

SEVEN PARABLES OF JESUS

CHAPTER ONE

The Purpose of the Parables

Our subject for this series of Bible lessons is the “Seven Parables of Jesus.” In our first lesson we will be giving an overview of all seven parables. First of all, to lay the foundation for our study we must first understand why Jesus spoke in parables.

In the first twelve chapters of Matthew Jesus gives a message, in plain easy to understand language, directed to the nation of Israel only. The record is in Matthew chapter ten, verses five through seven. This offer of the Kingdom was only to a certain class of people.

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 10:5-7)

Jesus offered Himself as King of the long awaited Kingdom age that was eagerly anticipated by the nation of Israel. To prove that he was in truth the Messiah He performed, in rapid succession, the miracles recorded in Matthew chapters 8 and 9. But these miracles which Jesus performed were branded by the religious leaders of Israel as being of the Devil. Therefore, they rejected the King, as well as the Kingdom.

In spite of the evidence of His power and authority, they did not believe. Jesus gives the reason for their unbelief in the following verses.

“But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (John 12:37, 38)

Why did those to whom Jesus spoke not believe on Him? It was because God said they would not, and God’s Word must stand; so Jesus made this most revealing statement. I would hesitate to give the reason if Jesus had not plainly stated:

“Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.” (John 12:39, 40)

God knew from the beginning that the nation of Israel would reject the offer of the Kingdom. **“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” (John 1:11)**

It was after their rejection that Jesus began to clothe His message in a mystery, called parables.

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world..” (Matthew 13:35)

This gives us our first clue as to why Jesus spoke in parables. The parables were given to reveal an age, or a period of time, that was unheard of up until this time. This “new age” was called by our Lord “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” (Matthew 13:11). Paul calls it “the dispensation of the grace of God,” (Ephesians 3:2). Paul continues with what Jesus was teaching, concerning the secrecy of this age, in verses five and six of Ephesians chapter three.

“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” (Ephesians 3:5, 6)

By the use of parables Jesus begins to reveal an age (or dispensation) never before revealed. The seven parables are a prophetic picture of the age between the first and second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ that reveal how this age will begin, what conditions will prevail and how it will end.

To have an understanding of the age in which we live, one must first have a clear understanding of the first seven parables of Jesus. Before we can understand the parables we must know the meaning of a parable.

We have all heard the modern definition that a parable is “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning;” however, this definition is only partly true. According to Jesus, a parable is a method of teaching designed to hide, or veil a truth, rather than reveal a truth.

The disciples asked Jesus the question, **“Why speaketh thou unto them in parables?” (Matthew 13:10)** Jesus gives the meaning, as well as the purpose of a parable.

“He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” (Matthew 13:11)

Jesus says, in this verse, that a parable is meant to reveal a truth to some, while hiding the truth from others. The only ones who will be able to understand the parables

are those to whom the truth is supernaturally revealed. This still holds true today. This applies not only to the parables, but to the rest of the Bible as well.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Corinthians 2:14)

The only teacher of the Word of God is the Holy Spirit, who is the author of the Word of God.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” (John 16:13)

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (I Corinthians 2:10)

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (I Corinthians 2:13)

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” (I John 2:27)

Apart from the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, the parables, as well as the rest of the Bible, would forever remain a mystery.

The parables may be better understood when placed in their proper perspective, therefore we must make a distinction between the two separate kingdoms mentioned in the New Testament.

(1) First, the Bible speaks of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is God’s rule over the earth and nations during all the ages.

(2) Second, the Bible speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the dispensation of the personal rule of Christ on earth during the one-thousand years millennial age.

The Bible speaks of the “mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven,” which is also a

part of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The “mysteries of the Kingdom” is the dispensation between Calvary and the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, during which the Kingdom of God is postponed, and the Church takes her place. That the Gentiles will be a part of the future Kingdom of Heaven was a “mystery” to the Old Testament saints, as well as the New Testament unsaved.

It is important, as we study the Word of God, to keep in mind which Kingdom the narrative is referring; whether it is “the kingdom of God,” “the kingdom of Heaven,” or the “mystery of the kingdom.” Unless Believers understand this they will never be able to separate the physical, earthly promises made to Israel, and the heavenly promises made to the Church.

Many times I have heard well-meaning speakers apply the promises of earthly material blessings that God made solely to the nation of Israel to the Believers in this age, the Church age.

Jesus makes plain what kingdom is in focus in the seven parables.

**“He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”
(Matthew 13:11)**

“The mysteries of the Kingdom” is the period of time preceding the Kingdom of Heaven. The “Kingdom of Heaven” is the literal rule and reign of Christ on earth.

The seven parables in their order are:

- (1) The parable of the sower.
- (2) The parable of the tares.
- (3) The parable of the mustard seed.
- (4) The parable of the leaven.
- (5) The parable of the hidden treasure.
- (6) The parable of the precious pearl.
- (7) The parable of the dragnet.

In these seven parables Jesus pulls back the curtain of time and gives Believers a prophetic view of the conditions that will prevail, from the beginning, until the end of this present age in which we live.

An Overview of the Seven Parables

- (1) The “parable of the Sower.” In this parable of the four types of soil we are given an overall description of the characters, as well as their response to all who hear the Word. This parable alone should silence forever the theory that by the preaching of the gospel, by social reform, and by education the whole world will one day be converted.
- (2) The “parable of the Tares.” This parable only confirms the truth of the first parable by the contamination of the Church by the Devil.

- (3) The parable of the ‘mustard seed.’ This parable gives the reason for an insignificant plant growing into a large tree, the end result of the parable of the tares.
- (4) The “parable of the leaven.” This parable shows the compromise of the true Church with the flesh.
- (5) The “parable of the treasure hidden in the field.” This parable shows what is happening to the nation of Israel, while God is calling out “a people for His name sake.”
- (6) The “parable of the pearl of great price.” This parable reveals God’s plan for this age, the age of grace.
- (7) The “parable of the dragnet.” This parable reveals to us what is going to happen to the nations of the world, the ones that survive the Great Tribulation.

This, in condensed form, gives us the complete history of the Church age, from the beginning on the day of Pentecost, until the beginning of the Kingdom age; the golden age of peace and prosperity promised to Israel, in the Old Testament.

CHAPTER TWO

Parable of the Sower - Parable of the Tares

In our first lesson on the “Seven Parables,” we saw the meaning, as well as the purpose of the parables.

In this, our second lesson, our study will be on the first and second of the seven parables.

(1) The Parable of the Sower.

(2) The Parable of the Tares.

These two parables should be considered together, not only because of their chronological order, but because of their similarity as well. They both use the same analogy to present an important Bible truth, that of sowing and reaping.

The parable of the sower opens with these words:

**“And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow.”
(Matthew 13:3)**

Following this brief introduction, in the following five verses, our Lord describes in graphic detail the four kinds of soil that represents every type of individual ever to hear the gospel, as well as their response to the gospel.

In one brief sentence the Lord gives the type of soil and what happens to the seed.

**“And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.”
(Matthew 13:4)**

For Believers who live during this dispensation, no further explanation should be necessary. However, the disciples, who knew nothing about God’s plan for this age of grace, needed more light. Here is the Lord’s answer.

**“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”
(Matthew 13:19)**

The words “and understandeth it not” hold the key as to why the seed that fell by the way side did not bear fruit.

There are at least two undeniable Bible facts as to why some do not understand the gospel.

First, no person can understand the gospel unless it is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

**“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.
And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed**

art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:16, 17)

The second reason some do not understand the gospel is they are blinded by the Devil. In this first “soil” we see the work and influence of the Devil.

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (II Corinthians 4:3, 4)

The second type of “soil” is found in Matthew chapter thirteen, verse five, and is a fitting description of a person driven entirely by emotions.

“Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth.” (Matthew 13:5)

Those who depend upon an emotional experience show only a “head knowledge” of the gospel, when a “heart knowledge is necessary. (Romans 10:9, 10) The second type of soil shows the influence of the “flesh” upon the hearer of the word.

The third type of soil is recorded in Matthew chapter thirteen, verse seven.

“And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them.” (Matthew 13:7)

No further explanation is necessary than that given by Jesus. We see in this type of soil the influence of the world.

“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.” (Matthew 13:22)

If it were not for the fourth type of soil (Matthew 13:8) and our Lord’s explanation (verse 23) the “Time for the Bible” ministry would be most discouraging indeed.

“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matthew 13:23)

Although we may rejoice that twenty-five percent of the hearers in this parable believe, we cannot overlook the fact that seventy-five percent do not believe.

The first lesson we learn from this parable is that during this dispensation true born again Believers will always be in the minority.

Second, it should put to rest the false theory that the whole world will be converted in this age.

The context of the second parable only confirms what is revealed in the first, that the whole world will not be converted during this age. Here is the reason why this will not be.

**“And another parable put he forth unto them, saying,
The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which
sowed good seed in his field:
But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares
among the wheat, and went his way.
But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth
fruit, then appeared the tares also.” (Matthew 13:24-26)**

Jesus explains Matthew chapter thirteen, verses twenty-four through twenty-six in the following Scriptures.

**“He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the
good seed is the Son of man;
The field is the world; the good seed are the children
of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the
wicked one;
The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is
the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.”
(Matthew 13: 37-39)**

The contrast between the two: First, the sower is the Son of man, and the good seed are Believers. Second, the tares are unbelievers, that only profess to be believers; and the enemy is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age. In the parable of the four soils, **“the seed is the word of God.” (Luke 8:11)**

In the parable of the tares Jesus calls the “good seed” the children of the kingdom. These are the body of true born again Believers; those in whom the good seed, the Word of God, fell on good ground.

The Devil has a counterfeit, a company of people called tares, who look and act like Believers. These tares are among the true Believers and are so similar in outward appearance to the children of God that it is impossible for Believers to tell the difference. Only the angels, in the end, may be trusted to separate them.

There are two important lessons taught in these parables. First, they confirm that the whole world will not be converted in this age. Second, they show that the Devil is not limited to just the exploration of the flesh. Galatians chapter five, verses 19 through 21 lists the works of the flesh. These works of the flesh are not the works of the Devil.

The Bible is crystal clear as to the primary sphere of the Devil’s activity during the “age of grace.” Here is the record.

**“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.
And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.
Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.
(II Corinthians 11:13-15)**

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” (Ephesians 4:14)

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (I Peter 5:8)

To show how the children of the wicked one (the tares) so emulate the children of God (the wheat), they appear as true children of God.

**“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”
(Matthew 7:15)**

The evidence of the success of the message of “the wolves in sheep’s clothing” is how orthodox they claim to be when they face the Lord.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (Matthew 7:22)

You will not find a more fundamental group anywhere. Not only did they call Him “Lord,” but notice what they claimed to have done all in the name of Jesus.

- (1) They preached.
- (2) They cast out devils
- (3) Many wonderful works.

Our Lord gives His answer to all these religious works.

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:23)

Some believe that this is an account of someone who became a Believer, and then was not able to hold on. NO, NO, for Jesus says, **“I NEVER KNEW YOU.”**

The lesson given in the parable of the tares is a direct contradiction of the theory that as long as you are sincere it does not matter what you believe for the good Lord will understand.

After a lesson such as this we would be remiss if we did not show, from the Word of God, how one may know if they are a child of God (wheat), or a child of the Devil (tare). You can know by a close self examination.

**“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”
(II Corinthians 13:5)**

In this self examination there must be two things present.

(1) That ye be found in the faith.

(2) That Jesus Christ is in you.

What evidence may be found that these two things are present? First, the act of receiving the Lord Jesus Christ.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:12)

Second, the act of believing what you have received.

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;
and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
(Romans 10:9, 10)**

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John 3:36)

Added to these Scriptures are three more important verses.

**“And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.
These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (I John 5:11-13)**

CHAPTER THREE

Parable of the Mustard Seed - Parable of the Leaven

In our third lesson on the “Seven Parables of Jesus,” our study will be on the third and fourth parables:

- (1) The parable of the Mustard Seed.
- (2) The parable of the Leaven.

These two parables present a picture of the natural outgrowth of the tares, (the false professors), sown among the wheat, (the true Believers.)

Parable of the Mustard Seed

The presence of the tares are responsible for a small insignificant plant growing into an abnormal size. Here is the record.

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the lest of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.” (Matthew 13:31, 32)

The unnatural growth of an insignificant herb into a large tree is an anomaly. By this small, insignificant plant growing into a tree so large that the fowls of the air rested in its branches, gives us the true interpretation of this parable.

The most commonly accepted interpretation is that the mustard seed is the Church; and the reason for the large size is to accommodate all the different denominations and religions of the world. We saw the false assumption of this in the parable of the tares.

Nowhere in Scripture is it taught that in this age the true Believers will be a large and popular group. The rapid growth of the Mustard Seed is accomplished by the addition of tares, not wheat.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Matthew 7:13, 14)

The parable of the mustard seed only continues the contamination and corruption of the Church that began with the parable of the tares. This can be seen in the ungodly obsession with growth in modern day religion; pictured by the acceptance of the fowls, (who represent the Devil) finding refuge in its branches.

As this age progresses apostasy will only increase until the end. We see a description of this in Isaiah and Ezekiel that conforms closely to the age we are living in today.

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.” (Isaiah 29:13)

“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before me as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” (Ezekiel 33:31)

The Parable of the Leaven

We come now to the parable that holds the key to the entire chapter on the “mysteries of the kingdom.” It is not by accident that this parable, the parable of the Leaven, is exactly in the center of the seven.

It has been said that the key to understanding the New Testament is the book of Matthew, and the key to understanding Matthew is the thirteenth chapter, and the key to understanding the thirteenth chapter is the “parable of the leaven.”

Without the correct interpretation of the “parable of the leaven” it will be impossible to understand the whole program of God for this age. It becomes very important that we come to the true meaning of what the “leaven” means in this parable.

For the sake of comparative teaching we sometimes make reference to a commonly accepted, although entirely erroneous, explanation of some Bible theme. The parable of the leaven is no exception.

The most well-known and accepted explanation of the parable of the leaven is: “The woman is the Church. The three measures of meal represent the world. The woman (the church), by preaching the gospel is hiding the leaven in the meal; so by the efforts of the woman (the church) the whole world will one day be converted. This will bring about the age of universal peace and prosperity, which the church claims is their sole mission.” There is absolutely no Scriptural evidence to support this false theory.

The Word of God teaches just the opposite. “Leaven,” as taught in the Bible, is always symbolic of evil, sin and corruption and always, without exception, signifies evil and error, either in doctrine or morals.

Concerning “leaven,” the Scriptures say: **“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (I Corinthians 5:6b)** This man’s conduct of fornication, spoken of in this chapter, threatened to defile the whole Church, and Paul admonishes them to:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: 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.** (I Corinthians 5:7, 8)

Everywhere in the Scriptures leaven represents evil and error, both in doctrine and morals. This gives us a clear meaning of this parable, and is in complete harmony with the previous two parables, the tares and the mustard tree.

We are told throughout the New Testament that there will be false professors in the church, tares among the wheat, until the end of this age. The woman, in the bad ethical sense, symbolizes the false church.

As the “tares” represent the contamination of the Church by the Devil, and the “mustard tree” represents the corruption of the Church by the flesh, so too the “leaven” symbolizes the compromise of the Church, by the introduction of error and false doctrine of false religious teachers; with their human interpretation, dogmas, religious creeds and traditions.

The process of contamination, corruption and compromise will continue until the realm of Christendom has been invaded from top to bottom. Instead of being a distinct, peculiar, separated body of born again Believers, it will be a great religious society, without life. It will be a “church” in name only.

Never before in the history of the Church has there been so much deception taught and practiced. **“...Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed...” (Romans 12:2)** is sorely lacking in the organized church today. Tolerance and embracing false doctrine is unprecedented in this age.

There were three false doctrines, called “leaven,” that dominated the religious world at the time Jesus gave these parables. These doctrines have not diminished, but have grown in scope and size.

(1) The leaven of the Pharisees. **“...take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.” (Matthew 16:6)**

The leaven is identified in verse twelve. **“Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees.” (Matthew 16:12)**

The “leaven of the Pharisees” was teaching salvation by works, by keeping the law.

“But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” (Acts 15:5)

(2) The leaven of the Sadducees.

The “leaven of the Sadducees” is the same as liberalism and modernism today, that of denying the supernatural and the miraculous. Jesus says of them: **“...ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” (Matthew 22:29)**

(3) The leaven of the Herodians. **“Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.” (Mark 8:15)**

The leaven of the Herodians was the doctrine of worldliness; the pursuit of wealth and politics in religion.

It cannot be denied that the presence of all three of these false doctrines, called leaven, is in the worldly, religious church system today.

It is well-known that the doctrine of the Pharisees, salvation by works, or keeping the law, is here today. The doctrine, or leaven of the Sadducees, denying the Word of God and the power of God, is openly embraced in many Bible schools, as well as many churches. Then there are the well-meaning, but misguided professing believers who practice the doctrine of the Herodians by the pursuit of worldly pleasures, and promoting a false hope of changing the world by the political system. The Bible clearly teaches that the Believer is not to be **“conformed to this world.” (Romans 12:2)**

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (I John 2:15)

The Bible clearly teaches that the expansion and growth of the Church is to be accomplished by SOWING THE SEED, not by mixing the leaven of false doctrine with the seed.

If we understand the purpose of leaven being mixed with meal, that it is to enhance the taste of the bread, then we can understand why mixing the leaven of good works and politics with the gospel will make it more acceptable to the masses. This mixture makes it more acceptable to the unsaved. Add to this the pursuit of worldly pleasures and there is something for everybody. The best explanation of this practice of the church today is found in the following verses.

**“They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.
We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us;
he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”
(I John 4:5, 6)**

Instead of the true gospel, represented by the meal, false and erroneous doctrine represented by the leaven now dominates the world of professing religion.

Leaven does not unite true Believers, and day after day we see more divisions. The evidence of this is seen in the hundreds of different denominations, sects and cults; all claiming to be the only ones teaching the whole truth concerning the Word of God.

The condition we see in the religious realm is only an affirmation of the Word of God. This ungodly world church system will one day be spewed out of God’s mouth into the Tribulation (Revelation 3:16), and will become a part of the corrupt religious system to be judged with the great whore that represents this ungodly religious system.

CHAPTER FOUR

Parables of the Hidden Treasure, Precious Pearl, and Dragnet of Fishes

In our fourth and final lesson on the “Seven Parables of Jesus,” we take up the study of the final three parables.

Being an eye-witness to at least part of the fulfillment of the first four parables, we have every reason to believe the fulfillment of the final three will be true as well.

The “treasure hid in a field” and the “pearl of great price” are the two bright spots in the otherwise negative account of the age in which we live.

Treasure Hid in the Field

We come now to the fifth parable, the “treasure hid in a field.”

“Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” (Matthew 13:44)

Before we get to the true meaning of this parable, we feel we must mention again the most common accepted interpretation of this parable.

Some tell us that the treasure in the field is Jesus Christ, or salvation; and the one who sells all that he has to purchase the field to obtain salvation is the sinner. The interpretation that the buyer is the sinner and the treasure is salvation to be obtained by purchasing the field is made without any Scriptural foundation whatsoever. Let us see where this interpretation breaks down at every point.

- (1) Jesus says in Matthew 13, 38, **“The field is the world.”**
- (2) Jesus is not hidden in a field. **“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:32)**
- (3) The sinner does not seek the treasure of salvation. **“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it.” (Luke 15:4)**
“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10)
- (4) Neither does the sinner buy the field (world), for the sinner does not have the means to do so. **“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (I Peter 1:18, 19)**

(5) Salvation is not for sale. **“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” (Isaiah 55:1)**
“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17)

(6) When a sinner is found by Christ, he does not then hide Christ.

The One who buys the field is the Lord Jesus Christ, for He alone has the price to do so. The “treasure hid in the field” is none other than the nation of Israel.

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.” (Exodus 19:5)

“For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.” (Psalm 135:4)

This parable tells us what happened to the nation of Israel. The parable of “the treasure hid in a field” holds the key. Paul, writing to the Romans, tells us:

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.” (Romans 11:1, 2)

“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” (Romans 11:26)

The nation of Israel is set aside while God is calling out a people for His name.

“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.” (Acts 15:14)

After God has called out a people (the Church), He will then fulfill every promise made to this nation. **“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David.” (Acts 15:16)**

While this is taking place, Israel is being protected by God as a “treasure hid in a field.” **“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” (Matthew 24:34)**

According to the Greek dictionary one rendering of the word “generation” in this verse means “nation.” The promise, therefore, is that the generation of the nation of Israel, or family of Israel, will not pass away, but will be wonderfully preserved until the Church is complete. A promise we see being fulfilled before our very eyes. The treasure, then, will stay hidden in the field until God’s plan has run its course, as the Bible teaches.

**“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.”
(Romans 11:25)**

Pearl of Great Price

We now take up the most important parable as it relates to the True Church.

**“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls:
Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”
(Matthew 13:45, 46)**

Once again we must mention the most universally accepted interpretation of this parable. We are told that the merchant man is the sinner, and the pearl of great price is salvation, the Lord Jesus. The sinner then sells all that he has to pay the purchase price of redemption. This interpretation is a direct contradiction of what the Bible teaches about the doctrine of salvation by grace.

As stated earlier, the sinner does not seek after salvation.

**“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:
There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (Romans 3:10, 11)**

There is a reason it is called “the pearl of great price.” Salvation cannot be purchased, for it is beyond the sinner’s ability to pay the price. The sinner is not only a pauper, but spiritually bankrupt too; therefore we must look elsewhere for the correct interpretation of this parable.

The “pearl” is the “true Church,” which is made up of all who are born again. The “merchant man” is the Lord Jesus. To obtain the “precious pearl” He sold all that He had, left Heaven’s glory, laid aside the form of God, came to this old sinful earth and paid the infinite price with His own blood to redeem us.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from

**your vain conversation received by tradition from
your fathers;
But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb
without blemish and without spot.” (I Peter 1:18, 19)**

This “pearl” has been growing now for some two thousand years, and will one day be complete. It will be at this time that Christ will return for His Church.

**“That he might present it to himself a glorious church,
not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but
that it should be holy and without blemish.”
(Ephesians 5:27)**

This “presentation” may take place at any moment, and will bring an end to the Church age.

Following the “Rapture of the Church” there will be a seven year period of time when God will pour out His wrath upon this old earth.

The Net

Immediately following this “time of sorrow” we will see the fulfillment of the seventh and final parable, “the parable of the Dragnet.”

**“Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that
was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:
Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat
down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the
bad away.” (Mathew 13:47, 48)**

This parable describes the judgment of the nations that will take place at the glorious appearing of Christ, as recorded in Matthew chapter twenty-five, verses thirty-one and thirty-two.

**“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all
the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the
throne of his glory:
And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he
shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd
divideth his sheep from the goats.” (Matthew 25:31, 32)**

It is easy to confuse this judgment with the great “White Throne Judgment;” however, by comparing Scripture with Scripture we may well note the contrast between these two judgments. In the judgment of the nations:

- (1) There is no resurrection.
- (2) Living nations are judged, not individuals.
- (3) This judgment takes place on earth.
- (4) There are no books present.

Contrast this with the Great White Throne Judgment.

- (1) There is a resurrection.
- (2) Only the unsaved dead are judged.
- (3) Heaven and earth fled away. (This judgment takes place at what the Bible calls the “Great White Throne.”)
- (4) Their works were judged from the record written in the open books.

The only thing these two judgments have in common is the “Judge.”

There is only one thing by which the nations will be judged. This Scripture is referring to the treatment of the nation of Israel, the Jews, during the time they are “hidden in the field.”

“Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” (Matthew 25:45)

God made a promise to the nation of Israel when He called them. He will keep this promise as long as the world stands.

“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3)

This judgment, the judgment of the nations, will determine which nations enter the one-thousand year Kingdom reign of Christ on earth.

As the “mysteries of the kingdom age” come to a close, one thing is made perfectly clear; the world will not be converted during this age, but will end as it started with the four kinds of soil, with only a minority being saved.

God gives us His Word that His true Church—all born again Believers—has survived and will survive. **“...upon this rock (the Lord Jesus Christ) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18)**

If you are not a member of His Church, you can be by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. **“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:12)**

