

Sunday September 11th, 2005

Matthew Chapter 13 Part 5
The Mustard Seed – Part 2

1). Review.

a). The Reason for the Church - Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

b). The fulfillment of this promise will result in the removal of Satan and his fallen angels from their position of rulership over the earth, bringing to an end their reign and will result in the occupation of their eternal destination - the lake of fire.

c). We will remember - Joh 14:30 *"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.*

I/ Mt 25:41b *.....the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:*

2). To try to prevent this inevitable conclusion we have seen the enemy work relentlessly to destroy Israel throughout her history in order to maintain his hold over the earth.

a). And within the context of our parables we see him working relentlessly to stop Christians – the new creation, the new nation – from producing fruit to exactly the same end.

3). We saw those in the Parable of the Sower –

a). By the wayside

b). Stony ground

c). Among the thorns

4). Those sown in good ground and producing fruit were then confronted by Christians with a message contrary to that of the Kingdom as referenced in the Parable of the Wheat and Tares – again with a view to stopping the production of fruit.

5). Which brought us last week to the Parable of the Mustard Seed, showing the outcome of this work by the Tares

Mt 13:31 *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like (the proclamation and offer of the kingdom of the heavens continues like) a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."*

a). We saw Satan using apostates – those who had come into an understanding of the kingdom and our inheritance within it, who then stood away from this truth proclaiming a message that was contrary to it.

1Ti 4:1 ¶ *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,*

b). The foundation of this corrupted message being a denial of the 7 Day structure of scripture laid down in the book of beginnings – Genesis – 2Pe 3:4 *"Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

c). As a result that which should have grown normally to become ‘the greatest among herbs’ grew unnaturally becoming a tree. Something it was never supposed to be. Allowing the ‘birds of the air’, who we saw in the parable of the Sower to find a safe haven in its branches.

6). The fact that it became a tree is not an insignificant detail as a tree in scripture is symbolical of a national power.

7). The first use of this symbolism is in the oldest known parable in the world which we find in Judges 9 where trees are seen symbolizing nations which had sought to elect a king to reign over them - Jg 9:8 *"The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us!'* 9 *But the olive tree said to them, 'Should I cease giving my oil, With which they honor God and men, And go to sway over trees?'* 10 *"Then the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come and reign over us!'* 11 *But the fig tree said to them, 'Should I cease my sweetness and my good fruit, And go to sway over trees?'* 12 *"Then the trees said to the vine, 'You come and reign over us!'* 13 *But the vine said to them, 'Should I cease my new wine, Which cheers both God and men, And go to sway over trees?'* 14 *"Then all the trees said to the bramble, 'You come and reign over us!'* 15 *And the bramble said to the trees, 'If in truth you anoint me as king over you, Then come and take shelter in my shade; But if not, let fire come out of the bramble And devour the cedars of Lebanon!'*

a). We find the same thing in Daniel Chapter 4 where a tree is used to symbolize the kingdom of Babylon - Da 4:20 *The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth, 21 whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home- 22 it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.*

and in Joel Israel is symbolized by the fig tree - Joe 1:7 *He has laid waste My vine, And ruined My fig tree;*

i/ A symbol Jesus used to picture Israel and other nations during His earthly ministry - Lu 21:29 ¶ *Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 30 "When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. 31 "So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.*

ii/ Not only did 1948 mark the return of an unrepentant remnant to the land of Israel, but also began a period of time when very quickly a large number of colonial nations gained their independence, becoming a nation in their own right. Just what we see outlined in Jesus statement in Luke.

b). It is true that the Church is a new nation.

c). Gr. – ethnos – from which we get our English word ethnic – literally a new people group

d). But this new people group was not to become a national power as power of this sort over the earth is reserved for Christians in the age to come not within this present dispensation under the ‘ruler of this world’.

e). However, becoming a national power is exactly what happened. History bearing out the authenticity of scripture.

8). Before we enter into the historical account let us lay some scriptural foundation that will help us better understand what took place.

9). The first generation of Israel on their way to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, had through the intervention of the Lord inflicted incredible defeats on Sihon, king of the Amorites and Og, king of Bashan. As a result their move into the land, defeating their enemies resulting in the setting up of the Theocratic Kingdom seemed inevitable

a). Nu 22:1 ¶ *Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho. 2 Now Balak*

the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. 4 So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time.

b). Now we will remember that to try and stop Israel Balak sent for the prophet Balaam to pronounce a curse upon Israel. But every time Balaam tried to speak a curse the Lord opened his mouth with a blessing instead.

c). A direct cursing of Israel didn't work so Balaam instructed Balak in another way to bring about Israel's downfall.

d). Nu 25:1 ¶ *Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.*

e). This is spelled out for us in Revelation Chapter 2 - Re 2:14 *"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.*

f). What we see then is Balaam's solution - not destruction of Israel but assimilation of Israel into the Gentile world system that surrounded them.

g). And isn't it interesting that the scripture we have just looked at is spoken by Christ to the church at Smyrna when He is pronouncing judgments at His Judgment Seat – providing commentary on the history of the Church during this dispensation pointing out those in the Church who 'hold the doctrine of Balaam'

h). And speaking of the apostates, the Tares, those who caused the unnatural growth in the church

2Pe 2:15 *They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;*

Jude 1:11 *Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.*

10). What we are seeing then is exactly the same tactic that Balaam used to bring about the overcoming of Israel being employed against the Church. Not destruction but assimilation within the world system under Satan.

11). History tells us that the early years of the Church were marked by an intense and brutal persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. But this persecution rather than bringing about the destruction of the Church fuelled its growth. A Christian living at the time of this persecution called Tertullian recorded what is now a famous saying – ‘the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church’

12). The Romans were emperor worshipers thus making religion and the state one entity.

a). Christians were monotheistic and looked to a King other than Caesar and a Kingdom other than Rome. Consequently Christianity was considered treasonous and was classified as an illegal religion.

b). This persecution lasted several centuries but did not bring about the demise of the church – during this time however, the apostates, following the way of Balaam, teaching a corrupted message concerning the 7th Day gradually and progressively broke down the barriers separating Christianity and the Roman Empire until around the end of the fourth century AD these barriers no longer existed bringing about a merger of Church and State.

13). At the beginning of the fourth century the Roman Emperor, Constantine stopped the persecution of Christians and he, himself, at some point became a Christian, setting the stage for what happened next.

a). In the year 380 AD Theodosius I issued an edict that made Christianity the exclusive State religion; and in the year 395 AD Christianity was finally recognized as the official and only religion of the Roman Empire.

b). At this point Christianity found itself completely enmeshed within a world power in the sphere of governmental authority over which Satan exercised control, completely out of line with God’s plans and purposes for the new creation in Christ.

c). Please remember the warnings given of this in 2 Peter and Jude and the Lord’s condemnation of it in Revelation 2

d). Let us put all of this together so that we can see that this is exactly what Christ foretold in the Parable of the Mustard Seed - the Church through a corruption of the Word of the Kingdom, grew in a way it was

never supposed to, becoming a tree – in complete union with a Gentile world power in the realm of Satan.

14). We can look at the excesses of the Roman Catholic Church, which during the Dark Ages completely controlled the kingdoms of Europe.

And even today has the Vatican as a city-state within the borders of Italy,

a). But despite the reformation the protestant church finds itself in the same situation. Witness the UK where the monarch became and still is the head of the Church in England. Don't forget we have the King James Bible. It is a situation from which the Church has never recovered.

b). Down to today Christians can still be found involving themselves with activities associated with the tree of the Parable of the Mustard Seed. They can be seen everywhere involving themselves in the present government in all sorts of different ways, attempting to exert some type of power in the present kingdom under Satan

c). But this is not the day when Christians are to rule and reign. That day still lies ahead of us when Christ will take the Kingdom, ascend His throne and set up His Millennial Reign with His bride at His side.

I/ Let us please be clear a Gentile nation, which is every nation apart from Israel and the Church, cannot be a Christian nation. As soon as a gentile becomes a Christian they become part of a new creation, a new nation, the new man. Remember Hebrews 11 - Heb 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

Ii/ Remember, Abraham left the land of his birth to go to the land of his calling – as did Rebekah, as did Ruth

Iii/ Remember Orpah who turned back to her own land

Lu 9:62 *But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

Lu 17:32 *"Remember Lot's wife."*

d). Let me put this as clearly as possible – if we want political power and influence now we can have it but we won't find ourselves ascending the throne with Christ in that coming Day.

15). Let us be perfectly clear on what scripture teaches in relation to this.

a). The foundation from the lips of Christ - Joh 18:36 *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*

b). Frankly this is clear enough without going any further, but let's go on - 2Ti 2:4 *No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. 5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.*

c). Eph 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

d). Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

e). Col 3:2 *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

f). Cf. Col 1:16 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*

16). Please remember - 1Co 7:31b *...For the form of this world is passing away.*

a). We know quite clearly what the Word teaches about the outcome of the present world system. Scripture is very clear about the coming Tribulation and there is nothing a Christian can or will do within the present system of government that will change that.

b). But for those who have heeded the apostate message that the kingdom is here now and it is the church's responsibility to usher in the kingdom in its fullness by involving themselves in every political sphere bringing about some type of utopia – we can see their motivation.

c). The reality is that at the Judgment Seat they will find these works associated with the present system of rulership burned up in fire producing nothing of value for the coming Kingdom of Christ, leaving them without a reward - 1Co 3:15 *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

17). Ga 6:7 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

18). We may pick this up again next week if the Lord permits