

VIGIL



“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

~ 1 Peter 5:8

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Kingdom of God**

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: THE SOWN SEED

Brian Gentle

In the Parable of the Sower, we learned that not all people react to the Word of the kingdom in the same way. As recorded only by Matthew, the Parable of the Sown Seed (or the Wheat and Tares) further illustrates this truth. Now we have the disciples being described as the “seed” where with before they were described as the “good soil.” So, when one receives the “seed” of the kingdom (the Word of God), they become “good seed” (a son of the kingdom). Even though this is one of only two parables that Jesus gives the explanation, many miss the great truths (or misinterpret them) found within. Let us look at some of these important truths and make application to them.

There seems to be some significance in the fact that the sower sowed in the daylight whereas the enemy sowed in the night. This truth is portrayed throughout scripture. As Christians we are to be the “light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). We are not to be hid under a bushel but we are to set ourselves on a hill. Why? So we can be seen. Our lives are to be a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1)

and in doing so we are leading others to Christ. However, our enemy, the devil (Rev. 12:9; 1 Peter 5:8), tries to deceive us and others. He sows in secret (Matthew 13:25). He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-14). He is the “ruler of darkness” (Ephesians 6:12). Jesus knew there would be those who would fall to the devil’s deceptive ways and would love darkness rather than light. For He said in John 3:19, *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”*

Another lesson directly resembles this. The tares are the children of the devil and are deceptive as well. The tares that were sown (or some translate this as darnels) looked just like the wheat. In fact that is why the farmer (householder) would not allow his servants to tear them out. For one they looked just like the wheat and according to several commentaries there was not anyway to distinguish between the two until they had fully developed. Even at full growth the “darnel” was similar

in shape and in size as the wheat but slate-gray in color (*“The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, William Barclay, page 73*). Secondly, the roots of the “tares” would often intertwine themselves with the roots of the wheat making it very difficult to pull the “tares” without pulling up the wheat. There are so many in the church who are being deceptive. They are “sneaking” around spreading their own opinions and desires. They are not doing so openly but will make a comment here and there and will only say those things when they are around a “weaker” crowd. This will be done until there is a big enough group to get their way or cause a split in the church. As indicated in our text, all of this takes place before anyone is aware of it. (vs. 27) This is why we must be “sober and vigilant” (1 Peter 5:8) because the devil and his followers are out to “devour” us. Jesus is warning us that this will happen in His kingdom (the Church).

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Editorial

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Ronnie Hayes

As we study Matthew 25 and the kingdom of God, it is easy to see the connection with judgment day. The five wise and five foolish virgins will be judged according to how they prepared. The five talent, two talent and one-talent men were judged according to their participation. Then in the great judgment scene the proclamation is made in regards to what we as servant have done or not done in God's kingdom.

The account of the virgins should teach us to be prepared. In Matthew 25:1-13 we read of these wise and foolish virgins. The difference between the wise and the foolish seems to be preparation. It would be the same as saying the five prepared and the five unprepared. If we are going to be the kind of servant we should be in God's kingdom, we will utilize every opportunity to be ready and stay ready. This is why Matthew summed up this account by saying, "Watch..." (Matthew 25:13). H. Leo Boles in his commentary on Matthew wrote:

"Christians are like the virgins waiting for Christ's return in a long night of uncertainty; of the hour of that event they can know nothing, therefore they must be ready for it at all times. We watch by serving the Lord as faithfully as if he were looking upon us; we watch by being on our guard against every temptation and danger. Watchfulness is a state of readiness. The warning to watch bids us to imitate the five wise virgins and to take warning from the fate of the five foolish ones" (479).

If we are wise we will be preparing

for the return of Christ. His return is certain (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We would we wise to heed the advice of Amos, "...prepare to meet thy God..." (Amos 4:12). Our preparation will come through our obedience and faithfulness. Are we wise or foolish?

Every individual will determine if they are going to use their talents to participate in the work of the kingdom. There is no such person as one who has "NO TALENTS". I know you can hear individual claim they have no talents, but this is merely an excuse to keep them from working. In my opinion, the most scathing rebuke found in the scriptures is unleashed against this servant. Christ said, "...Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury" (Matthew 25:26,27). How would you like to be called "wicked and slothful"? This servant was unfaithful because he wouldn't work. Strange isn't it? Servant that don't want to work! Yet, there are Christians today, who don't work, won't work, or seek ways of getting out of work. As workers it imperative for us to see the urgency of the work in the kingdom of God. Christ said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). One of the most common excuses today to get out of work is, "There is just no one who wants to hear the Gospel anymore". That is not true! The truth is what Christ said, "...The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38,39). The problem with many

servants in God's kingdom is we have the "I CAN'T" syndrome. We look at our weaknesses, shortcomings, failures and simply give up. We should be as Paul and say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). If it was left up to us alone, we probably couldn't accomplish our work. Aren't you thankful that it isn't left up to us? Through Christ (Philippians 4:13) we can accomplish our work.

Christ is going to proclaim whether or not we are righteous or wicked. How you might ask? It will be determined by what we have done in His kingdom. As servants, we know whether or not we are "faithful servants" or "wicked/slothful servants". We know right now! Servants, who are unfaithful in their obedience, labor, and life, don't have to wonder, "Is my Master pleased"? They know the answer. Servants, who are obedient, hard working, and living a life that brings honor and glory to the Master, don't have to wonder. We can know the Master is pleased! Those servants can be assured, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). Judgment day will be a time when our wickedness or faithfulness will be proclaimed. This is why Paul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Solomon stated, "us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14). What will Christ proclaim about us on that day.

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THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Tom Larkin

The parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:31; Luke 13:19) is one of Jesus' shorter parables, but its message is one that should not be overlooked. Interpretation of this parable (also the parable of leaven hidden in the meal – v. 33) has traveled two distinct paths.

One interpretation suggests that Jesus was warning that the kingdom could become something that it was never intended to be. Those who contend for this interpretation point out that since the mustard seed is an herb it would be abnormal for it to grow into a tree. This interpretation is based on our understanding of the mustard seed. Whereas our mustard, which produces leafy vegetation, would not be expected to grow into a tree, the mustard seed of Palestine is a different matter.

Numerous works make reference to the mustard seed of the Palestine area growing to a rather large size – large enough for the birds of air to “lodge in the branches thereof.” In his definition of the word “mustard,” Thayer says it is “the name of a plant which in oriental countries grows from a very small seed and attains to the height of ‘a tree’ – 10 feet and more” (p. 576). In his comments on the phrase “shooteth out great branches” (Mark 4:32), Vincent cites a professor who found in the region around Mt. Carmel “a collection of mustard-plants from six to nine feet high, with branches from each side of a trunk an inch or more in thickness” (vol. 1, p. 184). And Adam Clarke mentions a particular rabbi from the Jewish Talmud who spoke of a stalk of mustard seed in his field into which he was “wont to climb, as men are wont to climb into a fig tree.”

Further, it should be noted that Jesus does not say that the birds of the air build their nests in the

branches of the mustard that has become a tree. The word translated “lodge” means “to settle or rest upon” anything for a period of time (see the entry “Mustard” in Smith’s Bible Dictionary). Accordingly, this parable does not suggest that birds take up residence in the mustard tree, but simply that they land on branches large enough to support their weight. In his commentary on Mark in the Gospel Advocate series, C. E. W. Dorris notes that “in the proper season the traveler on Gennesaret may ride by mustard bushes as high as his horse, and alive with flocks of merry bullfinches or of rock pigeons feeding on the seeds” (p. 112).

The context of the parable is sometimes offered as evidence that in it Jesus is warning of an abnormal growth of the kingdom. In Matthew’s account this parable follows the parable of the tares in which Jesus warns of enemies planting tares in with the wheat. In his explanation of the parable Jesus identifies the tares as “the children of the wicked one” (Matthew 13:38). While context certainly is important in interpretation, it is interesting to note that neither Mark nor Luke place this parable in such a context. In fact, Mark’s account has this parable immediately after the parable of the seed that brought forth fruit of itself (cf. Mark 4:24-29) while Luke places no other parables around it. Taking this into consideration, the argument from the context cannot be considered to be conclusive.

A different school of thought on this parable is that Jesus is teaching that great results can come from very small apparent causes. Bullinger stated that “a grain of mustard is a proverbial phrase for the smallest particle” (A Critical Lexicon and Concordance of the English and Greek New Testament, p. 513). In Thayer’s discussion of the word

“mustard,” he observes that “A very small quantity of a thing is likened to a grain of mustard seed; and also a thing which grows to a remarkable size” (p. 576).

This is in keeping with the usage of the mustard seed elsewhere in the New Testament. For example, Jesus said to his disciples, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20; see also Luke 17:6).

The church on earth had a small beginning and met with early opposition from the Jewish council. But, like the mustard seed in this parable, the church grew and multiplied and filled all the earth. Within a generation of the church’s beginning, Paul was able to write that the gospel had been “preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Colossians 1:23). Commenting on this subject Dorris wrote, “from a babe in a manger has grown this mighty kingdom” (commentary on Matthew, p. 112). The church fails to fit the world’s view of a kingdom, yet throughout its history on this earth the church has flourished. For example, the years which followed the division in 1906, in which the church lost members, property and schools, show the church growing in spite of the obstacles before it.

While we must beware of that which will turn the church into something Jesus never envisioned, it appears that this parable emphasizes that great results can arise out of small beginning.

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LEAVEN

Sam Willcut

“Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Matthew 13:33).

In my judgment, I believe that many have misinterpreted this parable of the kingdom of God. Many have often used this parable to teach, “The gospel will leaven the world, since the gospel is as leaven.” If this is true, then this is the only place in the entire Bible where the word “leaven” is used in a wholesome sense.

If we go back to the beginning of the Old Testament, whenever the nation of Israel had its origin in Exodus 12, they were to put all the leaven out of the house (Exodus 12:15), because this symbolized the fact that they were to lay aside all sin and become separated from all of the sinful things around them. Through this, they were to observe the Passover feast by putting all leaven out of the house—they could not have it in their house or eat anything cooked with it during the time of the Passover. This is why the Bible also refers to it as “The Feast of Unleavened Bread.”

In Matthew 16:5-12, we see this word used again. In this context, Jesus uses the word in reference to false doctrine. In Mark 8:14-15, Jesus uses it in the phrase “the leaven of Herod” to refer to materialism. Luke actually classifies this term without question: “In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is

hypocrisy” (Luke 12:1). Thus, we find this term “leaven” three times in the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and in every instance, Jesus uses it in a bad sense.

Nevertheless, we see the New Testament using this word two additional times. In First Corinthians 5:7-8, Paul said, “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” This is in reference to their hiding, holding onto and covering up a corrupt brother in the church. Therefore, Paul is telling the church in Corinth, “You are allowing the leavening of corruption to enter into the church, and you need to get rid of that,” which is what happened. To the brethren in Galatia, Paul said, “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:7-9). Apparently, there was an ongoing struggle. Here in this text, Paul is talking about the leavening of the false teachings of the Judaizing teachers. In other words, if they allowed the corrupt teaching of the Judaizing teachers to continue in the churches in Galatia, then that would leaven the whole church there.

Now, with all of these Biblical references to “leaven,” what is Jesus teaching about the kingdom of God? Is he not teaching about the established kingdom facing ongoing struggles from false teachers and negative influences? In other words,

when we allow corruption to enter into the kingdom, unless we correct such with the help of God, it will leaven the whole thing! This harmonizes with what Paul declared to the church in Galatia: “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9).

It is for this reason that I have difficulty in studying the Bible and finding that the word “leaven” is always used where it has to do with a corrupting influence with one exception. If we are going to let the Bible interpret itself, I believe we will see the consistency of the Bible. If we carefully put what Jesus teaches in Matthew 16, Mark 8 and Luke 12 with what we see happening in the kingdom of God in First Corinthians 5 and Galatians 5, coupled with what the Old Testament teaches in Exodus 12 as well as other references, then we could not see “leaven” in a good sense. If it is, then this tiny parable of Jesus is the only place. Rather, I believe it is more harmonious in Biblical study to see “leaven” as a corrupting influence in relationship to sin corrupting what is right in view of the kingdom of God, which is what I believe is the emphasis of this parable.

How easy is it to start out living the Christian life and subtly becoming corrupted by the deceptive power of leaven? Just let a little “leaven” into your life (hiding, holding and harboring corruption and sin), and see what it does to your spiritual life! If we leave it there in our hearts, it will corrupt us, and it will progressively get worse and worse, just as leaven operates.

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THE TREASURE HID IN A FIELD

Mel Futrell

In all honesty, this is one of those one-verse parables that sometimes gets overlooked in our examination of the parables of Jesus primarily because of its brevity. Such of course should not be the case. But what shouldn't be often is. The wise will remember that Jesus frequently said much in a few words. Jesus' parabolic teaching, although quite concise, contains some of the most insightful instruction that one will find anywhere in Scripture. This parable of The Hidden Treasure is also one of seven parables located in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel. The verse and parable we are considering is found in Matthew 13:44 and reads from the King James Version thusly:

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

Even an extremely short parable like this is rich with meaning and reward and as such is deserving of our consideration.

First, this parable was spoken by Jesus privately to His disciples in a house (vss. 1 & 36). However, whether Jesus taught privately or publicly His teaching was always the will of His Father (John 4:34, 7:15, 9:4).

Second, the language “kingdom of heaven” lets us know that this parable is to be classified as one of twelve Kingdom parables from the lips of our Lord. More of Jesus' parables fall into this category than any other.

Third, Jesus constructed His parables out of things and happenings that His contemporaries would have known about. In this case, hidden treasure and treasure hunters. Jewish folks were evidently

familiar with such. Solomon said one was to search for wisdom and knowledge “as for hid treasures” (Proverbs 2:4). And Job spoke of those who “dig...for hid treasures” (Job 3:21). In that day and age, before safety deposit boxes and personal safes, it was quite common for people to hide valuables in the earth. Many of us know of or have heard of individuals who have hidden money in freezers, mattresses, walls, and Mason jars buried in the back yard. Do remember though, that in this parable the treasure is the kingdom.

Fourth, the man in this parable just happened on this particular treasure [the kingdom]. Apparently he was not specifically looking for it. This is in contrast to the parable of The Pearl of Great Price where an intentional search for a specific item is made (Matthew 13:45-46). Nathaniel (John 1:49) and the Samaritan woman (John 4:9-29), are examples of those who found someone [Jesus] and something [His redemptive message] they did not set out to find. It is the same today, people who are not actually looking for the gospel or the church of Christ because of circumstances and the providence of God (Matthew 5:6), find it and embrace it.

Fifth, this parable makes multiple points having to do with value, joy, and sacrifice. The parable emphasizes the value of the kingdom by picturing the kingdom as a desired treasure. Our English word *thesaurus* is a transliteration of the Greek word for treasure, *thesauros*. This treasure is to be viewed by us as of greater value than anything else we possess. Perhaps we should regularly ask ourselves, “Is this my attitude concerning the kingdom?” This parable also stresses the joy of the treasure finder. Jesus said of the man having found the treasure hid in the field, “when a man hath found,

he hideth, and for joy thereof...” There should be great joy in coming into possession of the kingdom. Knowledge that we are saved can and should be cause for rejoicing (Acts 2:47; 8:39). The joy factor is never to be underestimated. Equally highlighted is the reality of sacrifice. A.T. Robertson was right, “The enormous wealth of the kingdom for which any sacrifice, all that one has, is not too great a price to pay” [*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Volume 1, 1930, p. 110]. Gaddys Roy in his *Sermons Outlines On The Parables Of Jesus* remarked:

“Some will think that we are foolish for giving up everything for the church, but we are foolish when we fail to put the church first” [p.30].

The Master of the parable, Jesus Himself, was perfectly correct when He admonished, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

Sixth, if one objects to the truth that the treasure finder does not reveal the fact of the treasure to the field owner, keep in mind that “not every part of his conduct...is proposed for imitation, but only his earnestness in securing the treasure found” [R.C. Trench, *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*, p. 47]. A word to the wise is that no parable should be pressed beyond its intended purpose.

No one New Testament parable, whether long or short, contains all the information on any given subject. Yet this miniature parable of The Treasure Hid in a Field is ripe with wisdom about that which we should long to possess and once in our grasp should never give up — the kingdom of heaven.

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GOODLY PEARLS

Bobby Liddell

Jesus used parables to compare the unfamiliar with the familiar, the spiritual with the common, and the heavenly with the earthly (cf. Mark 4:30). Matthew 13 records seven parables by which Jesus taught great truths about the kingdom of heaven, and in which He likened the kingdom to earthly things and events which His hearers could more easily understand. The sixth of these parables (Matthew 13:45-46) likens the kingdom to a “merchant man seeking goodly pearls: Who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

SEEKING

The merchant man was a trader who sought beautiful pearls. Pearls are the product of oysters, and were (even more in old times) much desired for their beauty and rarity. Preferred size, color, shape, and texture would greatly increase their value. The merchant was already engaged in “seeking goodly pearls,” endeavoring to find those that were most desirable for his collection, or most advantageous to his prosperity. His interest was not in cheap, inferior seconds. As a merchant, he would have traveled near and far in his relentless search for the best pearls, and, no doubt, was constantly looking for that singular prized “pearl of great price.”

Like him, men should be eagerly seeking that which is of real value, and is of the greatest worth to them—salvation in Christ and His church (kingdom [Matthew 16:18-19]). As his diligent seeking brought the opportunity to gain something which made all his efforts worthwhile, so men must be ever vigilant in their search for what is really important, truly significant, and of eternal meaning. Thus, Jesus declared: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things

shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). The trader’s find was not accidental, but the expected consequence of vigorously searching for that which he had set as his goal. Far too many pass through this brief life without finding that which is of true, genuine, indisputable value because they are not actively looking for it, or because they do not recognize the value when they find it. Too many find themselves depicted in Jesus’ warning: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matthew 7:6).

SELLING

For one pearl of great price, the merchant sold all he had. The price was not cheap. What he had was the accumulated wealth of all his earthly labors. Why would he think of selling the product of his life’s work? The pearl he found was the pearl for which he had hunted all his life, and nothing was of greater value, more prized, or to be held dearer—not even all he had. Thus, no sacrifice was too demanding, no cost too high, and no price too great if he could but obtain the object of his heart’s affection. Did he haggle over the price? Did he reluctantly deliver up his goods? Was the decision one over which he agonized, or tarried in making? Was he forced to trade? Or, did he make a mistake in undervaluing what he had, or in overvaluing what he wanted?

No. Such a transaction must not be looked upon as a loss of that sold, but the gain of that precious object obtained (cf. Matthew. 6:21). The trader did not hesitate to sell all he had. Knowing the worth of the kingdom, we must willingly, gladly, and without delay give up all (material possessions, pleasures, relationships, or prior religious affiliations) we have to obtain it.

When one is aware of the value, when his quest is enthusiastic, and when he understands he can be rich forever, all he has gathered in the past, regardless of its previous perceived worth to the owner, or of the efforts expended to gain it, is of no value when compared to the solitary “pearl of great price,” the kingdom of heaven (Luke 9:23ff).

SECURING

Securing “the kingdom of heaven” should be of greatest importance, above all other things (Matthew 5:6). What else could be of greater value than that which means salvation to one’s soul, fellowship with God and His children, happiness and hope in this life, and, in the life to come, Heaven? Jesus’ purchase of the church with His precious blood clearly demonstrates its preeminent worth (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Yet, we must be wary of counterfeits, phonies, and cheap imitations which are of no value, but impoverish their owners (Matthew 15:9, 13; John 4:24; 7:17; 8:32). We must seek the true kingdom, be able to identify it, and give all to secure it.

The world zealously expends its time, efforts, and energy to gain the things that rust and decay, and from which they soon shall be separated (cf. Matthew 6:19ff; Proverbs 23:23). Wise men realize that which is of real value, not inferior, or just equal to the “things of the world,” but far surpassing them. It is not sufficient to “say” the spiritual treasures are of supreme value, if one acts like material possessions are more important, for nothing in this world is more valuable than salvation in Christ (Mat. 16:26). Thus, seeking is not enough, we must also secure, and even at the cost of selling all we have (Matthew 7:7).

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THE NET CAST INTO THE SEA

James E. Rogers

Jesus continued His discussion of the kingdom of heaven by using the familiar fishing trade. The text for consideration is Matthew 13:47-50. Jesus tied this to the previous discussion by the use of “again,” which has the idea of “once more.” As we examine this text, let us notice the following:

The **simile** by which the “kingdom of heaven” is presented is a drag-net which was cast into the sea (47). Notice the seine. The drag-net is “a “seine” for fishing” (Biblesoft’s). A “seine” in our vocabulary refers to “a large net with sinkers on one edge and floats on the other used vertically to enclose fish when its ends are brought together or drawn ashore” (Webster’s 782). The drag-net gathered all kinds of fish (47). When the drag-net was full (“pleroo (play-ro'-o) . . . to make replete, i.e. (literally) to cram (a net)” (Biblesoft’s)), it was pulled to the beach (48). Notice the sea. The sea would be the mass of humanity. The kingdom is cast into the mass of humanity through the message it presents, the Gospel.

The **separation** of the fish involved sitting down and sorting and sifting the good fish from the bad fish (48). There is consideration. The fact they sat down implies “deliberation in the assortment” (Vincent 1:82). Examine also the catch which consisted of good and bad fish. “When a Jew heard about **good** and **bad** fish, he would probably think ‘clean’ and ‘unclean.’ The Law allowed him to eat only fish with fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12). Since the drag-net caught both clean and unclean fish, it was necessary for the fishermen to sort out what was edible and what was not” (Roper 354). This implies a standard by which one could tell good fish from bad fish. See, further, the collection of the good fish into

vessels for use. There is also the casting away of the bad fish. “Bad” is from “sapro (sap-ro's) . . . rotten, i.e. worthless” (Biblesoft’s). The casting away signifies rejection for use. “Notice that as long as the fish are in the water, they have independence of movement, but when they are pulled to the beach, they are wholly under the control of another” (Jackson 35).

The **stress** of this parable was, “So shall it be in the end (*sunteleia*, “signifies a bringing to completion together (*sun* with, *teleo*, to complete . . .), marking the completion or consummation of the various parts of a scheme. In Matt. 13:39,40,49; 24:3; 28:20, the rendering ‘the end of the world’ (A.V. and R.V., text) is misleading; the R.V. marg., ‘the consummation of the age,’ is correct. The word does not denote a termination, but the heading up of events to the appointed climax. *Aion* is not the world, but a period or epoch or era in which events take place.”) of the world” (*aionos*, age) (49) (Vine 2:27).

The angels will sever the wicked from the righteous (49). “Sever” is from “aphorizo (af-or-id'-zo) . . . to set off by boundary, i.e. (figuratively) limit, exclude, appoint, etc.” (Biblesoft’s). Once the severing has been done there will no longer be any intermixing of the good and bad (Luke 16:26). The bad fish represent the wicked who will be cast into the furnace of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (49,50). This is the same fate that would come to “all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity (13:42,43). This would show that the “bad fish” represent the same kinds of people. The good fish represent the righteous who will be gathered into heaven (13:48,49,43).

The stress of the parable is the separation of the bad from the good at Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15). One should learn the following: (1) The Judgment Day has been appointed (Acts 17:31). (2) There is no middle ground between good and bad. (3) It is not just being in the net that counts, but what one is judged to be when he is examined. It may be hard for some to think about “bad” people being in the kingdom, but the Scriptures show it to be the case (Hebrews; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Peter 2). One cannot be judged to be bad and go to heaven (Romans 2:1-16). Once saved, Always saved is not taught in the Scriptures. (4) If one goes to hell, it will be a place of torment (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; John 15:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 21:8). (5) If one is judged to be good, he will go to heaven, which is described as “eternal life” (Romans 6:23; 2 Peter 1:11). (6) Even if one got away with being bad on earth, there is a day when he will be caught and cast away!

Let us work hard to be “good fish” in the kingdom!

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The Kingdom of God: The Sown Seed ----- continued from page 41

A closer look at this Parable lets us know that God loves His own. Remember the “tares” were not destroyed as soon as they were discovered (vs. 28-30). Why? Maybe it was to give His people time to grow. The farmer was concerned about the wheat (vs. 29). This demonstrates God’s long-suffering to us and to all people. 2 Peter 3:9 says, “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is **longsuffering** to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*”

As the text indicates as well, there will be a great separation (or harvest, vs. 30). Even though the good and bad seed are undistinguishable in this world at times, no “tare” will be among the wheat. No one will mistakenly but sent to the wrong place. The wheat will be carried to the farmer’s barn (descriptive of heaven) and the tares will be carried to the furnace (descriptive of hell). Jesus is very precise in letting us know who will be carried to the furnace. Verse 41

says the Lord’s angels will gather out of His kingdom ALL who offends (some translations have “stumbling blocks”) and which do iniquity (or who practice lawlessness). Jesus warned His disciples about being a stumbling block in Matthew 18:6-7,

“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!”

Paul warned the Christians at Corinth and Rome in 1 Corinthians 8:11-13; 10:31ff; Romans 16:16:17-18). Jesus also warned His listeners about their iniquity in Matthew 7:21-23. John also makes a statement in 2 John 9 concerning this. “*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*”

In conclusion. this parable is

very plain in making the comparison between the sowing of the seed and the kingdom of heaven. He is warning us not to allow ourselves to be influenced by the “wicked one.” We can overcome him if we abide in His word (1 John 2:14). At judgment, the Kingdom of God will be purified from the “tares” that are among us. Be sure to grow and blossom in the Kingdom of God and one day you will gathered to be with Him forever.

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