

THE END OF THE LAW AND THE AGE OF GRACE

CHAPTER ONE

Law

I know of no other subject that has caused more confusion in religious circles than the failure to understand the difference between the age of Law and the age of Grace. To most people the Law consists only of the Ten Commandments. Then there are those who accept the whole Law, but have separated it into “the Law of God” and the “Law of Moses. They tell us that only the Law of Moses has been fulfilled, and that the Law of God is still in force today. As we study the Bible we see that the “whole law” goes far beyond the Ten Commandments.

The total Law consists of FOUR parts that become inseparable.

- (1) The “moral law,” the Ten Commandments that governed the moral conduct of the nation of Israel.
- (2) The “civil law,” that governed the social conduct of the nation of Israel.
- (3) The “dietary law,” that governed the health of the nation of Israel.
- (4) The “ceremonial law,” that governed the religious conduct of the nation of Israel.

All four parts are one Law, given by one God, to one man, Moses, to be delivered to one people, the nation of Israel. This one Law, in four parts, contains all of the instructions necessary to protect and preserve a nation to bring us a Saviour.

The Gentiles were never under the Law.

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.” (Romans 2:14)

The Law had a definite beginning.

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

For four hundred and thirty years there was no Law.

“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” (Galatians 3:17)

The Law also had a definite ending.

“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” (Luke 16:16)

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy

seed which is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” (Galatians 3:19)

If the Law was to end, for the Scripture says, “it was given till the seed should come” (or until Christ’s coming,) what, then, happened to the Law? When Christ came, did God change His attitude toward sin? No, God’s holiness demands perfection! Man cannot in any way stand before God in his sinful state. It was and is impossible for man to keep the Law.

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” (Romans 3:19)

The Law was God’s standard. If the Law, then, is God’s standard, and no person is able to keep the Law, has the Law been a failure? The Law was never meant as a means whereby a person could attain righteousness. If there was a Law that could produce righteousness, then Christ died in vain.

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” (Galatians 2:21)

If the Jews would have been able to attain the righteousness that God demanded in the Law there would have been no need for the sacrifice of Christ.

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” (Galatians 3:21)

If the Law is not in force today, what happened to the Law? If God knew that man could not keep the Law, did God then lower the standards? Absolutely not! The Word of God tells us exactly what happened to the Law.

For mankind to ever be in the presence of God, the Law must be upheld in every detail. Jesus said:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” (Matthew 5:17)

God made provision for man’s failure before He ever created man.

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth

**his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
To redeem them that were under the law, that we might
receive the adoption of sons.” (Galatians 4:4,5)**

**“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation
of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he
appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”
(Hebrews 9:26)**

Jesus met every demand of the Law. He lived a perfect life, and therefore became a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. The proof of His accomplishment is his resurrection.

Every born again believer died with Christ when He died. “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” The Law demands death.

**“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live
unto God.
I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I,
but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in
the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved
me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:19,20)**

Paul not only says he is dead “through” the Law, but also dead “to” the Law. Paul does not say that the Law is dead. He is saying that the Law exacted its penalty. The Law demanded death; and the price has been paid by the Son of God, on the cross. Paul says also that believers are “dead to the Law.” If, then, believers are dead to the Law, the Law has no more claim over them. By our Lord giving His life, on the cross, every demand of the Law was met, and the penalty demanded by the Law was paid in full.

**“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the
law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to
another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that
we should bring forth fruit unto God.” (Romans 7:4)**

Believers being “dead to the Law,” there is no more the Law can do. By the Lord Jesus paying the penalty, by giving His life on the cross, the Law has no more claim on the believer. This is why Paul could say:

**“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not
under the law, but under grace.” (Romans 6:14)**

Not only have we seen from the Scriptures that the believer is dead “through” the Law, and dead “to” the Law, but the believer is also “free” from the Law.

**“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made
me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2)**

We are “redeemed” from the Law.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (Galatians 3:13)

Being redeemed from the Law, we are then “delivered” from the Law.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Romans 7:6)

Being therefore delivered from the Law, we are also “free” from the Law.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2)

Being free from the Law means that the Law has “ended” for the believer.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (Romans 10:4)

We see why the Law ended -- it was “abolished”.

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” (Colossians 2:14)

Just a word of warning to those who believe that one must keep the Law to be saved. The Scriptures say:

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” (Galatians 2:16)

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” (Galatians 3:10)

A warning to you who would mix law and grace:

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:4)

You see, it is not Law AND Grace, but it is Law OR Grace.

Now for those who say that they believe the Law was fulfilled in Christ, but they believe part of the Law, such as the dietary law and certain holy days, are still to be observed today, shall we let the Bible settle the question.

“But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.” (I Corinthians 8:8)

“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” (I Timothy 4:3-5)

According to these Scriptures we are not to judge people regarding their diet, whatever it may be.

The following verses alone should settle once and for all the question concerning the dietary Law, for believers.

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.” (Romans 14:1-3)

Here is the verse that settles the question once for all.

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:” (Colossians 2:16)

CHAPTER TWO

The Age of Grace

We come now to an age called by Paul “the dispensation of grace.”

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.” (Ephesians 3:2)

What does the Bible mean by “grace?” It means that God does something for you that you do not deserve; which is absolutely impossible for you to achieve on your own.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8,9)

The dispensation of Grace, like the Law, had a beginning, and it will also have an ending. The rejection of Messiah (Jesus Christ) as King, by Israel, (Matthew chapter 10) introduced the dispensation of Grace. The dispensation of Grace will end with the Rapture of the Church.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (I Thessalonians 4:16,17)

The dispensation of Grace was a mystery, not revealed in the Old Testament. Paul says of the dispensation of Grace:

“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 fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” (Ephesians 3:5,6)

When Jesus introduced the dispensation of Grace with the parables of the Sower, He says:

“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)

Even though the dispensation of Grace was planned from the foundation of the world, it was a mystery not revealed until the nation of Israel rejected the Lord Jesus as King. I am afraid it is still a mystery to many religious leaders today.

The final offer of the Kingdom was made when Jesus sent the twelve disciples to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The message of the disciples was rejected.

“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.

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

**Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,
Nor script for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.” (Matthew 10:5-10)**

For those who claim that this commission is for today would do well to take another look at these verses again. A peek at their wardrobe would be most revealing.

The Pharisee’s rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as King when they accused Him of casting out devils “by Beelzebub the prince of the devils,” (Matthew 12:24). This was the last straw. This was the “blasphemy of the Holy Ghost,” which was unforgivable.

The offer of the Kingdom, made by John the Baptist, was totally rejected. With the overwhelming evidence confirmed by mighty works, that Jesus was who He said He was, one may wonder how the nation of Israel could reject Him as King.

Not all of the Jewish people rejected Jesus, for we know that Nicodemus was one who recognized that there was something special about Him.

**“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus,
a ruler of the Jews:**

**The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him,
Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God:
for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except
God be with him.” (John 3:1,2)**

The wise men from the East also recognized Jesus as King of the Jews.

**“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the
days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men
from the east to Jerusalem,
Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for
we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship
him.” (Matthew 2:1,2)**

The answer to why the Lord Jesus was rejected by the nation of Israel is quite simple. First, human nature being what it is, the Pharisees were not about to relinquish what little power they had over the people to anyone. We see this in the political life of today. Many, like the Pharisees, would not relinquish their power to even God Himself. They will lie, deceive, scheme, or do anything under the sun to hang on to that power. The Pharisees were no different than the politicians today.

However, there is another reason the nation of Israel rejected Christ as King.

**“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.
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, not understand
with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal
them.” (John 12: 37-40)**

God knew beforehand, (He knows all things) that they would not accept Jesus as their King. Had they accepted Jesus as their King at that time, the Word of God would have become null and void.

After the offer of the kingdom to the nation of Israel was rejected, the Kingdom was set aside, or postponed, until God has accomplished His plan and purpose. For mankind to be saved Christ had to go to the cross and pay the penalty for sin. While the Kingdom is postponed, God is calling out a people for His names sake.

The Church age, called a “mystery,” was planned from the foundation of the world. A “mystery” is a truth once concealed, but now revealed.

**“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)**

**“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the
Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.
And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is
written,
After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle
of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the
ruins thereof, and I will set it up.” (Acts 15:14-16)**

**“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of
the world.” (Acts 15:18)**

Jesus introduced the dispensation of Grace with a new message. Remember, the message that John the Baptist and the disciples preached was “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” This is not the message we are to preach today.

This Kingdom message will again be preached at the close of the Tribulation, when the Kingdom of Heaven will again be offered at the Lord’s second coming. Then the nation of Israel will receive their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, as King.

**“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all
the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall
the end come.” (Matthew 24:14)**

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” is the message we are to preach today, as found in the book of Acts.

**“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?
And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16:30,31)**

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21)

After the nation of Israel rejected Jesus as their King, Jesus introduced the dispensation of Grace. Instead of a message only to the Jews, Jesus now delivers a new message to “the whole world.”

**“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
(Matthew 11:28-30)**

Before the age of grace, to receive the blessings of God one had to become a part of Israel. This is not so in the age of grace. The message of the Lord Jesus Christ is “Come to Me, and I will give you rest.” This “rest” is not of works. You cannot earn it. He will GIVE you rest! This message of “grace” can never be over emphasized.

God is not, at this time, dealing with nations, as He did with the nation of Israel. He is now dealing with individuals. Those who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour make up the “body of Christ,” called the “Church.”

The Bible tells us that there is only one way to become a part of the “body of Christ” and that is by **receiving** Him as Lord and Saviour.

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (I Timothy 2:5)

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
(John 14:6)**

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

**I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”
(John 10: 1 and 9)**

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)

In the book of Romans, referring to salvation, in the following four verses the word “gift” is mentioned three times, and the words “free gift” is mentioned three times.

**“But not as the offence, so also is the FREE GIFT. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the GIFT by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the GIFT: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the FREE GIFT is of many offences unto justification.
For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the GIFT of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”
Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the FREE GIFT came upon all men unto justification of life.” (Romans 5:15-18)**

The following Scriptures also speak of the wonderful “gift” of salvation.

**“For the wages of sin is death; but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
(Romans 6:23)**

**“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable GIFT.”
(II Corinthians 9:15)**

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the GIFT of God.” (Ephesians 2:8)

CHAPTER THREE

In introducing the dispensation of Grace, Jesus uses seven parables, called the “mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.” They are called “mysteries” because they had never before been revealed.

“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

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 13:34,35)

A parable not only reveals a truth, but it is also given to hide a truth.

“And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speaketh thou unto them in 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 13:10,11)

The Seven parables 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.

Jesus, in these seven parables pulls back the curtain of the future and gives us a prophetic view from the beginning to the end of the age of Grace. These parables teach us how the true gospel, with Jesus at the very center, will become so corrupt by man-made dogmas and creeds that it will end with Jesus being on the outside. This Scripture in Revelation chapter three details the sad and sorry state of the end of the dispensation of Grace.

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Revelation 3:15-17)

The first parable, that of the Sower, is usually referred to as “the four kinds of soil.”

“And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

**And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:
Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth;
And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.
And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:
But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.”
(Matthew 13:3-8)**

Jesus explains this parable of the Sower in very plain easy to be understood language. There should be absolutely no problem as to understanding what it means. He says:

**“Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.
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 receiveth seed by the way side.
But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;
Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.
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.
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 13:18-23)**

I would like to point out a couple of things taught in this parable, but not mentioned specifically by our Lord. First, this parable teaches that the whole world will not be converted by the preaching of the gospel. If we divide this up into equal parts seventy-five percent will be lost. Now, we are not told what portion fell by the wayside, what portion fell on stony ground, or what portion fell among thorns, however, the proportions are in line with the teaching of the following Scriptures.

“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)**

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter
into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of
my Father which is in heaven.
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?
And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you:
depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:21-23)**

Then, too, in this parable we see our enemies in full force: the world, the flesh and the Devil.

We see the Devil at work in the seed that fell by the wayside.

**“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 the heart. This is
he that receiveth seed by the way side.” (Matthew 13:19)**

We see the flesh at work in the seed that fell into stony places.

**“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same
is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;
Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for
when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word,
by and by he is offended.” (Matthew 13:20,21)**

These Scriptures describe those who only give their mental assent to the gospel. These are ones who believe with their head not with their heart.

We see the world at work in the seed that fell among thorns.

**“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)**

Whether these are saved or unsaved, they are certainly unfruitful. We all know professing Christians who are certainly unfruitful. The reason is simple. “The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches” will keep a Christian from being a fruitful Christian. Christians who do not bear fruit will answer at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is the reason there will be a Judgment Seat of Christ. They will be saved “so as by fire.”

**“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver,
precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;**

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."
(I Corinthians 3:12-15)

There is no question about who they are that received the seed on good ground. They are the ones that hear the Word and understand it. The lesson for believers is that they must make sure when presenting the gospel to others to make it as plain as possible. **"...not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."** (I Corinthians 1:17b)

CHAPTER FOUR

Mystery of the Tares

After the parable of the "sower" the second parable follows naturally. The mystery of the tares is also a product of the sowing of seed. We see in the parable of the Sower that the world will not be converted in the age of Grace. This parable gives the reason why the world will not be converted in the dispensation of Grace.

"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." (Mathew 13:24-26)

We see that the tares, the counterfeit, are the results of seed that had been sown along with the good seed. The tares are so similar to wheat that it must be difficult to distinguish them from the wheat. We are not to gather them up, but we are told to let them alone.

"He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matthew 13:28-30)

We see then, wherever the good seed is sown, Satan also sows seed, the tares. This is still true today.

**“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)**

These tares are ones who only profess to be Christians. In outward appearance they act like Christians. Only the Angels of God are trusted to separate the “wheat” from the “tares.”

Jesus did not say that the tares could not be identified. We are told not to try and uproot the tares. Judgment and the removal of the tares is not the ministry of the believer; that is God’s business. What, then, are we to do with the tares? We are told to “let both the tares and the wheat grow together until the end of the harvest.” I understand from this that even if one was able to identify the tares they are to be ignored. However, their doctrine is not to be accepted.

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. (II John, verse 7)

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.” (II John, verse 10)

There is no doubt as to the “gospel,” to which Paul was referring .

**“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.
For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures:
And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” (I Corinthians 15:1-4)**

The Bible is also clear as to how we can determine the difference between the “true” and the “false”?

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.
Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth**

**that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:
And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come
in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist,
whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now
already is it in the world.” (I John 4:1-4)**

It is not difficult to determine who are false teachers. What they believe about the Lord Jesus Christ is the test for “true” or “false.” There are only two beliefs. (1) Those who believe that Jesus Christ “is” come in the flesh, (the wheat). (2) Those who believe that Jesus Christ “is not” come in the flesh, (the tares). Put another way, those who believe that Jesus Christ is “the” Son of God, (the wheat), and those who believe that Jesus Christ was “a” son of God, (the tares).

**“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.”
(I John 5:1a)**

**“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given
us an understanding, that we may know him that is true,
and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.
This is the true God, and eternal life.” (I John 5:20)**

What are we to do when anyone comes with any other doctrine?

**“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine,
receive him not into your house, neither bid him God
speed:
For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil
deeds,” (II John: verses 10 and 11)**

Do the tares know that they are tares? Of all my years in the field of religion, I have never met a person that admitted to being a tare. I believe the Bible teaches that the tares do not know they are tares.

We have this illustration, given by our Lord, of the man without the proper wedding garment.

**“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall
find, bid to the marriage.
So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered
together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and
the wedding was furnished with guests.
And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there
a man which had not on a wedding garment:
And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither
not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.
Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot,
and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there**

shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 22:9-13)

There is no indication this man, or any of the guests, knew that he did not have on the proper garment.

This man may have had on the most beautiful robe in the crowd, but it was NOT the proper garment requested by the host. When ask why he did not have on the proper garment, “he was speechless.” He needed the “robe” provided by the Lord. The right robe, a robe “washed in the blood of the Lamb.”

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” (Revelation 19:8)

“And I said unto him, Sir thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:14)

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” (Isaiah 61:10)

The first thing the father did in the return of the son (Luke chapter 15:19-24) was to put the best robe on him.

“But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.” (Luke 15:22)

Or consider the ten virgins that took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

“And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.” (Matthew 25:2-4)

They were all on the same mission, to meet the bridegroom. All were dressed alike. All had lamps. There is no indication that the five wise recognized that there was any difference in them and the other five. The only difference was the oil.

If you are familiar with lamps that use oil, you can easily see their dilemma. A wick in a lamp without oil will burn very bright. But it will not burn very long. So there will be no confusion, the Bible clearly says that the foolish took their lamps, “but took no oil.” With only the wick to burn, no wonder their lamps went out. Oil, being a type of the Holy Spirit, we can readily see their problem.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Romans 8:9)

We see, then, the tares are alike in every respect to the true believer, with the exception of the proper robe and the oil.

Do you have on “the robe of righteousness” provided by our Lord, or do you have on “the robe of self-righteousness?”

Is your light shining from “the oil of the Holy Spirit,” or from the “wick” of good works? We hope you will consider the following instructions.

“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)

CHAPTER FIVE

The Mustard Seed

“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 least 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 third parable, the “Mustard Seed,” adds evidence of what Jesus taught in the first two parables, where apostasy will become a major part of professing Christianity.

The unnatural growth of such an insignificant herb into a large tree is a picture of what happens when every false doctrine is accepted as truth.

To enlarge the size and scope of religious organizations, the fowls of the air gives the clue as to who is responsible for the abnormal growth of the “mustard seed.” The fowls represent the wicked professors that find a welcome in the apostate body of Christianity.

This parable teaches that just because a religion is universally accepted does not mean that it is the true religion. Nowhere in Scripture is it taught that in the age of Grace true believers will be a popular group. As this age progresses, apostasy and false doctrine will increase until the end. If you think that “true Christianity” will be accepted by the masses, you have not read, or you do not believe the Bible.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (II Timothy 3:12)

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

**If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”
(John 15:18,19)**

The Leaven

We come now to the fourth parable, the Leaven. In this parable we have the natural results of the influence of false professors that have been accepted by the professing church.

The same as in the “tares” and the “mustard seed” the parable of the “leaven” is the key that opens the door of understanding to all the parables.

**“Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”
(Matthew 13:33)**

The most commonly accepted explanation as to what the leaven represents in this parable is that the leaven is the “gospel;” the woman representing the “church,” and the three measures of meal represents the world. The woman, (the church) by preaching the gospel (the leaven) will convert the whole earth (the three measures of meal) to Christianity. This interpretation not only violates the Word of God, but history as well.

Leaven always represents evil and error in doctrine or morality. Jesus warns concerning three types of leaven.

(1) The “Leaven” of the Pharisees.

“Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and and of the Sadducees.” (Matthew 16:12)

“And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod.” (Mark 8:15)

The “leaven” of the Pharisee was the erroneous doctrine of works for salvation.

“And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.: (Acts 15:1)

“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.

“For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit:” (Acts 23:8)

The “leaven” of the Sadducees was the denial of the Word of God.

(3) The “Leaven” of the Herodians.

“They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.” (I John 4:5)

The “leaven” of the Herodians was a doctrine of worldliness and politics in religion.

These unbelievers now permeate the ranks of true Christianity today and why they are accepted is beyond me. Instead of being called what they really are, liberals and modernist, they are called professors, pastors and Bible teachers.

The Pharisees doctrine of “works for salvation,” the Sadducees doctrine of “denying the Word of God,” and the doctrine of the Herodians, “that all the world’s problems can be solved by the political process,” is very much with us today. Never has there been so much error mixed with the truth. Many find it difficult to discern the difference between “truth” and “error.” It is growing more corrupt every day, and after God has taken the true believers in the Rapture, this world will end up with an unholy alliance of politics and religion.

The corrupt, apostate church will be judged in the Tribulation and is vividly described in Revelation, chapter eighteen.

The Hidden Treasure

The fifth parable is “the hidden treasure in the 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)

A commonly accepted interpretation of this parable is that the “treasure” is Jesus Christ, or salvation. The buyer of the field is the sinner. This, of course, is a complete contradiction to Scriptural revelation concerning salvation.

The “sinner” does not seek the “treasure;” neither does he have the money to buy salvation. Salvation is not for sale. The “sinner” is not hidden in a field, nor having found Christ, is he hidden again. This interpretation has no merit at all.

Little discernment is needed to see that Christ is the only One who has the price of redemption for both the “field” and “that which was lost.” Therefore we must look elsewhere for the answer to this most interesting parable.

I believe we will see from Scripture 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)

The Scriptures are clear that the Lord set aside the promised Kingdom, in order that the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) would be crucified so that He could offer salvation to all. The treasure (Israel) will be hid in the field until the “fullness of the Gentiles be come in.”

“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. 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 11:25,26)

Setting aside (hiding) Israel was God’s way of providing salvation to all. This is made plain in the following Scriptures in Romans 11: verses 28, 30 and 32.

**“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. (verse 28)
For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: (verse 30)
For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” (verse 32)**

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people?” (Romans 11:1a)

**“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.”
(Romans 11:2a)**

There have been forces throughout history, from Haman to Hitler, who have tried to erase the nation of Israel from the face of the earth. This is the ultimate goal of modern day forces in the middle East. They will never succeed, for Israel is under the protective hand of God. They are the “treasure hid in the field.”

God having set aside Israel so that salvation may be offered to the Gentiles, leads us naturally to the sixth parable, the “pearl of great price.”

**“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)**

A most universally accepted interpretation of this parable is that the merchant man is the sinner; the pearl of great price is salvation and the Lord Jesus Christ. The sinner sells all that he has and pays the purchase price for his redemption. This

interpretation is so diametrically opposed to the doctrine of salvation by grace one would wonder how anyone can be so blind that they cannot see the error of such application.

The true application is that the “pearl” is “the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.” The “merchant man” is “the Lord Jesus” who, to obtain the precious pearl, sold all that He had. He left His home in glory, became man, and paid the infinite price with his own blood to redeem us for His own.

“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” is growing day by day. **“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:47)**

One day this pearl (the Church) will be complete. The Lord will then present her to Himself “a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle.”

“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)

The Dragnet

The seventh parable completes the description of the program of “the dispensation of grace.” It is 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.” (Matthew 13:47,48)

Jesus immediately gives the interpretation of this parable. The net is the “gospel.” The fish represents “people.” The sea is the “nations.” The gospel net is cast into the sea of nations. Into this net there came a great number of both bad and good. It is the same lesson as the “wheat and tares,” the “mustard seed,” and the “leaven and the meal.” It is a picture of the organized church, made up of not only the “true children of God,” but also the false professors and hypocrites.

One look at the professing church today we can readily see all of the false doctrine, tradition, and error presented in this parable. We learn from this parable that we are not to judge who in the professing church are genuine believers and who are the pretenders. That is God’s business, and believe me He knows the difference!

Jesus says:

“All that the father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37)

Jesus also says:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

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?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:21-23)

Again, no amount of preaching or praying will make the “bad fish” good, no more than the “tares” can be made “wheat.” This is the reason I have never brought a lesson trying to expose the false doctrine of the day. We would be spending all our time and resources on such a venture. However, if we teach the truth, believers will recognize false teaching when they hear it.

Paul gave this warning in Galatians.

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:6-8)

For emphasis this warning is repeated again in verse 9.

“As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:9)

