

It's Time

It is one of the saddest, most tragic things Jesus ever said, yet it is fantastically important for us today.

He began by explaining to his disciples about how the Word of His Gospel would be spread and under which conditions it would be fruitful. Let's look at Mat 13 – “Then He spoke many things to them in parables saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Mat 13:3-8)

Later, Jesus explained, “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 received the seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy; 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. Now he who received seed 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. But he who received seed on 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.” Mat 13:19-23

Now, you're all probably familiar with this passage known as the parable of the sower. Seed representing His word is scattered here and there – in some hearts it's stolen away, in some it's received but only superficially; in some it's choked out and ruined; and in some it's productive.

To be clear, this is not just a truth for all time, but is also a prophetic picture, that is, a description of how the church got started. Jesus said to His disciples, “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel...” and indeed they did. In less than a generation, the Good News had spread to most of the civilized world and in only three centuries it was elevated to the proclaimed religion of the Roman Empire. Of course, this was historically a sad day for this status led to great compromise within the church and that very situation brings us to the next part of Christ's series prophetic parables.

Following the parable of the sower, Jesus spoke of what the enemy of the Kingdom would do in response to this growth. “*The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 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?’” 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?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 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.’” Mat 13:24-30

Herein, it's clear that the tares represent unbelievers and deceivers in the church. You see, as young sprouts of tares resemble young sprouts of wheat, so phony Christians can be hard to discern from the sincere. Yet given time to mature, they both become quite evident and distinctive. And, notice that this prophecy propels us forward all the way to the last days – the tribulation time. When Christ returns, the tares will be burned and the wheat will be ‘barned’. Now, this is not speaking of the rapture, for that is when the Bride of Christ, the assembly of honest believers still on earth, is taken up and brought, along with all the

resurrected faithful (also part of the Bride), into the presence of the Lord. In the rapture, the wheat is separated first rather than the tares. So this parable is pointing to the second coming of Christ to earth which will happen at the conclusion of the Tribulation.

So then, having moved us forward from the initial spreading of the Word and the consequent sowing of the enemy's tares unto the final days of the age, Jesus next describes the unnatural nature of the last days Kingdom of God on earth with the story of the mustard seed: *"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 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."* Mat 13:31,32

Now, in another parable, Jesus used the mustard seed as a picture of faith. (See Mat 17:20) And indeed, the church began in faith. You see, the mustard seed is small and will naturally grow into a modest herbal plant, but Jesus said this kingdom would

grow unnaturally large with branches that would be big enough for birds to perch upon and presumably nest.

So what's the big deal? Of course, this is a well-known passage and many of you already know that as with the fowl in Christ's previous parable of the sower, birds represent the agents of Satan. So this is a pretty scary and sobering truth – the final state of the church is that of being filled with evil agents. They are in its branches.

And that brings us to the tragically sad prophetic proclamation we first mentioned. Here it is – *"The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."* Mat 13:33,34

For those of you familiar with the meanings of prophetic imagery in scripture, this passage has some recognizable elements. We know from (John 6:31-35 and John 1:1) that bread or meal is symbolic of teaching or doctrine while leaven is always a picture of sin or sin-filled doctrine.

Jesus said, *"Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."* And in the following verses, it was said of his disciples, *"Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of (literal) bread but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees."* Mat 16:6,12

In this last parable, a woman is mixing leaven in specifically three measures of meal (flour). This is arresting, because again, Christ is speaking of the church, and from the chronological order derived from His sequence of parables, it's the last days condition of the Church. So who is this woman and what do the three measures picture?

Because this is a prophetic parable, it's quite clear that this woman is not a specific person or historical figure; she pictures a spiritual force that is corrupting the doctrine of the church with sin and its close cousin, deception. The Bible says concerning the last days that, *"...evil men shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."* (2 Tim 3:13)

Now, as we let the Bible interpret itself, we refer to Rev 17 where we see another prophetic woman riding a beast. It is said of her, *"The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."* Rev 17:4-6

This woman, the great whore, pictures the false religious system that deceives the whole world. I refer you to our letter entitled, Pious Prostitution (which can be downloaded from www.HeavenlyMinded.com/Essays/) for a more in-depth study on this. I suggest that she and woman mixing leaven in Christ's parable may be one in the same or at least of the same spirit.

And as we continue to consider the book of Revelation, we see in chapters two and three that

there are four churches out of the seven mentioned which will be active at the end of the age. Refer to our letters Fire Eyes, The Heeding Never Halts and Victory! (again, at www.Heavenlyminded.com/Essays/) for more on this. These four are Thyatira, representing the Roman Catholic church system, Sardis, representing the mainline protestant denominational church system, Philadelphia, representing the weak but faithful believers whose beginnings are associated with genuine moves of the Holy Spirit beginning in the 1800's onward, and Laodicea, representing the last days, self-absorbed or narcissistic church system whose congregants carry many Christian-like names but fundamentally are not Christ-centered.

In Revelation, only one of these four is commended by Christ for holding on to the veracity of His Word – Philadelphia; and this is the one group that Jesus promises to guard or keep from the hour of temptation or testing (the Tribulation time) which He says shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell on the earth (see Revelation 3:10)

For that reason, we are confident that the Philadelphian believers will be raptured before the wrath of God is poured out.

That leaves three remaining behind; three churches or church systems who like the three measures of meal in Christ's parable, have gotten their meal or doctrine mixed with sin. The entire church left behind at the rapture will be a corrupt and corrupting entity. Its doctrine will be filled with sinful error and its branches filled with Satan's agents. It is a horrible, sickening truth.

But, unlike the rapture, which will occur in a "blink of an eye", the infestation of the birds and the mixing in of leaven both take time and I'm firmly convinced have been going on for quite a while already. The contemporary church as a whole is filled with squawking, filthy fowl and rotting worldly doctrines dressed up to look and sound very Christian, very open minded and sensible. Therefore, if you are a Philadelphian believer, your guide and guard is the unaltered, unembellished Word of God.

The one world religion of the last days that will be the result of 'leaven in the meal' and 'birds in the branches' is very ecumenical. There will be an increasing equality among the faiths and even a mixing. Take Christianity and add a bit of Islam, throw in some Buddhism and Mormonism and... even ancient Judaism – you get my drift. And that is indeed happening even now – the birds are squawking and the leaven is rotting, and **it's time** for sincere believers to stand up against it radically or get out of it entirely!