



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

A big week, in the Big City (*update: based on office rent rates, the El Supremo designation has moved from New York to Washington. Prime real estate reflects where the money is: in the Old Days, it was Wall Street; New Day locale is Capitol Hill*). Why the “big week?” Four words: ***State of the Union***.

On Wednesday night - before a joint session of Congress and assembled dignitaries in the upper-level gallery - the President will deliver the stakeholders’ report for the Republic, and forecast his plans for his administration’s future. The audience will listen, and take copious notes.

In keeping with that tone, let me offer a Kingdom version of the State of your Union (*the Union in the cross-hairs in this brief is your personal union with the One True God, the Heavenly Father*). How are things, for you, with Him?

The best source of answer to that question comes from the only Son of the Father, Jesus. In a short message that I cite often, He



described four conditions characterizing people relative to God. It is known as the “Parable of the Sower,” though it talks more about the soil than it does the sower (*you can get the straight-scoop in Matthew 13:1-23*). Based on His address - given around A.D. 27, and still valid today - what is the State of people’s Union with God? Four groups are described...

**Group #1 are Hard**. Often called “wicked,” these people are at war with heaven. Not just “unrighteous,” they are offended by the concept of righteousness... and are antagonistic toward anyone who claims a Supreme Being. **Status: Lost, by choice.**

**Group #2 are Shallow**. Claiming an affinity for “spirituality,” they find value in all brands of religious offerings. The Pope and the Dalai Lama have equal

*validity, in their book. Championed by leaders like Oprah, "all roads lead to heaven" is their mystical MapQuest.*

***Status: Lost, by spreading their bets and missing the mark.***

***Group #3 are In.*** *They heard the truth; they accepted salvation; they are set for heaven... but they live as if their faith lacked power this side of Paradise. Jesus said because they were worried and deceived, they produce no eternal impact.*

***Status: Saved, but spiritually sterile.***

***Group #4 are Incredible.*** *They heard; they accepted; they are set... and, they're transformed. The chance to participate in the mission of God's redemptive plan has redefined them, to the core. For them, life is about producing eternal impact. **Status: Saved, and spiritually productive.***

Americans will listen on Wednesday night, searching for the part of the speech that will affect them, personally. Christians should listen - again - to Jesus' timeless speech, searching for the part that will affect them, eternally.

No portion of the Scriptures has ever impacted me more than this one. In fact, I've chosen to construct my entire life around it's tenets. Result: ***I choose to be a Group #4 player.*** My strategies: Avoid the fights with Group #1s; why waste my time? Try

to reason with the Group #2s, to bring them to their senses. Preach some to Group #3s, to challenge their worries and deceptions. But, mostly: devote as much time as possible to those Group #4s - the *Incredibles*. Encourage them to maximize their impact in this life, as they do the work that Jesus left them here to do, on His behalf - *the work that matters most!*

I will still listen to what's said on Wednesday night... but I sure wouldn't put it on par with what was said in Matthew 13! So, *what's your status? Does it stimulate strategies that give focus to your life?*

Bob Shank

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