

"The Earthly Kingdom of Jesus Christ"

Part 21

Matthew 13

Introduction: As we return to our study of the Kingdom, we are returning to Matthew 13 where we are looking at the parables which Jesus spoke to His disciples so that they could understand the age/dispensation which was about to begin. This dispensation of Grace and it would begin in Acts 2 with the start of the church, and it will end in Revelation 19 with the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. The focus in this age would be on Christendom. The parables of Matthew 13 introduce something completely new to the Jews. They were expecting the Kingdom, but the King was rejected by leaders of the Jews and for that reason the Kingdom was postponed. The King would go back to heaven and these parables then explain what life is like while the King is away, and this new dispensation is being lived out. The first parable we looked at was the Parable of the Sower. In this parable we learned that there would be a Seed sown that would be the Gospel and it would land on four types of soil/hearts. We learned that in this age Satan and his demons will do their best to steal away the Seed that does not find root in a heart. Jesus revealed in this parable that one out of four would have the soil of the heart prepared by the plowshare of conviction and receive the Seed and bring forth fruit. But He also made it known that over time in this age there would be a decline in fruit bearing. Jesus said the Seed brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

We then looked at the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. The Parable of the Sower showed us that Jesus/the Sower would be at work reaching souls with the Gospel. In this second parable we learned that Satan would waste no time sowing a false gospel to bring about false converts that would be tares within Christendom. Today they are within the church and after the rapture the tares will exist within the believers who will be saved during the Tribulation. This is Satan's way of causing confusion, strife, division, and weakness within Christendom. Jesus made it clear that the tares will exist until He returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation. We learned in all this that it is not our responsibility to root out evil in this world, but our responsibility is to preach the Gospel. Good and evil will exist together until the end of the age. This is not an age where good overcomes evil.

Notice the words of Pink:

"We see here the worthlessness of "reform" movements and efforts. It is an idle dream that we can improve the world by gathering out noxious weeds-banish drunkenness and immorality, purify politics, etc. Men might as well attempt to purify the waters of the

Dead Sea! The Lord has said, "Let both grow together till harvest." Then do not waste your time on the cultivation of the tares. "Preach the Gospel" is our marching orders."

This now brings us to where we are tonight.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Matthew 13:31-32

There are only two verses here but there is an abundance of spiritual wealth for us to see. This parable and the next parable are two that are greatly distorted in the present day by many teachers. Let us keep in mind that as we look at this parable, the context into which it is taught. The error of many teachers is that they want to use this parable and the next to teach the success of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Notice the words of Pink on the errors of modern-day teaching.

"The popular and current explanation of these parables is that they were meant to announce the glorious success of the Gospel. Thus, that of the mustard seed is regarded as portraying the rapid extension of Christianity and the expansion of the Church of Christ. Beginning insignificantly and obscurely, its proportions have increased immensely, until ultimately it shall cover the earth. Let us first show how untenable and impossible this interpretation is: First, it must be steadily borne in mind that these parables form a part of one connected and complete discourse whose teaching must necessarily be consistent and harmonious throughout. Therefore, it is obvious that this third one cannot conflict with the teaching of the first two."

So, what Pink is saying is that we must remain consistent in our interpretation. The first two parables teach us that Satan will be active in this age and good and evil will exist together until Jesus returns, therefore, to read into this third parable the success of Christendom to the point of converting the world, does not fit into the context.

Notice Matthew 13:31-32

The first thing we need to see here is that the mustard seed which is an herb turns into a tree. Let us understand that something has happened here because herbs never become trees. Therefore, we can know that Jesus is speaking of a transition here. The mustard seed in this parable represents Christendom so we can know that Jesus is speaking of some kind of transition in Christendom. But the question here is what does the tree represent? We shall allow the Bible to interpret itself here. There are two passages that will help us to understand what the tree represents. One is in Daniel and the other in Ezekiel.

Daniel 4:10-12

¹⁰ Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

¹¹ The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

¹² The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

Ezekiel 31:3-6

³ Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.

⁴ The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent her little rivers unto all the trees of the field.

⁵ Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth.

⁶ All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.

In both passages the tree represents worldly power, worldly influence and worldly greatness. So, the transition from the herb to the tree speaks of the change that would and is taking place within Christendom. We can clearly see this in the apostate church known as Religious Babylon in Revelation 17.

Revelation 17:1-6

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

² *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.*

³ *So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*

⁴ *And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:*

⁵ *And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

⁶ *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*

Getting back to the point, the transition was from being separated from the world in the beginning to becoming friends with the world.

Application:

We see this today within the church. There has been a loss of identity in many churches. Some have become places of entertainment, and many have accepted the sinful ways of the world so as to gather larger crowds. Some have accepted the sinful lifestyles of many and become places that are "safe havens" for those living in sin. This was never the Lord's intent for the church. The church was established to be a barracks to train soldiers where the Truth is to be taught.

Ephesians 4:11-15

¹¹ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

¹³ *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

¹⁴ *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

¹⁵ *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

So, we must ask the question, "What happened?" We must go back to the previous parable and get the answer.

Notice Matthew 13:38-39

The enemy planted the tares among the wheat and the tares used their influence and persuasion and brought about change from within. There are people who will get involved in the church and they are people who do not want the teaching of the Word. They want to be entertained and therefore they will press to get the music changed and fill the worship service with many different things so as to push out the teaching of the Bible because they despise the True Word of God. We see a picture of this in the Old Testament.

Numbers 11:1-6

And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.

² *And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.*

³ *And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.*

⁴ *And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?*

⁵ *We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:*

⁶ *But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.*

The manna is symbolic of the Word of God, and it was the "MIXT MULTITUDE", people who were not Israelites who had joined up with Israel when they left Egypt, who grew tired of the manna. They were the ones who started complaining and this complaining spread to the people of Israel. This is what has happened in many churches today. The MIXT MULTITUDE begins complaining about too much Bible and not enough variety and the next thing that happens is the believers join in and the service gets change, and the Bible gets pushed aside.

Now let us notice what has happened because of this.

Notice Matthew 13:31-32

We are told here that the birds of the air have come and lodged in the tree. There are those who teach that the **BIRDS** here are the Gentile nations who come into the Kingdom and find shelter and protection. But that is not consistent with the interpretation.

Matthew 13:3-4, 18-19

³ *And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;*

⁴ *And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:*

¹⁸ *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.*

¹⁹ *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

In keeping consistent interpretation, we see that Jesus tells us that the fowls represent the wicked one who is Satan. Let us notice another passage.

Revelation 18:1-4

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

² *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

³ *For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*

⁴ *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

Here in Revelation 18, we see that the birds are unclean. They are demonic spirits that have worked in the world's commercial system which is Commercial Babylon.

Getting back to the Parable of the Mustard Seed we can now understand that as Christendom and the church in particular, become more worldly that the result is it comes under the influence of the demonic world. Satan finds room in the compromising church. This is exactly what we are seeing today in the direction which many churches are going.

Conclusion:

It is our responsibility to be sure the Word of God is taught and given priority here. The moment this church leaves the Word of God it will become more and more like the world.