

A Study of the Kingdom of God II

Fred R. Coulter—September 22, 2013

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles, day #4. At sundown tonight we're halfway through the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. What a great Feast this has been.

I hope that you've been enjoying the fellowship and activities together, and that you've also used the time to draw close to God, to understand more about His plan and the coming Kingdom of God.

God is going to do His greatest work, beginning with us at the resurrection and the redemption of the whole world. Down through the Millennium, that is going to be preparing the way for the Last Great Day, and that will yet be a greater work! God has called us to things that are marvelous and wonderful and spiritually understood. The Kingdom of God is based on love and law, and God's plan flows from that.

God is increasing His family, increasing His kingdom, and it's going to go on through the *ages of eternity!* We need to keep these things in mind, because what God is doing is really fantastic, indeed!

- He is the One Who has called us
- He is the One Who has given us the understanding
- He is the One Who has prepared the way by:
 - ✓ providing His Word
 - ✓ giving His Spirit

We left off yesterday in Matt. 13 and let's go there and pick up the rest of the story, because this is really a very interesting chapter in that it has many of the parables concerning the Kingdom of God and what He is doing now. Remember, the world today is run and governed by God:

- through the angels
- through Satan and the demons
- through men.

In the Church, Christ is the Head of the Church, God the Father and Jesus Christ are the ones Who do the calling, drawing people to Them, etc. God has given the promise that the Church would not die out. Many times it comes close to it, I suppose, when you look at all the troubles and difficulties that the Churches of God have gone through.

Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:24—Jesus brings another parable: “And He put another parable before them, saying, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man who was sowing good seed in his field.’” The *good seed* is the Word of God.

Verse 25: “But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away.” The *enemy* is Satan the devil, the demons and men who hate God.

Verse 26: “Now, when the blades sprouted and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared.... [This was an astonishing thing for the servants to see]: ...And the servants came to the master of the house *and* said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Then where did these tares come from?’ And he said to them, ‘A man *who is* an enemy has done this.’ Then the servants said to him, ‘Do you want us to go out and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you are gathering the tares, you *also* uproot the wheat with them’” (vs 26-28). This also adds to the fact that Pentecost is the day of resurrection, because it's the *firstfruits harvest*.

Verse 30: “‘Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and at the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, ‘Gather the tares first, and bind them into bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my granary.’”” That's obviously at the end of the age when Jesus returns. Between now and then, we know that there will be those who will try to subvert the Church, as Peter and Jude wrote, *stealthily* come in:

- change the message
- change the doctrine
- bring another Christ
- appear as righteous

The Apostle John wrote in John 2 that those false teachers, when they are exposed, will leave or be cast out. Then we also find the time where later, in 3-John the infiltrators took over and they were casting out the true brethren; even excoriating the Apostle John. This parable really fits together.

“...gather the wheat into my granary.” When we die, our spirit goes back to God, and it's preserved there. There's no thought going on, but it has to be put into a spirit body with a spirit mind at the resurrection.

Let's look at the next parable, because He

wants us to understand that there are many similarities in these parables as to how the Church grows, as to how the Kingdom of God is developed. Only those who have the Spirit of God today are under, directly, the rule of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and they are under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of God. That's why we are not of this world.

Parable of the Mustard Seed

Verse 31: "Another parable He presented to them, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a *tiny* mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is very small among all the seeds; but after it is grown, it is greater than all the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and roost in its branches.'" (vs 31-32). That's showing when Christ returns it's going to grow. But today it is likewise growing in each one of us. It does not have to wait until the end of the age for the things to be done.

The *parable of the mustard seed* shows how God's Kingdom is going to continue to grow until it includes all people.

Parable of Leaven

Some people get a little confused with this, because during the Days of Unleavened Bread we're to *put out* all leaven; all leavening agents. Leaven becomes a type of sin and human nature, which puffs up like vanity, self, sin and all of those things. However, here is a parable where Jesus likens the Kingdom of God to leaven:

Verse 33: "Another parable He spoke to them: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until all was leavened.'" Let's understand something: The Kingdom of God is righteousness, so how can leaven be used in a good sense, that equals righteousness, and that shows that it is a good thing in this instance. That's why we don't eat unleavened bread all the time.

What does this mean? When you put leaven into flour or dough it puffs up, and it changes the nature of the dough. It becomes leavened bread. When it is put into the oven and baked, it is permanently kept in that form if it's not eaten.

This shows and pictures a type of the resurrection as symbolized by the two loaves in Lev. 23, the wave loaves that were to be brought to the priest on the Day of Pentecost. This then pictures the good growth and eventually the resurrection from the dead that we now become spirit beings, we've grown and overcome in this life, and the fiery trials

are very much like the baking of bread. ***We have then the permanent character of God right in our system!*** The unleavened bread, that's a different story.

Verse 34: "Jesus spoke all these things to the multitudes in parables, and without a parable He did not speak to them; so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from *the* foundation of *the* world'" (vs 34-35).

Isn't that what Jesus is teaching us. Hidden from *the* foundation of *the* world." God has His secrets; the mysteries of the Kingdom of God! We'll cover that tomorrow.

Verse 36: "And after dismissing the multitude, Jesus went into the house. Then His disciples came to Him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.'" They wanted to know! Let's see what Jesus had to say in explaining it, then we can see how we have all experience this in our lifetime.

Verse 37: "And He answered *and* said to them, 'The one Who sows the good seed is the Son of man.'" The seed is the Word of God.

- The Word of God is good!
- The Word of God is inspired!

What do people do with it?

Verse 38: "And the field is the world..." That's spreading the Word of God to the world. Today we have more Bibles in the world than ever before.

"...and the good seed, these are the children of the Kingdom... [that's us now; and we are to grow and overcome; we are to produce the fruit: 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold] ...but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*" (v 38)—the children of Satan the devil!

It tells us about it in Eph. 2; we need to also realize that we have been called out of the world and *we have nothing that we didn't receive:*

- our lives
- our being
- our understanding
- our minds
- everything about us
 - ✓ the calling of God
 - ✓ the Spirit of God
 - ✓ the Word of God

all comes from God, and *we* are His creation beginning with our conception.

Ephesians 2:1—here is how the world is: “Now you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [you were part of the world; part and parcel of it] ...according to the prince of the power of the air... [Satan the devil] ...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience” (vs 1-2).

Satan can cause people to sin through his temptations, and now look at how many things that he has available besides himself and the demons to get people to sin. The whole world is in sin! John says that the whole world is under the ‘power of the wicked one’ (1-John 5:19). He is the ‘god of this world’ and he has his blinding light; his light is *dark light* just like Jesus said that ‘if you have the Light—the Light of God—then you’ll be full of Light. But if your light is *darkness*, ‘how great is that darkness, indeed!’

Verse 3: “Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the children of wrath*, even as the rest of *the world*.” But *God reached down and called us because He loved us! He wants us in His kingdom!*

Matthew 13:39: “Now the enemy who sowed them is the devil; and the harvest is *the end of the age*, and the reapers are the angels.” We find that in Rev. 14; there are two harvests:

1. the harvest of the righteous, which is the first resurrection
2. the harvest of the wicked, beginning with those who come to fight against Christ

All nations are gathered to Jerusalem and they are destroyed in the Valley of Judgment. That’s how we start taking over the Kingdom of God.

Verse 40: “Therefore, as the tares are gathered and consumed in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all the offenders and those who are practicing lawlessness” (vs 40-41). Remember what Jesus said in Matt. 24: *Because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold!*

That’s exactly the kind of society we have in the world today. A world filled with violence and hate. Yes, there are some people out there doing some good, but always remember that *that good* we can be thankful for, but *‘that good’ does not lead to eternal life!* That’s a special thing; one of the mysteries of the Kingdom that we will cover tomorrow.

Verse 42: “And they shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth... [notice what happens]: ...**Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one who has ears to hear, let him hear.**”

Whenever Jesus says that, that means

- We need to stop!
- We need to think about it!
- We need to pray about it!
- We need to ask God to help us in everything that we do!

Our goal, as we started out: ***seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!*** Then ‘be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Matt. 5:48). Those two things tell us what the rest of the New Testament is going to be all about, so that we can accomplish what God wants.

- It is God *in us* Who is doing the work!
- It is His Spirit *in us* that is leading us and causing us to do these things!

This is why we need to constantly, as Peter wrote, growing in grace and in knowledge.

There are a couple of other parables to show the importance of the Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven:

Parable of Hidden Treasure

Verse 44: “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to treasure hidden in a field; which when a man finds, he conceals, and for the joy of *finding* it, goes and sells everything that he has, and buys that field.” That ties in with how we are to count the cost and put nothing between us and God. ***God wants us wholeheartedly, whole-mindedly—body and soul—seeking Him and His way!***

Parable of the Pearl

Verse 45: “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a merchant seeking beautiful pearls; who, after finding one very precious pearl, went and sold everything that he had, and bought it” (vs 45-46). That shows the value of it.

- Nothing can be compared to what God has called us to.
- Nothing can be compared to what we need to be doing today in
 - ✓ learning
 - ✓ growing
 - ✓ serving God
 - ✓ loving one another
 - ✓ loving God

That's how we're going to get through the difficulties here at the end of the age.

Parable of Gathering Fish

Verse 47: "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a dragnet cast into the sea, gathering in every kind *of fish*; which after it was filled was drawn up on shore; and they sat down and collected the good into vessels, and the unfit they threw away" (vs 47-48).

Verse 49 is something, because the angels are going to be doing a lot to get rid of the wicked and they are going to bring all of the saints resurrected up to the Sea of Glass.

Verse 49: "'This is the way it will be in the end of the age: the angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you understood all these things?'" (vs 49-51). I don't know how much they understood; they understood it to a certain extent because:

"...They said to Him, 'Yes, Lord.' Then He said to them..." (vs 51-52). This is very interesting because this shows the use of the whole Bible:

Verse 52: "Then He said to them, 'Therefore, every scribe who has been instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man *who is* a householder, who brings forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.' And it came to pass *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there" (vs 52-53).

Let's see where Peter, James and John all got a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. Matthew 16:24: "And Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross and follow Me.'" We can't mingle the ways of the world with the ways of the Kingdom of God. We can't partake of the table of demons and the table of the Lord.

Verse 25: "**For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it; but whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.**" *That is life eternal!* Quite different— isn't it? *Yes, that is really something!*

I tell you what, going through these Scriptures just makes me *yearn* for the Kingdom of God even more! We're being educated right now to take over this world. Just think what it's going to be like when we have our instructions and we know what to do, and we know where to go, and we know how to handle things; and we are spirit beings! That's going to be awesome!

Verse 26: "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world... [that would be something to gain the whole world, rule the whole world] ...but loses his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall render to everyone according to his doings" (vs 26-27).

Stop and think about this, because this is true: ***Faith requires works! Faith requires obedience!*** Because if you don't have works and obedience *you don't have faith!* It's just that simple!

Verse 28: "Truly I say to you, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they have seen the Son of man coming in His kingdom." That's interesting— isn't it? It follows right along in chapter 17 and it's very important for us to understand. This gives all of us encouragement, too.

Matthew 17:1: "And after six days, Jesus took with *Him* Peter and James and his brother John, and brought them up into a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them... [we will see that this is a vision] ...and His face shined as the sun... [that ties in with Rev. 1] ... and His garments became white as the light" (vs 1-2). Those are spiritual clothes; clothes made of spirit!

Verse 3: "Then behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him."

- Moses represents the Law
- Jesus represents the Kingdom
- Elijah represents the Prophets

Verse 4: "And Peter answered *and* said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You desire, let us make three tabernacles here: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'" He was kind of excited and beside himself and didn't know what to think about this. How would you feel if all of a sudden you saw this vision of Jesus transfigured as a spirit being in glory, and then Moses and Elijah right alongside Him.

This is why a lot of people believe that they go to heaven, but this is only a vision, a foretaste so that they would always have this in their minds. It led them and guided them in the things that they needed to do:

- to write the Word of God
- to preserve the Word of God
- to preach the Gospel

Verse 5: "While he was speaking, a bright

cloud suddenly overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, ‘This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight. **Listen to Him!**’” This was the message from God the Father. We don’t know if it was God’s voice; but Jesus said, ‘No one has heard the voice of God.’ So, this must have been the voice of an angel, a message from God.

Verse 6: “And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces in extreme terror.... [I guess so!] ...But Jesus came *and* touched them, and said, ‘Arise, and do not be terrified.’ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus alone” (vs 6-8). Imagine how they felt. In situation like that you would be wondering:

- Was that really true?
- Did that really happen?
- Where did they go?

Verse 9: “Now as they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man has risen from *the* dead.’” They didn’t understand that, though they heard Him say it quite a few times. Just like they didn’t understand what was going to happen on that last Passover that Jesus kept, nor did they understand the Scriptures where He was to be beaten and crucified.

Verse 10: “Then His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ And Jesus answered *and* said to them, ‘Elijah **shall** indeed come first and restore all things.’” (vs 10-11). That is *shall come*. There is yet another Elijah to come at the end. But John the Baptist came in the power and spirit of Elijah, and Jesus told them:

Verse 12: “‘But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him; but they did to him whatever they desired. In like manner also, the Son of man is about to suffer from them.’ Then the disciples understood that He was speaking to them about John the Baptist” (vs 12-13).

Quite a lesson! Awesome! Having that burned into your mind like Peter, James and John had, what is it going to be like to be a spirit being? They just had a little bit before where it says that ‘the righteous shall shine as the sun!’ (Matt. 13:43_[transcriber’s correction]). That’s what they saw with Jesus and His face. That really was a great thing to happen.

Let’s see some other things concerning the Kingdom of God and the parables and how those fit in. I want you to do a study through all of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and look up all the Scriptures that have to do with the Kingdom of God. There are

chapters in the book of Matthew that talk about the Kingdom of Heaven, what it’s going to be like. Here’s another parable, which, when we read it, gives us an indication—and Jesus was telling them—that the return of Jesus Christ would be somewhere way off in the future. It’s only implied here:

Parable of the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1: “The Kingdom of Heaven shall be compared to a man, a master of a house, who went out early in *the* morning to hire workmen for his vineyard.” Go back to Isa. 5; that also was likened to Israel. We find that Jesus said, ‘He is the vine, we are the branches, and the Father is the husbandman.’ There are many different things that tie into these parables to help give us understanding.

Verse 2: “And after agreeing with the workmen on a silver coin *for* the day’s *wage*, he sent them into his vineyard. And when he went out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘Go also into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’” (vs 2-4). Very interesting how He expresses this to show that eternal life is equal for everyone. What they do and how they do it in the Kingdom of God will be different.

Verse 5: “And they went. Again, after going out about *the* sixth hour and *the* ninth hour, he did likewise. And about the eleventh hour, he went out *and* found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all the day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘Go also into my vineyard, and whatever is right you shall receive’” (vs 5-7). Very interesting—isn’t it? These are the workers of the last hour. We can tie that in with Rev. 7 and the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude. They’re going to be converted just right at one year, so it ties right in with that.

Verse 8: “And when evening came, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the workmen and pay them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.’” This is to teach us that God does not do things the way that people *think* they should be done! You would think that they would start with the ones who have worked the longest. But Christ said to start with the ones who were last; and we’ll see why.

Verse 9: “And when those who *were hired* about the eleventh hour came, they each received a silver coin.” A type of eternal life; **you either have it or you don’t have it**. It’s not that you’re going to have more eternal life or less eternal life, or half

eternal life. You have *all* eternal life. Just like all human beings; do not all human beings have life? *But of course!* This is the lesson.

But notice that Christ does not want us to do as those who were first hired, v 10: “But when the first ones came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a silver coin. And after receiving *it*, they complained against the master of the house, saying, ‘These *who came* last have worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have carried the burden and the heat of the day.’” (vs 10-12).

- It doesn’t matter what you’ve done!
- It doesn’t matter how long you’ve worked!
- It doesn’t matter how long you lived!
- *It matters that when you were resurrected that you received eternal life!*

Don’t complain against God! God knows what He’s doing, so rejoice in what He’s doing.

Verse 13: “But he answered *and* said to them, ‘Friend, I am not doing you wrong. Did you not agree with me on a silver coin *for the day*?... [Isn’t that true? *Yes, indeed!*] ...Take *what* is yours and go, for I also desire to give to the last *ones* exactly as I gave to you. And is it not lawful for me to do what I will with that which *is* my own? Is your eye evil because I am good?’” (vs 13-15). That’s the way people are. They think that they should get more, but they don’t necessarily get any more. You either receive eternal life or you don’t receive eternal life.

Verse 16: “The last shall be first... [How all that works out, we don’t know. God has to make that decision.] ...and the first *shall be* last; for **many are called, but few are chosen.**” We’ll cover that tomorrow: Why are few chosen?

Remember, Jesus said that *few find the way to life; few go in the straight, narrow and difficult way!* Let’s not be surprised at some of these things and how they occur, because they are going to.

(go to the next track)

Come back to Isaiah 5, since I have mentioned it several times. Let’s see what Isaiah says about the vineyard. Then that will be carried over in the parable that we will cover in Matt. 21.

Isaiah 5:1: “Now I will sing to my Beloved a song of my Beloved concerning His vineyard. My Beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. And He dug it up, and cleared it of stones, and planted it *with* choice vines... [This is God speaking of Israel and Judah; but also it can be compared to the Church in some ways, too.] ...and built a tower in its midst,

and hewed out a wine vat in it; and He looked *for it* to produce grapes. But it produced worthless fruits” (vs 1-2). That’s why we have to bring forth good fruit.

Verse 3: “And now, O people of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, I ask you to judge between Me and My vineyard. What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it?...” (vs 3-4). He did everything. Just like us, just like these nations of Israel and Judah, they had everything; God gave it to them. Remember that God warned: *When you go into the land and you have everything you need, and you have eaten bread without scarceness, and you are filled to the full—BEWARE!—lest you forget the Lord your God!* That’s what Israel has done over and over again. Even in some ways, yes, the Church has done that, too.

Verse 5: “And now I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard; I will take away its hedge...” Isn’t that what has happened? Has not the hedge of the protection of God been taken from the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel and Judah? *Yes, indeed!* We’re going to learn the lesson. It doesn’t matter how much you defend yourself. It doesn’t matter how thorough that your digital devices are, that can capture everything concerning all the enemy everywhere. ***If you do not trust in God, you are going to fail!*** You may have some few successes, but eventually you’re going to fail because:

- God wants righteousness!
- God wants truth and understanding!

Where is it in the nations of the modern descendants of Israel today? *It isn’t there!* He said, ‘I’m going to remove the hedge.’

“...and it shall be consumed; *and* break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down; and **I will lay it waste**; it shall not be pruned nor dug; but briars and thorns shall come up. And I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.’ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant; and He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry *of distress!*” (vs 5-7).

So, when Jesus brings this parable to the men of Judah, especially to the Sadducees—who are the priests; and the Pharisees, scribes and Levites—they understood what He was talking about.

Parable of the Vineyard

Matthew 21:33 shows the unity of the Old and New Testaments: “Hear another parable: There was a certain man, a master of a house, who planted

a vineyard, and put a fence around it... [the hedge/protection] ...and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and *then* leased it to husbandmen and left the country.” Let’s understand something concerning ownership of the land: *God owns it all!* He lets us have it as an inheritance, but it is *His!* He let’s us use it as if it is our own, but it is *His!* How we use it depends upon the blessings as we read in Isa. 5, that will or will not come upon it. Let’s see how this follows in parallel with different details from Isa. 5

Verse 34: “Now when the season of the fruits was drawing near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen to receive his fruits.... [raisins and wine] ...But the husbandmen took his servants and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another” (vs 34-35). That’s what happened; that’s a type of Prophets coming to them saying, ‘Repent! Turn from your evil!’ No, they didn’t like it; they wouldn’t listen, but God wasn’t done, yet.

Verse 36: “Again he sent other servants, more than the first *time*; and they did the same thing to them. Then at last he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will have respect for my son.’” The Son is Jesus Christ, and they had all the prophecies, especially in Matt. 18 about Christ being the One Moses prophesied about: *That Prophet!* They understood. You go through and you see all the witnesses that the Jews had in Jerusalem at the time of the ministry of Jesus Christ, and you will see that they had every kind of witness—signs, wonders, healings—everything! God’s witness to them was overwhelming.

Let’s see the parallel, v 38: “But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us murder him and gain possession of his inheritance.’ Then they took him, *and cast him* out of the vineyard, and murdered *him*” (vs 38-39). Let’s stop here; there are parallels to this:

- On the Day of Atonement, where is it finished?
- *Outside the camp at the Miphkad Altar on the Mt. of Olives!*
- Where to all of the sin offerings go to be burned?
- *Out there!*
- Where are we to go that Paul said in Heb. 13?
- *We don’t have an altar at the temple, but we go outside the camp to the altar of God, because Christ was crucified outside the camp.*

It’s through His shed blood that we have forgiveness

of sin, mercy, kindness and the promise of eternal life. We go *outside* the camp! There’s that type right there.

Verse 40: “‘Therefore, when the lord of the vineyard shall come... [Christ coming back] ...what will he do to those husbandmen?’ They said to Him... [these are the scribes and Pharisees] ...‘*Evil men!* He will utterly destroy them, and he will lease his vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render to him the fruits in their seasons’” (vs 40-41)—gotcha!

Now then, Jesus brings the conclusion of it to them, v 42: “Jesus said to them, ‘**Have you never read in the Scriptures...**’” Just like today, people have Bibles but they don’t read them. People use Bibles, maybe even study it, but they bring all of their pre-conceived unrighteous notions to it so that they can have their religion. Whenever they do that, they bring blindness upon themselves, and they don’t understand.

Here’s another prophecy to them: “...‘*The Stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner....* [Psa. 118] ...This was from *the Lord*, and it is wonderful in our eyes’? Because of this, **I say to you**, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you...” (vs 42-43)—because the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were the Kingdom of God on earth for Israel and Judah, not the Kingdom of God that Christ is going to bring from heaven.

They could have had access to the Kingdom of God that Christ is going to bring from heaven IF they would have listened, and IF they would have repented.

Notice what Jesus says, “...and it shall be given to a nation *that* produces the fruits of it” (v 43). All of those in the first resurrection are being developed into the nation—we won’t become the nation until the resurrection—to whom the Kingdom of God is going to be given. He’s not going to leave it to other people. They had an opportunity. Christ came to them:

- taught them
- preached
- healed
- raised the dead
- did many miracles

—and because He wouldn’t come to them on *their* terms, they rejected Him, they killed Him, they slaughtered the disciples. So, what happened to them? *Jerusalem was destroyed! The temple was destroyed!*

Verse 44: “And the one who falls on this

Stone shall be broken... [repentance, and then you'll be restored] ...but on whomever it shall fall..." The judgment of God by Christ Who died, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and administered the punishment and defeat upon Jerusalem in 70_{A.D.}

"...on whomever it shall fall it will grind him to powder" (v 44). This becomes key, because these men of Jesus' time knew what they were doing. They resented what Christ was doing, because He wouldn't come to them on *their* terms, and they wouldn't come to God on *His* terms. No one comes to God and tells God what to do. No one comes to God on *their own* terms; you come to God on *His* terms.

Verse 45: "Now after hearing His parables, the chief priests and the Pharisees knew that He was speaking about them.... [They knew! They understood!] ...And they sought to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet" (vs 45-46). Amazing, isn't it? Political reasons! They did what they did, and they wanted Jesus dead, because their minds were hardened and their eyes were blinded.

Let's look at another parable, Matt. 22, and this also shows a prophecy of the preaching of the Gospel, and it began in Jerusalem and went to those who were in authority. Let's see what this is like, and you get all of these parables and you compare them one with the other, put them all together and you couple that with all the rest of the things in the Bible, and you understand that the Bible is talking about the Kingdom of God. That is the most important thing of all!

All of these things to show and teach those who have *eyes to see, ears to hear and a willing heart* to accept. We can learn from these.

Parable of the Wedding Feast

Matthew 22:1: "And again Jesus answered and spoke to them in parables, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man *who was* a king, who made a wedding feast for his son" (vs 1-2). The king in this case we know is God the Father, because of the other Scriptures that we understand. But they didn't know that. The parable fits nevertheless.

Verse 3: "And sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast; but they refused to come." Just like we covered earlier. They blinded their eyes, they stopped their ears and hardened their hearts.

Verse 4: "Afterwards he sent out other servants, saying, 'Say to those who have been

invited, 'Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and the fatted beasts are killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding feast.'" But they paid no attention and went away, one to his farm, and another to his business. And the rest, after seizing his servants, insulted and killed *them*" (vs 4-6). Didn't that happen? *Yes, indeed!* We already covered that concerning Stephen. All the apostles were martyred!

Verse 7: "Now, when the king heard *it*, he became angry; and he sent his armies *and* destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." A prophecy to them that unless they served God and listened to the message that He brought, they would lose their city, they would lose their nation, they would lose everything!

Isn't that an ironic twist on the prophecy of Caiaphas who said that 'one man should die for the nation lest we should lose everything'? Because they killed Him, they did lose everything! Granted, they were blinded; granted, they hardened their hearts. But nevertheless, they had a witness!

Verse 8: "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast indeed is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy; therefore, go into the well-traveled highways, and invite all that you find to the wedding feast.'" That's the preaching of the Gospel—isn't it? That's what we are called to do! It doesn't give the indication of the number of years, but it shows that it's over time that this took place.

In this parable, it has to be given this way to show that even though you're invited to come,

- *you* have to make yourself ready through the Spirit of God
- *you* have to follow the Word of God
- *you* have to do things that are important in developing the character that you need to be there

You can't come with your own devices. This is likened with the parallel with the garments.

No one is going to end up on the Sea of Glass who is not converted and has been resurrected to be there. But this parable is given to show that you're not going to come to God *your way*. You must come to God *His way!* Remember that the wedding garments are the righteousness of the saints. When this one was discovered to not have garments fit for the wedding feast, he was rejected.

Verse 10: "And after going out into the highways, those servants brought together everyone that they found, both good and evil; and the wedding feast was filled with guests. And when the king

came in to see the guests, *he* noticed a man there who was not dressed in *proper* attire for *the* wedding feast; and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you enter here without a garment *fit* for *the* wedding feast?’ But he had no answer. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind his hands and feet, *and* take him away, and cast *him* into the outer darkness.’ There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **For many are called, but few are chosen**” (vs 10-14).

If you are chosen, you had better be dressed for the wedding feast, and that is with the love and righteousness of God in your life, with the Spirit of God in growing and overcoming so that you will be ready for the resurrection. Have on those garments that God says are fit for the wedding feast.

Now, let’s look at two more parables in Matt. 25. Here, again, we find the same thing over and over again. These are all lessons to not let human nature take over, to not give in to human nature. Rather yield to the Spirit of God, do what is right and serve and love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being all the time. Isn’t it interesting? All of these parables concerning the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven.

Parable of the Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1: “Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be compared *to* ten virgins, who took their lamps *and* went out to meet the bridegroom.” The lamps are likened to the Word of God, to give you light and where to walk.

Verse 2: “And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.” Why were the five foolish? *They were relying more on themselves than on God!* They didn’t take the warning seriously and correct themselves and do what should be done that was right to do. That is pictured with the lamps and the oil.

- oil is a type of the Holy Spirit
- lamps are a type of the Word of God
- the virgins are a type of those who are learning, following and waiting for the wedding supper of the Lamb

Verse 3: “The ones who were foolish took their lamps... [had the Word of God] ...*but* they did not take oil with them” What do you know about that! They weren’t prepared! Remember: ***whenever you are not prepared, something always happens***—doesn’t it? Always unexpected—*isn’t it?* *Yes!* That’s why we are to be prepared!

Verse 4: “But the wise took oil in their vessels *along* with their lamps.” The lamps were these small little olive oil lamps and the wick was

put into the olive oil and it was lit so it would draw the oil and give light. It couldn’t hold very much, so they had to have a reserve vessel with them so they could put the oil into the lamp, so that it would continue burning.

Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit and you can only get the Holy Spirit from God. This puts them into the category of those people within the Church of God, those brethren who are Sabbath-only Christians. They come to services on the Sabbath, enjoy the fellowship and that’s pretty much what they do until the next Sabbath.

Verse 5: “Now when the bridegroom was gone a long time, they all became drowsy and slept.” Everyone has their problems and difficulties, but the question is: Will we wake up to those and repent, and do what is right?

Verse 6: “But in *the* middle of *the* night there was a cry...” The middle of the night is when it is the darkest, and you don’t know what’s happening. Have you ever been awakened in the middle of the night by something startling? You don’t know where you are; you don’t know what is happening right away. So, it’s very much like this.

Once they got their bearings, “...there was a cry: ‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Go out to meet him’” (v 6). This is really quite something, because what the bridegroom was to do when there was an engagement, he was to go and prepare the house so when they married they would have a place to live. Is that not what Jesus is doing? Did He not say that ‘if I go, I will come again; I go and prepare a place for you so that I can receive you to Myself’? *Yes, indeed!*

The virgins had to be prepared when the bridegroom came, v 7: “Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.... [so they could get a little more light and see, and also to let the bridegroom see them] ...And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, because our lamps are going out’” (vs 7-8). Isn’t that something? ***When you’re not prepared you have no reserve!*** That’s why you’ve heard—how many times:

- pray
- study
- grow
- overcome
- love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being
- love your neighbor as yourself
- love the brethren as Jesus has loved us

All of those things need to be on an ongoing basis, then you will have the oil in your vessel so that you

can put it into the lamp.

This sounds a little harsh, but notice what the answer was from the five wise virgins; because what we're talking about is: *no one can be righteous for you!*

- You have to be righteous in Christ because He gives you His Spirit!
- You have to be righteous in obedience, because you keep the Word of God!
- You have to be yielded to God so you're constantly receiving of the Holy Spirit of God!

When it comes to 'crunch time' and you're not ready, you're in trouble!

Verse 9: "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest *there* not *be* enough for us and *for* you. But instead, go to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'" You have to work at it yourself.

- No one else's Bible study is going to be your Bible study!
- No one else's prayer is going to be your prayer!
- No one else's Holy Spirit is going to be your Holy Spirit!

Verse 10: "**And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut.**" Exactly what this means, I couldn't tell you. Does it mean that the five foolish were excluded from being part of the bride? Though, if they repented they would still enter into the Kingdom of God? *I don't know!*

But at least for the sake of the parable here, the five virgins went with the bridegroom, so that means their part of the bride of Christ. The others didn't go with the bridegroom, because he didn't know them as the one betrothed to him.

Verse 11: "And afterwards the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But He answered *and* said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'" (vs 11-12). Whoa! That's pretty strong—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*

Here's the lesson, v 13: "**Watch...** [watch your spiritual life; watch the things that you need to watch for in other areas, too] ...therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of man is coming." You go back to Rev. 2 and He says to the Church at Ephesus, because they lost their first love. That's not the excitement of being first converted. The first love is to God! They were doing other things, and Jesus said, 'Repent! Or else I will

remove your candlestick.' That being in a prophetic sense, Christ can come upon us at any time in judgment:

- if we don't repent of our sins
- if we are not doing as He said
- if we are not growing and overcoming

He also said that to Pergamos where they had the doctrine of the Nicolaitans and they offered things sacrificed to idols. That means that they had idols, and He told them to *repent!* Otherwise, 'I will come and fight against you with the sword of My mouth!'

- While there is peace, *work!*
- While you have opportunity, *do!*
- While you have the time, *study!*
- While you have the health and vigor to do so, *work!*

—because our time is coming! You don't know in what hour He is coming.

Let's turn back to Matt. 24; especially applied to the end-time. Why? *Because there are so many things going on!*

- People don't study like they should *because they're watching television.*
- People don't study like they need to, *because they're all involved with other activities.*
- People do not take the time to pray, *because they don't realize how urgent it is to pray every day.*
- People do not watch the events that are unfolding in prophecy.

Always remember this: ***Just when we think that a prophecy is going to be fulfilled and take place, something happens and it works out differently!***

Matthew 24:42: "Watch, therefore, because you do not know in what hour your Lord is coming." You don't know when Christ is going to look down at your life. Remember, you have the Spirit of Christ in you, and the Spirit of the Father, so They know all the time. "...you do not know in what hour your Lord is coming."

Verse 43: "But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have been watching, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into." That means:

- you are *strong in the Lord,*
- you are *fighting against Satan the devil*
- you are *overcoming the world*
- you are *overcoming your human nature*
- you are *developing the character of God*

- you are *worthy of the resurrection*

Verse 44: “Therefore, you also be ready. For **the Son of man is coming at a time that you do not think**. Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his lord has set over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing. Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his property. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delays *his* coming,’ and shall begin to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken” (vs 44-49). That is get involved in the cares and worries of this life.

Verse 50: “The lord of that servant will come in a day that he does not expect, and in an hour that he does not know. And he shall cut him asunder and shall appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (vs 50-51).

Again, we have a couple more parables in Matt. 25:

- The *parable of the talents*
- The *parable of loving your brethren* and serving them

You be sure and read and study those. But through all of this, it proves a wonderful and marvelous point. The whole Bible is about the Kingdom of God, including:

- How do you receive eternal life?
- How do you overcome human nature?
- How do you serve God?
- How do you live your life in this world?
- How do you resist Satan the devil?
- How do you overcome those problems?
- How do you get along with the brethren?
- How you love God?
- How you love your neighbor?
- How you love the brethren?

Tremendous, isn't it? We have the whole Bible!

Tomorrow we are going to cover: What are the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God. I think you will find that most revealing!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 13:24-38
- 2) Ephesians 2:1-3
- 3) Matthew 13:39-53
- 4) Matthew 16:24-28
- 5) Matthew 17:1-13
- 6) Matthew 20:1-16
- 7) Isaiah 5:1-7

- 8) Matthew 21:33-46
- 9) Matthew 22:1-14
- 10) Matthew 25:1-13
- 11) Matthew 24:42-51

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 2
- 3 John
- Leviticus 23
- 1-John 5:19
- Revelation 14
- Matthew 5:48
- Revelation 1; 7
- Psalm 118
- Revelation 2

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