

Let's review a few things about parables before we look at our text this morning.

The bible is a book of many literary genre or forms. Therefore it is necessary for us to know what is meant by a parable as compared to an allegory or a proverb. A parable is a short simple story intended to illustrate a moral or religious lesson. A proverb is a short well-known saying that expresses an obvious truth and often offers advice. An allegory is a work or story or a truth in which the characters and events are to be understood as representing other things and symbolically expressing a deeper, often spiritual, moral, or political meaning.

John Bunyan's Pilgrims' Progress is an allegory. It is the story of the main character Christian and his progress on the way to the heavenly city. Paul writes in Galatians, 3:21 ¶ Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.²³ But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.²⁴ This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.²⁵ Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

Many throughout history have tried to interpret much or all of the Bible as allegory, always looking for a deeper, more spiritual meaning or a double meaning and this is a very poor and inaccurate way to approach the Scripture.

One other thing we should note before continuing is that even a parable may make use of other literary forms. When Jesus says, "the kingdom of heaven is like", He is using simile and then he proceeds with the parable itself. He is saying that the real truth of the parable is not the things mentioned in the parable but that they are similar to the things that he is teaching: the kingdom of heaven is like these things.

24 Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.²⁵* "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶* "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. ²⁷ "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' ²⁸ "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves *said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' ²⁹* "But he *said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰* 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."

This parable contains some of the elements of the first parable we studied last week but the thrust of the teaching has a different purpose.

Jesus again refers to a sower and seed and this time we know exactly what crop is being planted by the sower. Wheat is being planted with an expected harvest. In this story an enemy comes and deliberately plants weed seed in the wheat. I might call this agro-terrorism. Now this may seem strange, but this kind of thing really did occur, not that it was a common practice.

Notice, the sower is not the problem. Actually in this story the man who sowed is the property owner and his slaves did the actual sowing of the seed. Neither of them were at fault. The men were sleeping not because they were lazy or neglectful as some teach this parable to mean, but they are asleep at night after a hard days work. The landowner does not hold them accountable for what occurred. There is nothing wrong with the seed they sowed. When it sprouts it proves to be hearty wheat. It is obvious that the slaves manage the crop because they notice that weeds are growing in the midst of the wheat and report it to the landowner. The one who planted the weed seed had to know what he was doing.

He comes by night, knowing that the slaves will be asleep. Once he is done with his seeding he leaves. It is obvious that he knows something about the soil and that it will receive the weed seed and sprout. Also notice that the weeds are not noticed until the grain heads first appear which means this weed has a very close resemblance to the wheat and that it is not easily detected until the flower head appears.

There is a weed in Palestine that is called darnel. It is a weedy annual ryegrass that often is found in grain fields and other cultivated lands and the seeds are sometimes considered poisonous.

Once the weeds are discovered and reported to the landowner, he knows that someone has deliberately planted weeds in his wheat. He knew his soil, he knew what it should produce, he knew if anything other than wheat would be growing in this soil.

He instructs his slaves not to attempt to separate the tares from the wheat until the harvest. It would appear that the tares are so in grown with the wheat that unnecessary loss of wheat would be the result of an attempt to remove the tares while the crops are growing. At the appropriate time the two will be separated and the tares will be destroyed and then the wheat will be properly stored.

Jesus then proceeds to tell two more parables to the crowd that is gathered. When He completes the parables 36 Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

Again Jesus is going to explain the parables exclusively to the disciples. Why? The answer is in vs. 35 "I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD." Jesus quotes from Ps. 78:2 and fulfills that Old Testament prophecy.

Let's remind ourselves of what Jesus taught during the first of this series of parables when He explained what the various soils meant.

Because the masses of people are continually rejecting the truths that Christ has been teaching since the Sermon on the Mount, the parables are being used as a judgement against those who will not hear. The first thing we must notice is the exclusivity concerning those who can understand the parables. It has been granted to the disciples. Only those who know Christ are granted this ability.

These parables are about the kingdom of heaven. These mysteries of the kingdom are meant to be revealed to those whom God has chosen to hear. Remember, the word mystery does not mean something that remains a mystery. It is a mystery that can be solved, it can be understood. Furthermore, those who will have understanding that is granted by God will be given more ability to understand, their knowledge of the kingdom of heaven will be abundant. But those who have not been granted this ability will lose any perceived understanding of the kingdom of heaven they may have, it will be taken away from them. This is a demonstration of the wisdom of a Sovereign God in the things concerning salvation and the knowledge of God. This has nothing to do with good works or intellect or human ability. It has to do with God and the election of His saints.

This is a judgment against those who deny the Gospel. It is proof that when man is left to himself he cannot understand the things of God and of our Christ.

In his explanation of the soils Jesus is saying that those who do not hear are a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in Is.6:9.

They will keep on hearing but they are really not listening and truly hearing and they are seeing but with no real perception concerning the truth of Christ. What they hear and see are meaningless because they are dull of heart. There is no true spirituality that has been born of God. There is no regeneration. This is a judicious hardening of the heart by God. First they don't hear or see nor do they really want to so God hardens them even more. If they truly desired God, they would turn to Him and He would make them spiritually healed from their sin but rather the opposite has occurred as a judgement from God. This is made even clearer as

Jesus says:

Mt 13:16 "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

Their eyes and ears are blessed. They have been granted to know the secrets of the kingdom of God. They are not like those who are dull of heart and who have been hardened by God.

Those who are the genuine disciples of Christ are the blessed ones of the beatitudes and spiritual prosperity is evident in them because of the knowledge of the kingdom that Jesus' true disciples have.

This brings us back to our text where Jesus now proceeds to explain the Parable of the Wheat

and The Tares. Notice what the scripture says, And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." They still need instruction to understand the parables. They know the parables are about the kingdom of God but they cannot interpret the meaning even though it is meant for them to do so. They are still in training. Also remember, the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven were taught before this one. It is only this one that they ask to have explained. It would seem that they understood those two parables but this one was more difficult or perhaps some part of the parable was not as easily understood. We do not know but Jesus explains the parable to them:

37 And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. 40 "So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 "Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Jesus begins His explanation by saying that He is the landowner and the good seed represents his kingdom people. The bad seed represents the sons of the evil one.

These two seeds have been around since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden.

And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." (Genesis 3:15, NAS95).

When Satan was cursed in the garden we already had record that there will be only two kinds of people in the world - those who are the children of the Devil and those who are Christ's. Jesus is saying that this is still true and will be until He brings His final judgement to the earth and finally separates the tares from the wheat. Jesus victory over Satan as prophesied in the Garden is the guarantee that judgement will fall upon all who have been and will be of the seed of the Devil. This is man in His unregenerate and lost condition. Paul wrote the same truth to the Ephesians:

Eph.2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Now, remember that this is a parable about the kingdom. The central truth is about the kingdom and the theme is that there is a final judgement in the kingdom and the children of the Devil, all who are not saved by grace, will be separated from the true children of the kingdom and they will be burned in judgment.

The ones who will be judged by being thrown into the furnace of fire are characterized as being stumbling blocks and those who do not live by Christ's kingdom law. They are

unbelievers yet they have lived in the kingdom.

What does Jesus mean by “the kingdom?”

The field where the seed was sown is the world. We are the seed and we live in this world and so do the tares, the sons of the Devil.

The kingdom of Christ has already been inaugurated by His presence. It is not the consummated or final kingdom but the kingdom has come with Christ. Repent and believe for the kingdom of God is at hand is what was preached. Jesus taught His disciples to pray thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Lets remind ourselves of what we studied when going through the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus, with His incarnation has inaugurated the kingdom of God. The kingdom as God has purposed it throughout human history has begun. This is the rule of God under which there is life. This kingdom never existed until Jesus arrived. People were saved by grace before now, but there was not a kingdom of life as it now exists. The people of Israel were a picture, a physical type of the kingdom that was to come physically and spiritually. The present kingdom is such because God has written His law on the hearts of His kingdom people. It no longer exists on two tables of stone as a summary of the Law and the Prophets and a legal binding document for Israel. Christ’s law is engraved on the heart of every true believer. And yet the fullness of the kingdom will not come, it will not be consummated until Christ’s return.

So in praying for the kingdom to come, Jesus is instructing the disciples to pray that the evidences of the present kingdom will be manifested in the life of the church as it extends beyond the day of Pentecost and beyond the city of Jerusalem and beyond Samaria and into the whole world. It is a prayer to taste the kingdom now knowing that the fullness of it is yet to come and that it will come in all of it’s glory when Christ appears to resurrect His own and then bring final judgement at the second resurrection.

The Jews were looking for the kingdom. Jesus said the kingdom has come and it will be extended as far and for as long as God wants it to be and then it will come in its final fullness. The kingdom is not in and of itself the church. The church exists within the parameters of the kingdom. These parables are not about the church. They are about the kingdom.

In every kingdom throughout history there have been those who live in the kingdom who are not loyal to the king. All disloyalty is a form of lawlessness and a stumbling block whether it be in a good kingdom or an evil kingdom.

The kingdom is the world under the rule of Christ, whether He is acknowledged or not. That is why even in judgement every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is

Lord when the consummation of the kingdom occurs.

From Jesus' perspective there is the kingdom as it is when He is on the earth; the kingdom as it will expand to its fullest until He returns and then there is the final eternal kingdom.

Until Jesus comes to consummate His kingdom there will be the mixing of those who are Christ's and those who are not. He has the final authority to separate them from each other.

And when He does so,

41."The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus agents of gathering the harvest and separating at this time of judgement will be His angels. There is so much false teaching about angels today, even in the church. An honest study of Scripture shows that God uses angels for His purposes of judgement more than He does for blessing when they are interacting with man.

Those who are put into the furnace of fire will know horrible judgment. Unlike the tares that are consumed by the fire, men will weep and gnash their teeth while in the fire.

Another heresy is gaining hearers in certain theological camps and churches today and that is the idea of the doctrine of annihilationism, which teaches that man was created immortal. But those who continue in sin and reject Christ are by a positive act of God deprived of the gift of immortality and are ultimately destroyed.

Another view, called "conditional immortality," argues that immortality is not a natural endowment of man, but is rather a gift of God in Christ only to those who believe. The person that does not accept Christ is ultimately annihilated and loses all consciousness. Some of the advocates of these doctrines teach a limited duration of conscious suffering for the wicked after death, after which time they are annihilated.

Suffice it to say, it is heresy, it is not what Jesus taught - it is not what Scripture teaches.

Jesus finishes His explanation with these words of hope,

43* "Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

He quotes from Dan.12:3 and uses the verse eschatologically and sotierologically. When salvation has its ultimate completion in the day of the resurrection of the saints; and once all things are judged; when the kingdom comes in its final form, in its consummation, those who are made righteous by Christ will shine like the sun in the Fathers final kingdom. All true kingdom sons will reflect the glory of Christ in the kingdom. There will be no more darkness, no more lawlessness and no more stumbling blocks in the kingdom. He who has ears, let him hear.

For the true disciple of Christ who is blessed to hear and blessed to see these things there should be a sense of hope and encouragement that makes the serious call and commitment to discipleship worth everything that it costs to pursue a life that is pleasing to God.

The sons of the kingdom while living in the realized kingdom until Jesus returns have advantages and blessings that the other inhabitants of the kingdom cannot and never will have. We have the ears and we have the eyes. We see and hear what others cannot see and hear.

We will know persecution but blessed are we. We will be misunderstood, but blessed are we. We will be hated, but blessed are we. We have the truth and we have Christ, how blessed are we. We alone can pray to the Father thy kingdom come and know that it will. We alone can pray to the Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven and we know that it will be done.

We alone can say, even come Lord Jesus and we know that He is coming unto the glory of God, for His purpose, for His pleasure and unto the praise of His glorious grace to consummate His kingdom. Christ is our blessed hope.

He who has ears, let him hear.

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Matthew 13:24-30 First Baptist Evans June 11, 2006 Elder/Pastor Joseph Krygier