

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

-A PARABLE-

“IT IS THE GLORY OF GOD TO CONCEAL A THING: BUT THE HONOR OF KINGS IS TO SEARCH OUT A MATTER” (PROV. 25:2).

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

In Matthew 13 Jesus gave seven parables about heaven to the multitudes, not for clarity, as is commonly taught, but to conceal His real meaning, with the exception of those to which understanding is given (Matt. 13:11). He went on to say He would utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Of all the seven parables the one about leaven is probably the least understood, yet reveals the greatest secrets about the Kingdom of Heaven. In one short sentence Jesus described the three callings of mankind into the kingdom of God. These callings have been designed, planned, and placed in a sequence of time and events so that all mankind will have an equal and fair opportunity to be saved. In doing so, He answered many haunting questions for those who seek understanding.

Meaning Of The Symbols

Christ is here using an allegory in which leaven represents the Holy Spirit. The woman represents God's church; she "hid" the leaven would indicate that it can't be found without the key; (*the cross is foolishness to them that perish, I Cor. 1:18*). The meal represents people; the three measures represent three separate callings for judging; (not sentencing). The whole indicates that all of mankind will be given an opportunity for salvation. That the whole was leavened would indicate that, eventually, any and all that would be saved are, but every man in his own order (I Cor. 15:23).

THE FIRST MEASURE OF MEAL

This measure represents those who are being called and judged in this age. Peter tells us that judgment is to begin at the house of the Lord (His church, I Pet. 4:17) with Christ, the first of the firstfruits and afterward, they that are Christ's at his coming. Paul quotes Isaiah 49:8 when he speaks of an acceptable time in a day of salvation in II Corinthians 6:2. Not the same day for all, but all will have their day.

Firstfruits

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20). Other firstfruits of the harvest of the earth are mentioned in Romans 8:23; James 1:18; and Revelation 14:4. These are of the

spring harvest, or first harvest (barley and wheat). This harvest was implemented when Christ fulfilled the Wave Sheaf offering as the first of the firstfruits, opening the way for the descending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (called “Day Of First Fruits” in Num. 29:26). The calling of the rest of the first fruits is now ready, preparing them for the spring harvest of the earth - the first resurrection.

The First Resurrection

“Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection.” writes John in Revelation 20:5; it consists of those who shall live and reign with Christ for a 1,000 years. It is referred to as a better resurrection in Hebrews 11:35 and a blessed calling in Revelation 19:9, made up of those who rise first as mentioned in I Thessalonians 4:15-17 and followed by Christians who are still alive at that time. The marriage supper of the Lamb has come and the bride, arrayed in white linen, has made herself ready (Rev. 19:7-9).

This resurrection occurs at a time of the greatest ever tribulation and includes all those whose names are written in the book of life (Daniel 12:1). This is a spiritual resurrection; their change has come (I Cor. 15:53-54). They receive a free pass, as it were, right into the kingdom and do not have to appear before the Great White Throne Judgment. They are now immortal, therefore the second death has no power over them. They

have already proven themselves through their calling and will even be involved in judging angels (I Cor. 6:2; Mal 3:18).

But When?

In First Corinthians 15:51-52 we are told of a trumpet that will sound, called the last trump. At that time the dead in Christ (*firstfruits*) shall be raised, and the living firstfruits shall be changed. Also in Matthew 24:31 we read of a great sound of a trumpet when His elect shall be gathered from throughout the heavens and earth (*not the Jews as is sometimes taught, but the church (Col. 3:12; I Pet. 1:2; II John 1)*).

This also occurs immediately after the tribulation of those days. Again, in I Thessalonians 4:16 we read of the Lord descending with a shout, with the trumpet of God, and the dead rising, followed by the saints that are still alive. This is obviously a very noisy event; and every eye shall see Him (Rev. 1:7); no secret rapture here.

Trumpets

The blowing of trumpets played a great part in the life of the Israelites. It was their major means of communication. God instructed them to blow them at all important and timely events, such as announcing holy days, new moons, call to battle, etc. Revelation 11:15 describes the sounding of the seventh trumpet, announcing to the

universe that the kingdoms of the earth have become the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ.

There are trumpets blown on the Feast Of Trumpets (*called a day of blowing of trumpets for His people (Num. 29:1)*), which many understand announces the coming of Christ. It seems reasonable to assume that if that is the day He returns, that will be the time of our resurrection or change. It would also, quite likely, be at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

The calling of the firstfruits ends at the second coming of Christ. This is the *first* and *only* opportunity for those called and chosen at this time to have their names placed in the book of life. All whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life are now resurrected to eternal life.

THE SECOND MEASURE OF MEAL

Satan's binding is followed by 1000 years of peace referred to as the millennium. This is pictured by the Feast Of Tabernacles called the "In gathering" and represents the fall or great harvest. This is the beginning of a larger harvest than the spring harvest and is the time for the harvesting of the fruit of the earth. Remember that spring was the grain harvest, a smaller harvest.

There is a remnant of people left alive after the tribulation as evidenced by Christ's statement in Matthew 24:22

where He states that unless those days are shortened there would no flesh be saved; the obvious intent therefore is to save some flesh. Also see Isaiah 1:9, a small remnant is left; Isaiah 26:6 prophesies that Israel will blossom and bud and fill the whole earth; and Isaiah 65:8-9 where we read, "... that I may not destroy them all."

The people living at this time will live and die much as we do today. This is a time of the major regathering of the remnant of Israel from the four corners of the earth (Isa. 11:11-12).

Utopia

This appears to be a time of peace and rebuilding of the earth. Remember, Satan is bound and no longer influencing the people of the earth with his lies. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isa. 11:9). Read all of Isaiah 11 and 12. The deaf will hear and the blind will see (Isa 29:18; 35:5); swords will be beaten into plow shears; they will learn war no more and nations shall come to the house of the Lord to learn His ways and his laws (Isa 2:1-4, also Micah 4:1-8).

Pastors with knowledge and understanding will serve the people, and all nations will recognize Jerusalem as the throne of the Lord. Judah and Israel will be one nation again, read Jeremiah 3:15-18. The new covenant will be understood, having the same laws, but now be in the mind and heart (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:10; 10:16). God's holy days shall be observed (Isa. 66:23; Zec. 14:16); no one will die before their time, homes will be built, vineyards planted, life span will be comparable to a tree, and God will answer before He is called (Isa. 65:17-25).

For a peaceful 1000 years the people will be learning God's ways, rebuilding the earth, and all will know their God. Remember, Satan and his ministers are gone. The earth will probably be much like it was originally. This will be the opportunity for the earth's occupants to have their names placed in the book of life, their first and only opportunity.

THE THIRD MEASURE OF MEAL

The third measure of meal is those of the second resurrection and occurs after the 1,000 years of peace (millennium). This is a physical resurrection as described in Ezekiel 37, the valley of dry bones. Sodom, Gomorra, Samaria, and the Queen of Sheba are now resurrected along with all others who were never called or had an opportunity to make an informed decision for Christ during their previous life. This is not a second chance;

this is their first and only opportunity (Ez 16:55). (*Remember, none can come to Christ unless the Father draw him, John 6:44; 65*).

This is the day of judgment (not sentencing) Jesus was referring to in Matthew 10:15; 12:41-42; Luke 10:12-15. This explains why Jesus spoke in parables, since it was not their time to be called (Mark 4:11-12 and John 6:65). If they understood, they would be responsible and perhaps be judged prematurely. God knows the best time to call someone. This also answers the question of what happens to babies, children, and those who have never heard the name of Jesus, the only name by which they may be saved. This is their resurrection and their first opportunity for salvation; for then the entire world will know the Lord (Jer. 31:34). It sure doesn't now.

The Rest Of The Dead

These are the rest of the dead that lived not again until after the 1,000 years (Rev. 20:5). This is the second resurrection, pictured by the last Great Day or eighth day following the Feast of Tabernacles. On this day the high priest gathered "Living Water" (*ceremonially clean*) from the Pool of Siloam, which was mixed with wine (*blood of Christ*) and poured out on the holy altar.

Isaiah 12 mentions "in that day" alluding to the last day when men are freely drawing water from the wells of

salvation, and that His works are known in all the earth, which is certainly a first. Wouldn't this be the time when His gospel will be preached in all the earth before the end comes?

We read in John 7:37-38, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If *any* man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Wasn't He prophesying of the events of the actual last Great Day when salvation is open to all?

If we believe what Christ said in John 6:44 and 65, then this would be the first time that the calling of all mankind to the living waters of salvation has been given unto all men. It would also explain why Christ spoke in parables to the multitudes (Matt. 13:11). It was certainly not to make things clear as is commonly taught.

And in Isaiah 44:3 we read, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:" Spiritual darkness is removed (Isa. 25:7). Israel is no longer blind (Isa. 6:9-10; 29:10; Mk. 4:12).

The Third Resurrection

This occurs after the millennium and after the last great day. It is a resurrection to judgment (sentencing) and the time of the second death (Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8). This will be when some will be sentenced to the lake of fire (Rev. 21:7-8). Satan will be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet were cast (Rev. 20:10).

Some will be resurrected to shame and contempt (Dan. 12:2). There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Luke 13:22). The rich man rises from the grave and sees the lake of fire (Luke 16:23-24). The proud and wicked burn as stubble; the wicked are as ashes (Mal. 4:1-3). Mankind is to be baptized by fire or the Holy Spirit, his choice (Matt. 4:10-12). Fear him who can destroy both the soul and body in Gehenna (Matt. 10:28).

This is when the sheep and goats are separated (Matt. 25:33-46). Finally, the heavens pass away, the elements melt, all physical things are burned up (II Pet. 3:10).

The earth is now made ready for the final chapter of God's plan, the wonderful coming of the New Jerusalem described in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 when God will dwell with man.

Let's look again at the parable of the leaven and ask God for understanding.

“33 “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.

34 “All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

35 “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things, which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

The obtaining of wisdom and understanding is up to us, and God tells us how to get it.

“Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts” (Ps. 119:98-100).

“Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way” (Ps. 119:104).

Brethren, we are close to the final calling of the first measure of meal. Are you ready? 

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