

Sunday October 18th 2015
Without a Parable
Part Four

1). Mt 13:3 *Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, the sower went out to sow. 4 "And as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7 "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8 "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"*

a). The parable of the sower is the first of 7 consecutive parables given by the Lord which are recorded in Matthew Chapter 13 – the parables are given ‘on the same day’ as Israel’s religious leaders’ rejection of their King and His Kingdom witnessed through their response to 3 interrelated events which are recorded in Matthew Chapter 12.

b). The parables that then follow, beginning with that of the sower, deal with a people other than Israel who will be brought into existence to receive that which Israel had rejected – the Kingdom of the Heavens.

c). These are those referred to in - 1Pe 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

d). Those who would come from both Jews and Gentiles to make one new man - Ga 6:15 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.*

An entirely new creation, which at the time the Lord gave these parables did not exist, except in the plans and purposes of God. And yet remarkably, before this new creation comes into being, the Lord clearly sets out what will be the dispensational history for this new creation, the Church, from its inception to its conclusion at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

e). And it all begins as ‘The Sower’, the Lord Jesus Christ sows individual Christians, those who have been eternally saved by grace through faith, into the world for the purpose of producing fruit – fruit that is produced after only one fashion - Mt 13:19 *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom,* and produced only for one specific purpose - 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.*

And this is particularly important to understand because it shows most clearly what is to be the central activity for all Christians during their time on the earth, and inseparably connected to this is the present ministry of the Holy Spirit amongst the eternally saved to search out a Bride for God’s Son. In this respect the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the production of fruit by individual Christians for the purpose of rulership in the Millennial Kingdom go hand in hand.

f). Now this ‘word of the Kingdom’ can only be the same ‘gospel of the Kingdom’ that the Lord preached to Israel, only now from the perspective of the one new man – this is the message concerning rulership from the Heavens over the earth, with Satan and his angels being replaced by Christ and those from the human race who would qualify to rule with Him, His co-heirs, the many sons who will be brought to glory. This is the message that strikes at the very heart of the present system of rulership and declares emphatically that it will be overthrown – a message that even now is being declared by those who are determined to be a part of Christ’s future administration - Eph 3:9 *and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*

g). The ‘manifold wisdom of God’ which has always been His ‘eternal purpose’ is that Christ and His co-heirs will replace Satan and his angels and we declare this ‘wisdom’ to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places’ by pressing on to the goal which is ahead of us – Php 3:14 *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

By setting our attention where scripture says it is to be set –

Heb 12:2 *looking [from the things of this world] unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Focusing on the same thing that our Lord focused on, 'the joy that was set before Him' as He considered the suffering and shame of the cross of little consequence compared to the coming Day of His glory - Ro 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Mt 25:21 *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

h). We are not to look back, nor look around, but continue to look out ahead - 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."*

We are to follow the instructions typified in those given to Lot - Ge 19:17 *So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed."*

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

i). And as we know, if we were to continue on in the Book of Ephesians to Chapter 6 we would find the on-going spiritual warfare in which we are engaged as our enemy seeks to stop us.

2). Now, to go back to Matthew 3:19 again - Mt 13:19 *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom,*

There are some obvious things that we should see from this that we will spend a moment reminding ourselves of – firstly, 'the word of the Kingdom' is the gospel of the glory of Christ and does not of itself have anything to do with the gospel of grace.

a). This is the 'word' that can only be heard by those who are already eternally saved, those who have spiritual life, who have the ability to

understand spiritual truth; therefore that which is contained in all 7 of these parables is for the eternally saved alone.

b). And then we would realize that the content of these parables deals exclusively with those who have heard, 'the word of the kingdom' – those to whom the gospel of the glory of Christ has been presented; and so within the confines of the Laodicean church we also realize that this is 'the word' that the greater majority haven't heard and the reason for this is contained within the parables themselves as we shall see.

c). And lastly, let's remember that at the time of the inception of the Church, following the preaching of the gospel of grace, this was the only message that was presented to Christians, and so the statement 'when anyone hears the word of the kingdom' takes us right back to the very beginning of this dispensation – and these parables show us quite clearly what the experience of the Church would be upon hearing this message; something laid out by the Lord before the Church even existed and later confirmed through that recorded about the 7 churches in the Revelation, with the church of Ephesus providing additional commentary on the parables of the sower and the wheat and tares - Re 2:4 *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

d). Consequently, there is a duality to these parables – there is within the broad context of all 7 a dispensational history of the Church and within an immediate or individual context with regards to the first two parables particularly, that which must be the experience of every Christian who 'hears the word of the kingdom' at any point within that dispensational history.

e). For ourselves, we have heard 'the word of the kingdom' within the time in this dispensation pictured through the parable of the leaven in Matthew 13 and the church of Laodicea in the Revelation Chapter 3 – in one sense we are a long way removed from how things were at the beginning of the dispensation, but in another, we are no different when it comes to Satan's attempts to destroy the word of the Kingdom and those who receive it.

3). So, let's now go to the parable of the sower and the explanation of it that the Lord gives - Mt 13:3 *Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 "And as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.*

Mt 13:18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who was sown by the wayside.*

a). What we see then is that as Christ sows Christians out in the world and as these same Christians hear the word of the Kingdom some fall 'by the wayside' and these individuals are seen as falling by the wayside for one reason only – they do not understand the word of the Kingdom.

b). The analogy is drawn from the hand broadcasting of seed where inevitably some seeds which are sown outside the confines of the field don't germinate and this seed as it fails to germinate is eaten by the birds – this is the same picture for those Christians who do not understand the word of the Kingdom. And they don't understand for reasons we saw last week –
2Co 4:3 *But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

As a result they just don't get it and therefore do not 'germinate' and as a consequence of this 'the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart'; the word of truth is done away with and the Christian is devoured – 1Pe 5:8 ¶ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

c). That described here in the first part of the parable of the sower would, because of where we are in the dispensation, be the experience of the majority of Christians today who 'hear the word of the kingdom' and in this there is a direct parallel with the nation of Israel at Christ's first advent with the majority of the nation of Israel at that time falling 'by the wayside'. And the reason Israel had this experience is because they were misled by their religious leaders, and as we work our way through these parables we will find exactly the same to be true for our own day.

d). We had noted in a previous study the uncomfortable parallel between that said of Israel's spiritual condition at the Lord's first advent –
Mt 13:14 *"And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;*

*15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,*

And that said of the Church's spiritual condition in anticipation of His second advent - Re 3:17 *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—*

e). Although there are over 2000 years separating these 2 periods of time there is a chilling similarity between the two – and should we really be surprised? The 'word of the kingdom' has not changed and nor has Satan's tactics in trying to destroy the word – and, inevitably, people are people no matter where we find them in human history - Eph 6:11 *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

f). Finally, those who are 'sown by the wayside' produce no fruit and are as barren as the fig tree depicting Israel in Matthew Chapter 21, with essentially the same outcome – the Kingdom of the Heavens is taken from them and given to those who produce the fruit.

4). Mt 13:5 *"Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.*

Mt 13:20 *"But he that was sown into stony places, is he who hears the word [of the Kingdom] and immediately receives it with joy; 21 "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word [of the Kingdom], immediately he stumbles.*

a). The second part of the parable of the sower adds another facet to the Lord's sowing of Christians out into the world. In this part of the parable Christians are pictured as having been sown 'into stony places', and again the 'stony places' is not the result of the Lord's sowing, but the consequence of what happens when these individuals 'hear the word of the kingdom'.

b). Here we see those Christians who hear the word of the Kingdom and immediately receive it 'with joy', they understand it and are excited about it – their eyes are opened to the scriptures and they are thrilled by what they see.

c). Now let's note something very important at the end of v21 – tribulation or persecution arises 'because of the word of the Kingdom' – wherever this gospel is preached those who hear it and receive it will encounter tribulation and/or persecution.

d). For reasons that we have already seen this morning, Satan will do everything in his power to come against this message and those who hear it, hence tribulation/persecution must follow.

e). In this particular instance the individual who has received the word of the Kingdom with joy is just at the beginning of his understanding – he has either not had the opportunity or has not taken the time to build a firm foundation. In the imagery of the parable he has 'no depth of earth', 'he has no root in himself'; and when the tribulation/persecution comes, 'when the sun was up', he is able to endure for a little while under the pressure but is then caused to stumble.

f). The most common scenario we have seen with regards to this is the individual who has suddenly come across the word of the Kingdom and then rushes off to share the good news with his church leadership – the leadership then discredit the word, pouring scorn on those from whom this word has been received, most usually associating the word of the Kingdom with error and those teaching it with cultism - 2Pe 2:2 *And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*

g). And because our individual lacks maturity in the faith he is not able to endure this onslaught, he gives up and quits and withers away.

h). In the NKJ translation this individual is said 'to stumble' whereas the word in the KJV is 'offended' – 'skandalizo' – which we may remember comes from the word that means a bait stick, as in a trap – 'skandalon'. Now the reason for drawing our attention to this is so that we are clear that tribulation/persecution because of the word of the Kingdom comes as a snare, a bait stick that is deliberately set by our enemy to trap the individual.

i). What we need to realize in this then is that tribulation/persecution that comes after this fashion, because of the word of the Kingdom, is a deliberate and intentional work of the enemy to prevent the individual becoming fruitful.

h). And so, again no fruit is produced – only barrenness, as in the fig tree, and barrenness, as those by the wayside exists, and the purpose for this individual's sowing is lost and our enemy has gained the victory.

5). Mt 13:7 *"And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.*

Mt 13:22 *"Now he also that was sown among the thorns is he who hears the word [of the Kingdom], and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.*

a). In the recording of this part of the explanation of the parable of the sower in Luke's gospel we find this - Lu 8:14 *"Now the ones sown among thorns are those who, when they have heard, [the word of the Kingdom] go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.*

b). And also this in Mark - Mr 4:18 *"Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, [of the Kingdom] 19 "and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

c). Again we see our Christian here sown out in the world, who is seen to be 'among the thorns', not because of his sowing, but because he allows things within the present world system under Satan to become his focus causing the word of the Kingdom which he has heard to be 'choked'.

d). Now, this might happen because of immaturity in the faith, it might happen because of neglect – not giving the more earnest heed to the things he has heard, because of letting his guard down – not watching and praying, or perhaps a variety of other reasons.

e). But what we will note at once is that this again is a deliberate work of the enemy for the purpose of preventing any fruit being brought to maturity.

f). Within the explanation of the parable itself we see that this is accomplished through 'the cares of this world [age]', the 'deceitfulness of riches', the 'pleasures of this life', the 'desires for other things' – or if we might put this more succinctly, 'the world, the flesh and the devil'.

g). We can find an admonition concerning this in - 1Jo 2:15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And*

the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Well, our individual in this part of the parable will have chosen to love the world and the things of the world – he will have taken his eyes from the prize and instead of looking from this world unto Jesus he will have looked from Jesus unto this world after the same fashion as we see typified through Lot – Ge 13:10 ¶ *And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.*

h). Rather than having taken the proper stand within the spiritual warfare - 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.*
We find our individual here having been defeated.

i). And although this is a deliberate ploy of the enemy we must realize that there is a choice made on the part of the individual to embrace the enemy's deception.

j). Whatever the reason our individual loses his focus the result is exactly what our enemy intended – the word of the Kingdom is choked and no fruit is brought to maturity – the same barrenness that we have seen with the previous 2 sowings is all that remains – and of course no fruit means no place with Christ in His Kingdom.

6). The good news is of course that there are those Christians who hear the word of the Kingdom, who receive it and believe it - Mr 4:24 *Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.*
And through their proper engagement with it do not allow themselves to be overcome by the world, the flesh and the devil and as a result become fruitful - Mt 13:8 *"But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

Mt 13:23 *"But he that was sown into the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

a). These are the ones who accomplish the purpose for their sowing and indeed fulfill the purpose for their creation – but we will need to deal with this group more thoroughly next time – if the Lord is willing.