

Sunday October 25th 2015
Without a Parable
Part Five

1). 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. 20 "But he that was sown into stony places, is he who hears the word 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, immediately he stumbles. 22 "Now he also that was sown among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 "But he that was sown into 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). In our study of the parable of the sower we have seen that 'the Son of Man', the Lord Jesus Christ, has sown Christians out into the world for the purpose of producing fruit in response to hearing 'the word of the kingdom' in order that they might have a place of rulership with Christ as a joint heir in His future administration, receiving that which Israel had rejected - Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

Col 1:3 ¶ *We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;*

b). This very simple and yet profound truth makes abundantly clear what our purpose is and what is to be the nature of our activity as we pursue that purpose - 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,

c). And then alongside the Lord's purpose in sowing Christians into the world is the concerted effort of our enemy to prevent those sown who hear the word of the kingdom from firstly producing fruit and then to stop fruit production in those that do.

d). That which we see in connection with those sown by the wayside, into stony places and amongst the thorns is neither random nor arbitrary, but deliberate and intentional – these are facets of 'the wiles of the devil' and demonstrate both the nature and the focus of his attack within the spiritual warfare - 1Pe 5:8 ¶ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

e). It is not just for effect that we are told - Eph 6:16 *above all, taking the shield of [the] faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*

f). In all 4 of the 'sowings' that we looked at last week we saw that the individual in each instance 'hears the word of the kingdom' and it is the individual's response to what he hears that determines the type of ground he is to be found in. For the one who does not understand the word of the kingdom the enemy comes and snatches away the word of the kingdom given to him and he is likened to a natural seed sown by the wayside which fails to germinate and is eaten by the birds. The one who hears the word of the kingdom and then stumbles, is offended, and withers away because of tribulation/persecution is likened to seed which is sown into stony places where there is no depth of earth which prevents proper growth causing the fledgling plant to die – And for the one who hears the word of the kingdom but then places his focus elsewhere through the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pleasures of this life, the desire for other things, this one is likened to the seed which is sown amongst thorns which then choke the plant preventing it from bringing fruit to maturity.

g). In the first 3 of these 'sowings' then the Christians described in them do not bring any fruit to maturity and are therefore as barren as Israel at

Christ's first advent – and of course in not producing fruit in response to hearing the word of the kingdom the purpose for their 'sowing' is lost.

h). However, there is, as we see, a fourth group - 23 *"But he that was sown into good ground is he who hears the word [of the kingdom] and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

i). These Christians hear the word of the kingdom, they receive it and believe it and then in response to what they hear and believe they, through their faithful obedience, produce fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty - Lu 8:15 *"But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word [of the kingdom] with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience. [patient endurance]"*

2). What will strike us immediately here is that there are different amounts of fruit produced by these individuals, but fruit is being produced nonetheless. And what we see in Christians producing these different amounts of fruit is perfectly consistent with that which we find elsewhere in the scriptures.

a). We might remember this from a previous study - 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."*

b). We will remember that 'what you hear' in this context, is the word of the kingdom and that 'with the same measure you use, it will be measured to you' – the 'measure you use', which is then measured back could easily be seen to be 'a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty'. There is then in this verse the thought of producing a return commensurate with believing and acting upon the word of the kingdom – this is what the Book of Hebrews calls 'a just recompense of reward'.

c). And this is exactly what is taught through a parable we had focused on some time ago in a previous study, the parable of the minas – Lu 19:12 *Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 "And so it was that when he returned, having*

received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

d). Each of the nobleman's 10 servants is given the same amount, one mina, and they are told to 'do business till I come' – the expectation is that they will take what they are given and will produce an increase with it. As we see in v16 the first servant had produced a tenfold increase and the second a fivefold increase – they both receive the same amount of the nobleman's goods, one mina, but each produces a different amount with what they have been given. Both are commended for what they have done, 'well done, good servant' and there is no difference in the commendation, and then both receive a just recompense commensurate with the amount of their increase; with the same measure they have used, it is measured back to them – 'have authority over ten cities', 'you also be over five cities'.

e). In the parable of the sower then some have produced a hundredfold increase with what they have been given – 'when anyone hears the word of the kingdom' – some sixty and some thirty and each must receive a reward, wages would be a better word, commensurate with the increase they have made, the fruit they have produced. If we then bring the imagery from the parable of the minas over into this parable we could say that some will 'have authority' over a hundred cities, some over sixty cities and some over thirty cities - Re 22:12 *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

f). What we see then is that there will be different levels of authority given to those who overcome within the Millennial Kingdom based justly and righteously on the amount of fruit they have produced upon hearing the word of the kingdom.

g). Now nothing is said in the parable of the minas or in the parable of the sower as to why some produce more than others, but what we should be clear about is that each must have exactly the same opportunity to produce the maximum, but for reasons which must involve personal choice, not all do.

h). It is encouraging to realize then that we are not in an all or nothing situation, but that rather we will all receive exactly what is due to us based upon our labor as we hear and continue to hear the word of the kingdom – 1Co 15:58 ¶ *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

3). Unfortunately, our producing fruit does not mark the end of the matter – although the very production of fruit shows that we are having victory over the world, the flesh and the devil our enemy does not see himself as defeated. Once Christians begin to produce fruit Satan now moves to try to stop their fruit production – and this is the subject of our next parable – the wheat and the tares - Mt 13:24 ¶ *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven has become like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26 "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"*

a). As we begin to look at this parable let's remember what we know about the word parable itself – one truth placed alongside a previous truth in order to give more detail to that which has already been given. We have seen in the parable of the sower that the subject matter is fruit production in response to the word of the kingdom amongst those whom Christ has sown out into the world – the parable of the wheat and tares then deals with the same subject matter, fruit production, but something new is now added and has to do with those who make up the fourth group in the parable of the sower, those sown into good ground, the only ones from the previous parable who produce fruit.

b). Let's also note the way the parable begins, 'the kingdom of heaven has become like....' – hopefully as we look at this we will see that something

doesn't look quite right. The 'Kingdom of Heaven' is the realm from which rulership over the earth takes place and as such it doesn't change. It cannot 'become like' something as it is what it is – a realm in God's Kingdom. This is the same as we find in the gospels where we read - Mt 3:2 *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"* [lit. drawn near]

The Kingdom itself, the realm from which rulership takes place had not moved, nor could it, but the possibility of the nation of Israel moving into that heavenly realm in order to replace Satan and his angels was 'at hand', had 'drawn near' because the King, with an offer of entering into this Kingdom was present among them.

c). Therefore it is not the realm of the Kingdom of the Heavens of itself that 'has become like', but that which forms the bookends to these parables in Matthew Chapter 13 concerning this realm - Mt 13:19 *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom,*

Mt 13:52 Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven

d). 'The word of the kingdom', as we have seen in our Bible studies is the message about the realm presently occupied by Satan and his angels which Christ and his joint heirs will one day take from them and instruction 'concerning the kingdom of heaven' is exactly the same thing. So then "it is the proclamation, offer and reception or rejection of the kingdom of the heavens which 'has become like'", not the realm itself.

e). What we see in the parable of the wheat and tares then has to do with the word of the kingdom relative to fruit production amongst those sown on 'good ground' who are producing fruit.

f). So, to return to the parable – in the first verse, v24, we see 'a man who sowed good seed in his field' and we see an enemy who sowed tares amongst the man's wheat. And as with the parable of the sower the Lord provides the explanation for this parable for us - Mt 13:37 *He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil,*

g). The sowing seen here is the same sowing as we saw in the parable of the sower and confirms for us what we know from that parable that it is the Lord who does the sowing and that the 'seed' that He sows is individual

Christians sown out in the world. The particular seeds seen here are described as 'good seeds' and are called 'the sons of the kingdom' and this 'good seed' is seen to have 'sprouted and produced a crop'; again these are the ones producing fruit, some a hundredfold some sixty some thirty, those seen on the good ground from the fourth part of the parable of the sower.

h). Then in amongst this good seed the enemy, Satan, has sown tares, described as 'the sons of the wicked one' and the tares appear to remain dormant until the 'good seed' is producing fruit *then the tares also appeared*. And so we see the appearance of the tares as a direct response to the fruitfulness of the 'good seed'. And the appearance of the tares is only for one reason – to try to stop those producing fruit from continuing to produce fruit.

i). Now the thing about tares of course is that in the natural they so closely resemble wheat as they grow that you cannot tell the difference between the two, it is only as the time comes for harvest that the tares are seen to be counterfeit – they are not wheat and therefore do not produce a harvest as the wheat does. In one sense then we could see the tares as being 'fruitful' in that they do produce something, but that which the tares produce is worthless and is not what the farmer is expecting.

4). Mt 7:15 ¶ *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*

a). These verses from Matthew Chapter 7 talk about 'false prophets', who come to Israel 'in sheep's clothing' – they look like sheep but are not sheep in the same way that the tares look like wheat but are not wheat. They are also described as 'ravenous wolves' and as 'a bad tree' that 'bears bad fruit' and we see through the imagery that the bad tree 'is cut down and thrown into the fire', a consequence that is strikingly similar to that of the tares *"First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them.*

b). False prophets in Israel had brought to the nation a 'word' that declared something other than that which God had said. We could trace the origin for this right back to the 10 spies at Kadesh Barnea who brought the bad report to the first generation to come out of Egypt causing that generation

to lose its inheritance. We could add into this Balaam who was responsible for seducing Israel into assimilation with the pagan nations which surrounded them and we could continue on to the religious leaders of Israel at Christ's first advent who misled the people with a false message and were directly responsible for the rejection of the King and His message [which was of course the gospel of the Kingdom] - Mt 23:13 ¶ *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men [in the presence of men]; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.*

c). With all of this in mind let's recall what we have previously read from Peter with respect to the Church - 2Pe 2:1 ¶ *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*

d). Then we can add into this that which we find in – Ac 20:28 *"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

e). Jude speaking of these same people says of them - 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.*

f). And as the 'Church' stands before the Lord in judgment as recorded in the Revelation we see this said of the church in Pergamos - 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.*

g). From the false prophets of Israel to the false teachers of the 'Church' we see a common thread, the introduction of a message that says something

other than that which God has said which misleads the people thereby preventing them from fulfilling God's purpose for them.

h). This said, the identity of the tares seen in Matthew Chapter 13 should be pretty obvious. They are Christians, those who have received eternal salvation by grace through faith who teach and ultimately lead congregations who, as a result of their false message, make those under their care unfruitful.

i). Now as we consider all of this let's remember that where we find ourselves today within the dispensation allotted to us and what we see in Christendom around us has not happened in a vacuum, but is a direct result of the sowing of the tares amongst the wheat at the beginning of the dispensation, and we will need to look at the historical context that has brought the 'church' to its present condition in order to understand this and to see things from the right perspective.

j). To understand the historical context is of course of paramount importance to us, but would it always remain true that wherever and whenever those who hear the word of the kingdom begin to produce fruit tares must appear to try to stop the fruit production? Well, I will let you draw your own conclusions about that, but suffice it to say that if the 4 parts of the parable of the sower remain true for anyone who hears the word of the kingdom at any time then it would seem most likely that we would have to find tares among the wheat.

k). But just one moment – according to the Lord's explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares He says - Mt 13:38b.....*but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.*

Could we really say this of those who are eternally saved, for whom Christ shed His blood, that they are sons of Satan?

l). This will have to wait until next time though – if the Lord is willing.