when all the proud and all who do wickedly will be burned up like stubble.*”² Every Jewish person listening to Jesus knew the day will be the second time their God has done this. The first time, God drowned every family on earth, except for Noah and his family.

- *God gave Noah instructions about what he could do to save his family.*
- *God gave instructions to Noah, and not anyone else, because he was “righteous.”*
- *The instructions showed Noah how to build an ark.*

Part 2 (verses 34-40)

- *The King addresses the sheep in the group on the right.*

“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

“I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.”

¹ Isaiah 61.2

² Malachi 4:1

Everyone listening to Jesus knew the parable is about **The Great Day of Judgment**. My family belonged to a Baptist church, and I knew the parable was about **The Great Day of Judgment**. But I did not know that giving food to hungry people, drink to thirsty people, etc., had anything to do with "**Judgment Day!**"

- *The righteous will say to the King:*

"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?"

"When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you?"

"Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?"

The nations in the group on the right are called "the righteous." Noah was "righteous." In the parable, it is already "**Judgment Day**," but in the story of Noah, he was called righteous before the flood began. Noah had enough time to build the ark before the rain began to fall.

- *The King will say to them:*

"Amen!"

"When you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me!"

The "*amen*" was an affirmation that the nations above asked the right questions. The King's answer reveals a key wisdom principle -- *the least members of a nation are the King's brothers*.

Part 3 (verses 41-45)

- *The King now speaks to the nations in the group on the left:*

"Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

"I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take me in, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me."

- *They ask the King:*

“Master, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?”

- *The King will say to them:*

“Amen!”

“In as much as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.”

This reveals that all nations, including Israel, will be judged by the same standard.

Part 4 (verses 46)

- *The nations in the group on the left will go away into everlasting punishment.*
- The righteous, the nations in the group on the right, will go away into eternal life.

Those are the words of Jesus. His message to the audience is this:

Take care of the King's brothers in our nation!

What kind of God would do that! It made absolutely no sense to me. For me, this parable was about giving charity to the poor, not eternal life. Eternal life was about going to Heaven and living with God forever. The only way to do that was **being saved**. For me, this is what “*being saved*” meant:

*A person is saved by faith **alone**, through grace **alone**, in Christ **alone**.*

For me, being saved was an “**individual experience**.” It is what makes an individual “**righteous**.” It cannot be done without “**Christ**.” I was taught that Romans 10:9 is what people must do to be saved:

*“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord
and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,
you will be saved.”*

But after digging deeper into the parable that Jesus taught, the first thing that came to my mind was -- *What kind of God would do that!* Clearly, the message of Jesus in Matthew is very different from the message of Paul in Romans – **that is a FACT!** So, today, when I

encounter conflicts like this – *I use BHC’s Guidelines and Models to Explore the Bible*. I began with the words of Jesus in Matthew and found a clue I hadn’t noticed before.

The Blessing & The Alliance

At the beginning of this newsletter, I pointed out that we know more about the ancient world than any generation has ever known. In the past, the only source of information regarding Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Canaanites, or Persians, for Bible readers was the Bible. But today people can use “Google” to read translations of actual writings of Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Canaanites, and Persians and see their version of events found in the Bible. Ancient Near Eastern writings also include the Hebrew texts of the Jewish Scriptures. Those “other writings” reveal shared ideas with the Hebrew texts that were unknown until very recently.

*“Come, you blessed of My Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*

This is the clue from the parable above that revealed one of those unknowns. We traced the words “*blessed of my Father*” back to “*the Creator’s blessing of the humans*” in Genesis 1. Using related information from Babylonian, Persian, and Egyptian writings, we discovered that what we thought was a blessing in Genesis, is actually a blessing and an alliance.

- **Blessing:** *Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.*
- **Alliance:** *Subdue the earth, have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the winged creatures of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.*

In the past, biblical scholarship has viewed covenants as simply a *list of legal obligations*. An alliance is a type of covenant in which **the relationship of the parties is a very important aspect**. Understanding an alliance requires an awareness of the following:

- *Diplomacy through alliances shared cultural ideas of family.*
- *Parties of the alliance are viewed as members of the same family and household, united by bonds of love and friendship.*
- *Friendship, peace, good relations, and material well-being of the parties are core aspects of the alliance.*

- *Analogies rooted in brotherhood and family are used to communicate the terms of treaties.*

In Genesis 1, there are two parties involved in this alliance – **the Creator** and **the ADAM** (*a man and a woman*). Their relationship is viewed as that of **“father and son.”** Below is quick overview of the terms of the alliance.

- The Creator has created everything the ADAM will need to survive, thrive, and fulfill the terms of the alliance.
- The ADAM is a creature with an earth soul, which means it has appetites, desires, and longings related to the earth. Animals also have an earth soul, but unlike the animals, the ADAM has the power to **“subdue”** *their appetites, desires, and longings by exercising impulse control and self-discipline.* The man and woman are to help each other do this.
- The ADAM is the **Creator’s Representative** over the fish of the sea, over the winged creatures of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.
- The ADAM is to exercise power over all living things -- *like a shepherd interacts with the animals of his flock.*
- **“specific diets”** – Humans may eat any plant that yields seed and fruit from any tree that yields seeds. Only humans may eat fruit. Animals and winged creatures may eat any green plants.

Relationship of the Man and Woman of The ADAM

- They are “equals” in the eyes of the Creator.
- They must act together to fulfill the terms of the alliance.
- They must help each other exercise impulse control and self-discipline.
- They are to create new human lives by sexual reproduction.
- They are to act together as parents – father and mother – teaching, mentoring, and training their children to become adult members of the ADAM.
- They are to act together as the Creator’s Representatives by exercising power like a shepherd over all living things on earth.
- They are to gather every Day Seven and hear, discuss, and remember the Creator’s Wisdom.
- They may eat any plant that yields seed and fruit from any tree that yields seeds, but only humans may eat the fruit of trees.

