

Jesus Gave a Parable about Leaven

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the parables that Jesus gave about the kingdom of heaven (God). That topic included the tares and the mustard seed. In this topic, we will look at the parable of the leaven and see how Jesus used leaven to illustrate the kingdom of heaven. We will also see why Jesus spoke in parables.

We see that Jesus gave another parable about the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 13:33 says, “Another parable He spoke to them: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.’” Leaven (yeast) was used to teach both the spread of evil and the spread of good in the New Testament. In Matthew 16:11-12, we read, “‘How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? — *but* to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’ Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” In these verses, we see that leaven is used to describe the false teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

In contrast, Luke 13:20-21 says, “And again He said, ‘To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.’” In these verses and our verse in Matthew, we see that leaven is used in a good sense to speak of the spread of the kingdom of heaven (God) in the world. The kingdom speaks of the rule of Christ over the earth. The kingdom will reach its full fulfillment when Christ rules on the earth for one thousand years just before the final judgments. Revelation 20:4 says, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” This time is still future.

However, in Luke 17:20-21, we read, “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, “See here!” or “See there!” For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.’” In these verses, we see that the kingdom of God is in the hearts of all those who place their trust in Christ. At the time Jesus was here on this earth, it was only true in the lives of a small group of people. It was like a tiny amount of yeast being placed in a large amount of bread dough. However, Jesus was telling in advance that those who are true believers in Him would spread throughout the world until there are believers in every tribe and nation. During the time of the tribulation, Revelation 7:9 says, “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands.” Here, we see that the kingdom of God will be in the hearts of people of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues.

We go on to see that Jesus spoke in parables to fulfill the words of the prophet. Matthew 13:34-

35 says, “All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ‘I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.’” The parables in chapter 13 of Matthew had all been kept as a secret from the followers of God throughout the Old Testament. As a result, Jesus was teaching new things that were not known in the Old Testament. At the same time, Jesus was explaining the parables to His followers. This also resulted in truth being hidden from the multitudes and revealed to His disciples. At the same time, Jesus was also fulfilling this promise from the Old Testament.

After giving these parables to the multitudes, Jesus sent the multitudes away. Matthew 13:36-42 say, “Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, ‘Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.’ He answered and said to them: ‘He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore, as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels; they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.’” We see that once the large crowd was gone, the disciples asked Jesus to explain the parable of the tares.

Jesus then explained that He is the One who sows the good seed. Luke 19:10 says, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” We share the Word with people day by day. The Son of Man places us as Christians in the world to share the Word of God. In that way, the Son sows the Word and causes it to enter their hearts as people hear the Word. John 16:8 says, “‘And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.’” This verse, and the following verses, tell us that the Holy Spirit then uses that Word to convict of the sin of unbelief, convince those who hear that Jesus is the Righteous One, and convince them that Satan has already been judged. He convinces that those who continue to follow Satan will share in his judgment. Finally, John 6:44 says, “‘No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.’” The Father then draws people to Jesus. In this way, the whole Trinity is involved in the work of transforming lives.

We see that the field is the world and that we as Christians (the sons of the kingdom) are the good seed. Mark 4:14 says, “‘The sower sows the word.’” Jesus is both the sower of the Word of God and He is also the sower who places us in this world to share the Word of God with those who are not Christians. That is why 1 Corinthians 3:9 says, “‘For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, *you are* God’s building.’” Paul, Silas, Timothy, Apollos and others had shared the Word of God in Corinth. They were God’s fellow workers as they shared the Word. In the same way, we become God’s fellow workers as we share the Word of God with others. In fact, we see in the previous paragraph that we have the privilege of working with all three members of the Trinity as we share the Word of God. We share the Word and Christ places the Word in the hearts of those whose hearts are good soil. We share the Word, and the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We share the Word, and the Father draws people to Christ in

repentance and faith.

Jesus went on to explain that the tares are the sons of the wicked one. We are given a warning, in Hebrews 3:12, which says, “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” This verse shows us that there are people who have an evil heart of unbelief that causes them to depart from the living God. The phrase an “evil heart” is used six times in the Bible. The other five are all in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 18:12 says, “And they said, ‘That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart.’” Here, we see that those who have an evil heart are those who walk according to their own plans and obey the desires of their evil heart. Genesis 6:5 says, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.”

Some of those who are tares also become false teachers that Satan uses to try and deceive others. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 says, “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.” We see that all who have hearts of unbelief will be gathered by the angels at the end of the age. Then, we see that they will be burned with fire. However, many of those who have unbelief have not been false teachers in addition.

That is why Jesus went on to make it clear that all would be gathered that offend or practice lawlessness. In 1 Corinthians 1:22-24, we read, “For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Whether people are Jews or Gentiles, Romans 3:10 makes it clear that “‘There is none righteous, no, not one.’” Then, Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The only ones who do not have offenses listed against them are those who have had their sins blotted out by the blood of Christ. Acts 3:19 says, “‘Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.’” Those whose sins are blotted out have eternal life.

Then, Jesus described the judgment of all those who sin and do not repent. He said that they will be cast into the furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Revelation 20:15 says, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain clearly to others that they will escape this eternal judgment if they will come to God through Christ as they turn from sin to God by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.