

The Parables

Dan Snaddon

Used by permission, as published on plymouthbrethren.org. More of his ministry at dansnaddon.org.

Also online at <https://plymouthbrethren.org/series/11980>

KEE Ministry Library · Faithful Men
kee-ministry-library.netlify.app

Life's Greatest Certainty: Death

Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 3:1-19

Illustrations

Time

When as a child I laughed and wept—Time crept.

When as a youth I dreamt and talked—Time walked.

When I became a full-grown man—Time ran.

When older still I daily grew—Time flew.

Soon shall I find in traveling on—Time gone.

And face eternity begun,—Time done.

Time was—is past: thou canst not it recall:

Time is—thou hast: employ the portions small.

Time future is not and may never be:

Time present is the only time for thee.

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32

Death

1 Samuel 20:3 “There is but a step between me and death.”

“For we must all needs die and are as water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again.”

Jeremiah 27:13 “Turn ye, oh turn ye, for why will you die.”

Psalm 116:15 “Precious in His sight is the death of His saints.”

“The Lord has no pleasure in the death of the unbeliever.”

Life’s Greatest Certainty: Death

It is appointed unto man once to die (see Hebrews 9:27). Death to some is a great mystery, to others a great tragedy, and to many more, a door into eternal bliss. Voltaire on his deathbed said, “Now, for a leap in the dark.” Alexander the Great asked that when he died, his hands be placed across his chest with his palms in an outward manner to show all that looked at him in death that he left this world empty handed.

Sir James Simpson had a butterfly engraved on his child’s tombstone to suggest that death was only a transition, like that from a chrysalis to the butterfly. Henry Reed, a dear saint of God, said when he was dying, “I find no shadow of death in the valley. It is to me full of light, green pastures, and living water.” Balaam the wicked prophet said, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his” (see Numbers 23:10).

What really is death? What is the Scriptural definition of death?

Death in its physical form is the result of the fall which came from Adam’s sin.

“The soul that sinneth shall die.”

Death is the penalty for sin. Romans 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death.”

Death in the Scripture is recognized in two spheres: the physical and the spiritual.

Physical Death

Let us consider the “physical” aspect first. Romans 5:12 says, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” The seeds of death, implanted in man’s constitution, began to develop after Adam’s sin; its progress could not be allayed, because access to the tree of life was denied them. Physical death, and decay, and ultimate dissolution were then inescapable. Man, then, from the moment of disobedience consequently became a dying creature.

God said, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” In a true sense death began at once. Although Adam lived for 930 years, Genesis 5:5 says, “And he died.” That is to say his soul and spirit was separated from his body. He did not exist anymore on earth. Physical mortality is the result of Adam’s sin. When a person dies, his body dies and returns to dust (see Genesis 3:19). The spirit of the believer returns to God who gave it (see Ecclesiastes 12:7). The soul and spirit is separated from the body, temporarily, in the case of the believer. In the case of the unbeliever, it is separated from God eternally.

Spiritual Death

This death, which was the result of Adam’s sin, was physical, but in a greater sense, it was spiritual. Spiritual death in the ultimate and absolute sense is separation of the soul from God for eternity. Let me express a truth little realized today - “unbelievers are dead while they live.” Paul’s writings force us to this conclusion, “Ye are dead in trespasses and sins” (see Ephesians 2).

In life, this would represent the building of the intellect, the corruption of the affections, and the enslavement of

the will towards God. Man, without Jesus Christ, is totally under the control of the god of this world. Living in this condition and dying in this condition carries with it the ultimate in wages. Eternal death, which is separation from God, involves eternal punishment in everlasting fire. Matthew 25:41 says, "Depart from Me..." Physical death affects all of us, "For we must needs all die and are as water spilled upon the ground." Spiritual death is the portion of the unbeliever who dies without Christ.

The Lord, on one occasion only, drew back the curtain of eternity and permitted us to look at life beyond death. This takes place in Luke 16, when Lazarus is in "Abraham's bosom," also known as paradise and would equate with our heaven. The rich man was in hell, in torment. This was not a parable, but in all probability, an actual incident. One man is in the state of bliss, the other is in a state of torment. Between the two, there was a "great gulf fixed."

This is a picture of the conditions that existed prior to our Lord's resurrection and ascension. We believe that conditions have changed. The victorious Christ liberated those believing souls of the Old Testament who died in faith and led them forth and took them with Him into heaven, i.e. the presence of God. So then when a believer dies, he goes directly into the presence of God. His is "absent from the body, at home with the Lord."

Conversely, when an unbeliever dies, he goes to Hades, a place of punishment. In a day future he will be resurrected (see Revelation 20:12). This is called the "resurrection of judgment" (see John 5:29). This is the Judgment of the Great White Throne. From there,

unbelievers will be cast into the lake of fire (Gehenna). This is what Paul calls the “wages of sin,” but praise God the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Parables of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:1-23

The subject of the chapter is the beginning of a new revelation, the introduction to the mysteries of the kingdom. In the preceding chapters, Israel has refused her king. The Lord said to them as He turned from them nationally, "I have piped unto you, but you have not danced; I have mourned, but you have not lamented" (see Matthew 11:17). At this point in His ministry, the Lord introduced a new message. In Matthew 11:28 He says, "Come unto Me all ye that labor..." He no longer bids His disciples "to go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (see Matthew 10:6). The sphere of their service is expanded to the world.

The nation had put itself beyond the point of "no return" when they gave Beelzebub the credit for the miracles which the Lord had performed. The Holy Spirit was the power, and in refusing to acknowledge this, they committed the unpardonable sin (see Matthew 12:31-32). The result of this total rejection was that Israel was set aside, and a totally new order was introduced. This new order, with its fresh revelations from God, had been hidden from the patriarchs and prophets (see Matthew 13:17). In its fullness, these revelations included the mystery of the Church composed of all born again believers.

Paul was the chosen vessel by which God revealed this sublime truth in its entirety. Prior to Paul's revelation of the church, the Lord revealed the "mystery of the kingdom" in this first parable in Matthew's Gospel. From this point on when the "kingdom of heaven" is

mentioned, it is not related to its absolute or final form. It rather depicts conditions in Christendom during our Lord's absence from the earth culminating in His second coming.

Note how the history of the professing church or the "kingdom of heaven" is revealed in this chapter:

1. The seed of the Word sown in the world and its results.
2. Satanic imitation—the tares among the wheat.
3. The kingdom of heaven as a great world church sheltering evil as well as good.
4. The professing false church inserting the leaven of corrupt doctrine into the spiritual food of God's people (the true church).
5. Israel, God's peculiar treasure, purchased with the world, but hidden away among the nations during this present age.
6. The church, the pearl of great price, for which the Lord impoverished Himself.
7. The dragnet—the events and conditions at the end of the world.

Wherever the Gospel is preached, the seed of the kingdom is being sown. The results of the sowing are twofold. A great body of people is being gathered. This body consists of those who recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and as earth's rightful King and give Him heart allegiance. Then there are the millions more who, when they hear the Word, give Him lip service, and in an outward way seem to own His authority, though their hearts are far from Him.

The kingdom of heaven in its present form includes both the true and the false. At the end of the age they will be separated (see Matthew 47:50). At first glance, the parable of the sower appears quite simple to interpret, but the true meaning is hid from many. The multitudes did not understand it and neither did the disciples.

Let us now consider the parable. It begins in Matthew 13:3 with, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." The sower is the Lord and the seed is the Gospel. In Matthew 13:4-7, notice the unproductive soil upon which the seed fell:

- It fell by the wayside and was devoured by the birds.
- Some seed fell on stony ground, and it looked as if it might produce fruit. Green shoots appeared, only to wither away quickly.
- Other seed fell among thorns, which choked the tender shoots.
- Some seed fell into good ground, took root, sprung up, and bore fruit.
- Then significantly, the Savior draws attention to the amount of fruit produced, totaling some thirty, sixty, one hundred fold.

The meaning of the parable is of tremendous importance. Jesus says, "He who hath ears let him hear" (see Matthew 13:9, 16-17). Matthew 13:18-23 gives us the Lord's interpretation of the parable. Matthew 13:19 describes the seed that fell by the wayside. This describes the attitude of those who reject the blood; though they hear, they are indifferent.

The ground is so Gospel-hardened that the seed cannot take root, so Satan and his emissaries snatch it away (see 2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

Hebrews 3:7 “Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart...”

Proverbs 29:1 “He that being often reproved”... “I’ll take the wages”

2 Corinthians 2:16 “Savior of life or death. Wax and clay.”

In Matthew 13:20-22, we have the professors, who are the stony ground hearers. [Describe those who make a profession, but who soon collapse under persecution. See Matthew 7, and describe those who say, “Lord, Lord.” Note also Simon the sorcerer and the ten virgins.] In verse 22, the unfruitful Christian is described as the seed among thorns. These Christians hear the Gospel and accept it, but their lives are not fully surrendered. They become entangled with the world’s pleasures; they are obsessed with riches and burdened with cares. Their temporal responsibilities choke the Word. On the other hand, the fruit bearers are described as the good ground hearers. They are the ground that the Spirit has prepared. Real conversion and real fruit mark their lives.

The Kingdom of Heaven is Likened Unto a Net

Matthew 13:47-50

This net is literally a “dragnet.” [Describe the “dragnet” as used by the fisherman.] This illustrates the work of the professing church today. The net is cast into the sea of humanity and great numbers of people, saved and lost, are gathered in from the waters of the nations. In the professing church today there are the professors and the possessors. Some examples include: the Andersons, Mary Angy, Terry Murphy, and Betty Bios. These individuals are examples of profession without possession. When the dragnet is full, the fishermen draw it in and commence to separate the good and the bad fish. Matthew 13:49 tells us, “So shall it be at the end of the world” or rather, the end of the age.

There is a great day of separation coming when the wheat and the tares will be separated and the good fish and the bad fish will be separated. The good will be gathered up at the Rapture, while the wicked will be gathered up and cast into the furnace of fire. The conditions of this place are described for us. There will be “weeping and wailing,” because of their suffering. In Luke 16, we see a depiction of this suffering, “Being in torment he lifted up his eyes [...]” The gnashing of teeth would depict their hatred against God and Jesus Christ. Their attitude will be one of continual tears and bitter regret.

After He had finished speaking, Jesus asked His disciples, “Have ye understood all these things?” Do you

understand these things? Jeremiah 24:7 says, “And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.”

Read Matthew 25:1-13 and describe an Eastern wedding. The Lord took this well-known custom to illustrate this important spiritual truth. In Matthew 25:1, the “kingdom of heaven” is likened unto ten virgins. [Describe the bridesmaids - explain that there were the foolish and the wise.] Matthew 25:3 reveals that the foolish took their lamps, but took no oil. In Matthew 25:12, The Lord said to them, “I know you not.” The wise had oil in their vessels. This illustrates the spiritual truth, that one part may have the Holy Spirit, while the other does not.

At the birth of the Spirit within us, we are sealed by the Spirit and receive the indwelling of the Spirit. [Describe the regeneration that took place at the Reformation.] The professing church is marching down to meet the bridegroom. They all appear to be the same, yet there is a vital difference. Some have oil in their lamps, and some do not. Some have never been born again (Note: the devils believe and tremble).

The religion needs the new birth. Such an example of this new birth is seen through the life of Saul of Tarsus (see Philippians 3:4-6). In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul describes himself stating that Jesus saved him, the chief of sinners. The un-churched need the new birth. In Isaiah we find the verse that says, “Come let us reason together,” which is referring to God’s attitude toward the confessing believer.

The Lost Coin

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the World

Luke 15:8-10

Introduction

The parable is as follows: A woman loses a small coin. She lights a candle and seeks diligently until she finds it. The coin is a picture of a lost sinner. The woman is a type of the Holy Spirit seeking and reclaiming men and women for Christ. So then, the parable presents a picture of God, the Spirit, working through the Church to reach the lost. In the whole parable we see the Godhead at work saving the lost. See Luke 15:2, "This man [...]" In the elder son, we see a picture of the Pharisees and scribes.

The Age of the Spirit

During the times of the Old Testament, God, the Father, was the central focus. Then, the Trinity was revealed at Christ's baptism. Then, for thirty-three years, Christ was the central focus. The times of the New Testament (also known as the Church Age) are known as the age of the Spirit. The Spirit's work is primarily in two distinct spheres: (1) to exalt the person of Christ, and (2) to bring men and women to Christ.

John 16:13-14 explains the Spirit's work relative to the Christian and to Christ. John 16:8 explains His work as it relates to unbelievers - "When He is come he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." There can be no conversion apart from the work and conviction of the Holy Spirit. John 6:63 says,

“It is the Spirit that quickeneth.” [Describe His work as He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment, bringing men to Christ.]

The Parable of the Great Supper/the Lost Coin

See Luke 14:15-24. The servant in the parable is the Holy Spirit.

1. He invites graciously, “Come, for all things are now ready” (see Luke 14:17).
2. He brings people to Christ (see Luke 14:21).
3. He compels people to come to Christ (see Luke 14:23).

The woman in the parable of the lost coin personifies this truth regarding perseverance, for she never gave up seeking for the lost piece of silver until she found it.

Conviction

Psalm 32:3-4, “When I would not confess my sin, I grew old because of the anguish in my heart. Day and night your hand of conviction was heavy upon me, until I was brought to the point of death.”

Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. There is no escaping God the Spirit.

Psalm 139:7-10, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Hades, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and they right hand shall hold me.”

[See how the Spirit worked in apostolic days. See also the Christ who is portrayed in prophecy - the Lord and Messiah - His resurrection proves this.]

Acts 2:37 - [Describe briefly Peter's sermon.] "When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'"

See Acts 16 and the conversion of the Philippian jailor - "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe."

In Acts 7:51, just before laying down his life, Stephen said, "You stubborn sinners, you do always resist the Holy Spirit." [Discuss resisting the Holy Spirit - A warning and a charge]

The Lord, in Genesis 6:3 says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

The Climax of the Parable

When the shepherd found the lost sheep and the woman found the lost coin, they called their neighbors together to rejoice. When the lost son repented and returned to the father, he forgave him, clothed him, and celebrated his return by killing the "fattened calf." Luke 15:2 says, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

Luke 15:10 says, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

Luke 15:1-10

Introduction

Consider first the publicans and sinners (see Luke 16-24). The accusation comes in Luke 15:2, “this man receiveth sinners.” Note that the previous events that had taken place revolved around the woman and the city (see Luke 7). See also the story of Matthew the tax gatherer. It was the accusation of verse 2 that prompted the parable.

When the Lord spoke of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, He was describing the “publicans” and “sinners.” The parables are designed to show the activity of the Godhead in the salvation of the lost through the suffering Savior, the lost coin, the seeking Spirit, and the singing Father.

There were three things that stood out in the first parable:

1. The value of a soul
2. The love of the shepherd
3. The cost of redemption

The Value of a Soul

The sheep is representative of the sinner. It represents the lost, who are headed for certain death, but are still so valuable in the eyes of the shepherd. Consider Mark 8:36-37, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Psalm 49:6, 8 - "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)"

The Love of the Shepherd

The shepherd left the ninety-nine other sheep and went after the lost one. The shepherd thought not of himself, but of the sheep. What a picture we have here of a sheep lost, but valuable, and of a shepherd who loved the straying sheep. [Describe Christ as the Shepherd.] Song of Songs 8:7-8 describes such a love, "Love as strong as death - that many waters could not quench." Describe the scene in heaven in Isaiah 6:8, which says, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" The answer is, "Then said I, here am I send me." Paul gives further light on what this means:

Philippians 2:6-8 "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"

The Cost of Redemption

The shepherd left all that he had and went after the sheep that was lost. Matthew 13 says that "he sold all that he had to procure the treasure."

"For none of the ransomed ever knew,

How deep were the waters crossed!

Nor how dark was the night that the hoard passed through

Ere he found his sheep that was lost.

Out in the desert he heard its cry -

Sick and helpless and ready to die."

The sufferings of the Savior as he sought the sheep are described in Psalm 22:

Note verse 1, which says, "My God, my God [...]" In verses 2-5, the patriarchs trusted and were delivered. We find the statement, "But I am a worm and no man" in verse 6, and in verse 7, we see that the people laugh at him; they put their tongue out at him; they mock him. He says, "I am poured out like water, my heart is melted like wax." His strength is gone, His tongue is swollen, He has an awful thirst, and His hands and feet are pierced. His bones are out of joint and He is forsaken by God. He cries out, "My God, my God [...]" John 13:1 says, "[...] having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

Lamentations 1:12 - "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the hand hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."

Why did the Lord the heavenly Shepherd do this? Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost." The lost sheep is loved - "The Son of God who loved me [...]"

The Lost Son

Luke 15:11-24

[Give a short resume of the life of the son.] The father supplied him with everything that he had (see Luke 15:12). Despite his affluence and his wealth, he left the home and his father (see Luke 15:13). There is a philosophy of life, not generally understood, that every faculty and talent that we possess, whether physical, mental or spiritual, we obtain from God. "In him we live and move and have our being"

The son lost everything that he possessed in the far country. He wasted his substance with riotous living (see Luke 15:13-16). The result of this was abject poverty.

Luke 15:17 - He came to himself [explain]

Luke 15:18 - His repentance is depicted here. He says, "I have sinned against heaven and against thee."

Psalm 51:4 "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

Luke 15:20 - "And he arose and came to his father."

The scene changes and now our thoughts leave the son and focus on the father. We have a picture here of God, the Father, that we have nowhere else in Scripture. This unveils the heart of God. The father in this narrative is seen grieving his lost son. He scanned the horizon continually. Who then suffers the most, the lost son or the father? [Describe a mother's terrible experience during the war.] God, the Father's heart bleeds for sinful humanity. Where is my wandering boy tonight?

Consider David's grief over Absalom. See 2 Samuel 18:33, which says, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son

Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" [Quote Matt 23:37-38, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem" - "Your house is left unto you desolate." Apply this to sinners of today.]

The climax of the story is now reached. The father's welcome is astounding. We see the father (or God, the Father) in a hurry—he ran to his son. God is love. He has compassion. The father embraced and kissed the son, whose garments were in tatters. He was filthy, smelled of a pigpen, and his sandals were gone. His body was emaciated and he bore the marks of sin. He came just as he was.

Ephesians 2:4 - "God who is rich in mercy [...]"

Romans 5:8 - "But God commendeth his love toward us [...]"

Note the son's confession in Luke 15:21 as he says, "Father, I have sinned." He never said, "And am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants."

Luke 15:22 brings us to the father's benediction. The father says, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; clothe him with the best and cover him with my garment. Make him fit for my presence." What a transformation! Every stain, mark, and trace of sin was removed from the father's sight. Therefore, he was forgiven (see 2 Corinthians 2:10). - Salvation "Put shoes on his feet that he may walk perfectly in my way," and "How beautiful are the feet [...]" - Service "Put a ring on his hand, a token of everlasting love and union which can never be broken." - Relationship They killed the fattened calf; they ate and were merry. Can you see the son singing? Can you see the father singing? -

Fellowship There is joy in heaven over the sinner that repents. You are a sinner. Repent! You are a sinner. Confess it; a welcome awaits you. Can you see the Father scanning the horizon looking for repentant sinners—looking for you? Will you this morning say, “I will go to my father?”

The Parable of the Leaven

Matthew 13:33-35

In this parable, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a woman hiding leaven in a meal. [Explain the kingdom of heaven]. The picture presented to us here is of a woman baking. She is seen inserting leaven into the meal. This is fine if her activities are confined to the kitchen. The issues here, however, are far wider, more complicated and much more important. This woman hid leaven in three measures of the meal. Eventually all the meal became leavened. This shows the history of the kingdom on into the Tribulation. The Lord compared this to conditions which would prevail in the kingdom of heaven.

A common interpretation of this parable is that the meal is the world and the leaven is the Gospel. This interpretation gives the idea that the Gospel will be preached throughout the world until eventually every person will be saved. This view is contradicted by Scripture, by history, and by current events.

Leaven is always used as a type of evil in the Scripture. When God commanded His people to rid their houses of leaven, they understood that leaven was a type of evil (see Exodus 12:15). In the New Testament, Jesus warned against the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians (see Matthew 16:6 and Mark 8:15). In 1 Corinthians 5:6-7, Paul defines leaven as malice and evil. Also, in the context of Galatians 5:9, leaven is depicted as false teaching. In general then, leaven means either evil behavior or evil doctrine. In this parable the Lord warns against the permeating power of evil doctrine

working in the kingdom of heaven. The picture here of the woman is to represent the introduction of evil into the professing Church.

At the present time, the evil teaching has reached alarming proportions. What is this evil? There is the externalism of the Pharisees. [Give examples here - horror with lips and hearts that fail.] The unbelief of the Sadducees shows in their profession of there being no resurrection. The worldliness of the Herodians is another evil. [Discuss the Billy Graham crusades.]

Furthermore, other evil doctrines are preached and practiced unashamedly. Such include:

Christianity without Christ (for example: Jim Jones, Moonies).

Forgiveness without repentance. You must be born again.

Salvation without regeneration.

Heaven without Hell. Heaven for gain only, not for Christ.

Religion without the Holy Spirit.

The professing church is riddled with leaven or evil doctrine. They deny the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, and the virgin birth. They also deny the blood atonement, the doctrine of the bodily resurrection, and the second coming of Christ. All this raises the question, "What should we believe?" We must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. This entails a confession of our sins and a confession of the utter depravity of our human nature; "God be merciful to me a sinner."

The true repentance of our sin is found in our sorrow and our turning around. The prodigal son provides us with such an example of just this. We must acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Savior, and then receive Him as our own personal Savior (example: the Ethiopian eunuch). In doing this, we believe in the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, His sinless life, His atoning death, His bodily resurrection, and His return to earth.

If you do believe with all your heart and receive Him not only as Savior but also as Lord, the Bible says that you have eternal life. 1 John 5 says, "He that hath the Son hath life." If you do not have the Son, you are in the false church, the professing church, and the Bible says of you that you have not eternal life; you are on your way to a lost eternity.

Women have been notorious for hiding evil in the Christian church. Mrs. White, a neurotic, hysterical woman was the chief prophetess for Seventh day Adventism. Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy was also neurotic, hysterical and a spiritualistic medium. She was the founder of Christian Science. Mrs. Blavatsky, a spiritualistic medium, introduced modern theosophy. Mrs. Besant, an infidel, was her successor.

The Lost Silver/The Lost Coin

This story is full of hidden meaning. It relates to Eastern culture and is a beautiful story that begins in sorrow and ends in joy:

A woman had ten pieces of silver, but inadvertently lost one of them. This was a very serious matter, as we shall see. These pieces of silver were worn across the wife's forehead, and were valued much like the wedding ring is valued today. If one coin was lost, it indicated that the wife had been unfaithful to her husband. This particular woman was very upset with losing one of the coins and was concerned about what her husband would say when he returned home.

In her dilemma she lit a candle and searched diligently, sweeping every inch of the floor until she found it. When she did find it and put it in its proper place, she was so overjoyed that she called her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her. To carry the story to its conclusion, the nine silver coins speak of the self-righteous, unrepentant scribes and Pharisees. The one lost coin speaks of the sinner, who, realizing his lost condition, when found, confesses his sin and repents of his sin and is eternally saved. The retrieved lost coin brought the woman more pleasure than the nine that had never been lost. So it is with God, when the sinner humbles himself and repents of his sin, it brings joy to the heart of God.

Note Two Important Principles Here:

(1) The activity of the woman:

The woman in the story would depict the Church, the Bride of Christ, as the agent of the Holy Spirit. There

was no hope for the lost coin, apart from the intervention of the woman. Similarly, there is no hope for the sinner, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

“Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” John 3:3.

Jesus said that when the Spirit is come, He will convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16):

The Holy Spirit came to convict of sin, not sins. “Of sin because they believe not in Me.” Refusing to take Christ as Savior is the great outstanding, damning sin which, if not repented of, will at death hurl a man or woman into the pit of hell. It is the Spirit’s prerogative to convict of this sin.

The Spirit will also convict of the need for righteousness. “Of righteousness because I go to the Father, and you see Me no more.” After the Lord completed His atoning work, God raised Him from the dead, and translated Him to His own right hand in heaven. Sin put Jesus on the Cross, but righteousness put Him on the throne. He is the only righteous person in the universe. The sinner needs this divine righteousness to be right with God, and the Spirit delights to point men and women to the exalted Christ, who is made unto us, righteousness. Behold the Lamb of God.

The Spirit also convicts “of Judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” The devil was judged at Calvary and sealed his doom when he crucified Christ. His head was bruised there. That is past judgment. His future judgment is in two stages: (1) He is bound with a chain and cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years. (2) Finally, he will be cast into the lake of fire which burns

with fire and brimstone for ever and ever. The Spirit convicts the sinner of the awful eternity of the Christ rejecter.

(2) The lost coin could not find its way back to the woman (the lost sheep):

"My dear sinner friend, you are dead in trespasses and sins, helpless and hopeless, held captive by the devil at his will...but you are valuable to God! Because you are valuable to God, He sent His Son to die for you and the Holy Spirit is seeking you this morning to bring you to Christ."

Until now, despite the reproving and conviction of the Holy Spirit, you have chosen to say "No" to the Spirit, and "No" to Jesus Christ. Be warned, "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his heart." You may be saying, "Not now" to the Spirit, and, "but I will some other time." "Boast not thyself of tomorrow." (Consider the example of the rich farmer) "Tomorrow's sun may never rise, to bless thy long deluded sight."

When as a child I laughed and wept, Time crept; (This is an urgent matter.)

When as a youth I dreamt and talked, Time walked;

When I became a full-grown man, Time ran;

When older still I daily grew, Time flew;

Soon shall I find in traveling on, Time gone;

And face eternity begun, Time done. Revelation 22:17.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended and I'm not saved." Jer 8:20.

Almost persuaded, harvest is past!

Almost persuaded, doom comes at last!

Almost cannot avail!

Almost is but to fail:

Sad—sad the bitter wail—

“Almost but lost.”

King Agrippa — “Almost you persuaded me to be a Christian.”

If you repent, your name will be registered in the Lamb’s book of Life.

“Rejoice with Me for I have found the sheep that was Lost.”

The Parable of the Marriage Feast

Matthew 22:1-14

The Lord's earthly life is almost finished. He spoke this parable shortly before going to Gethsemane, the Judgment hall, and finally to the Cross. The parable is actually a dispensational outline of how God is dealing with men and women in this age. It is another parable of the kingdom of heaven. It has to do with the sphere of profession and portrays conditions in Christendom during our Lord's absence.

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son (see Matthew 22:2):

1. The king is God.
2. The Son is Christ Himself.
3. The marriage is the union of believers with Christ.
4. The marriage supper is really the Gospel feast.

Please note that it is God's feast, God's Son, and He provides everything for the joy and glory of His own beloved Son. This thought was in God's heart, and motivated Him to express it by sending the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to seek a bride.

Matthew 22:3 covers the period of Christ's lifetime:

He sent forth His servants to call those that were invited to the wedding feast. Yet, they would not come.

- John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way—and they rejected him.

- The Lord Himself came and they rejected Him.
- He sent forth His disciples and they, too, were rejected.

The first invitation was limited in its scope. It was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They refused the gracious invitation. “Ye can discern the sky [...]” “Come unto Me [...]” John, writing many years afterwards, wrote, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (see John 1:11).

John 5:40 - “Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life”

Matt 23:37 - “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...but ye wouldn’t”
Their answer? Crucify Him.

Matthew 22:4 introduces us to the period immediately following the ascension of the Lord. This is known as the Apostolic Era. The history of this time is given in the book of Acts. Consider Peter and the others pleading with the Jews “Tell them which are bidden—tell them again; all things are now ready.”

Matthew 22:5 shows us that they made light of it. It is true that a few of them accepted the invitation. The majority of them spurned Him (see Matthew 22:5) and persecuted His servants (see Matthew 22:6). Use the examples of the various soils, oxen, and the wedding feast. They went their own way into their trades of farming and/or being merchants. They followed after their earthly pursuits instead. Hebrews 2:3 says, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation.”

Matthew 22:7 reveals that when the king heard of their continuing refusal, he was angry. He sent forth his armies, destroyed the murderers, and in A.D. 70, burned up the city of Jerusalem. God’s judgment on the wicked

unbelievers can be summed up by the verse that says, "God is not mocked."

Will God have an empty banquet hall because of this? Will no one accept the invitation and be present at the marriage feast for the glory of the Son? The wedding feast will be furnished with guests and He will find them in the most unlikely places. Matthew 22:9 says, "Go ye therefore into the highways and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." The Gentiles are then brought in (see Acts 10).

In Matthew 22:10, we see that the servants obeyed. From apostolic times until today, God's servants have gone into every land and nation with the Gospel invitation; the good and the bad have responded and are still responding. The wedding feast will be furnished with guests. [Describe the events leading to this, including the Rapture, the Judgment Seat, and the Wedding.]

Matthew 22:11 reveals that it was a custom in the East for the host to supply suitable garments to be worn at these feasts. The wedding garment ensued that everyone was suitably clothed for the presence of the king. [Note the sphere of profession.] The guests were assembled; the king arrived and found a man without the wedding garment.

Matthew 22:12 allows us to picture the man entering the feast. The servants were making robes available to the guests. This man came along and said, "I really do not need to bother with that robe, you see I just bought a new outfit, and I do not think that I need anything else; I am quite presentable as I am. I am good enough."

“But sir,” say the servants, “the king himself has provided this robe, and He wants all to wear one.” But the man insists, “Oh, I don’t think it will make any difference in my case; the king will be satisfied with me just as I am.” And he passed on in. He took his place with the rest of the guests. He joined in the preliminary activities, he used the same language. He was really enjoying himself. Then the king came in. [Quote Matthew 22:12] - “And he was speechless...” “That every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may become guilty before God.”

Matthew 22:13 describes the punishment. They are cast into outer darkness. Note the Great White Throne and the story of the rich man in hell. Profession - not everyone who sayeth Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of God. In Matthew 22:14 we learn that many are called, but few are chosen. The Gospel invitation is the call. Those who are chosen are those who obey the call.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast and the Great Supper

The King insists that the host be present until the guests are assembled. These parables show the time at His absence. Then is the time for His giving and receiving of His invitation and for His seating of His guests. In a sense, the gospel begins for each one as soon as he is saved, but the great banquet represented in these parables cannot really take place until He Himself sits down at the feast with us.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Matthew 13:31-32

Explain the phrase, “the kingdom of heaven.” The kingdom of heaven as illustrated in the seven parables of Matthew 13 is the sphere of Christian profession during this age. This particular parable illustrates what has taken place and is still taking place during the period between Pentecost and the Second Coming. This “mustard seed” was sown at Pentecost. From this small beginning it became a great tree, and the birds came and sheltered in its branches. This illustration is borrowed from the Old Testament (see Daniel 4).

[Show the growth of the “mustard seed,” which represents the Church, and the wheat and the tares:

Acts 1:15 (A.D. 58) - The number of names together was about one hundred and twenty.

Acts 2:41 (A.D. 33) - There were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Acts 4:4 (A.D. 33) - And the number of men was about five thousand souls.

Acts 8 (A.D. 36) - During the fourth persecution against the church at Jerusalem, the believers were scattered abroad. They went everywhere preaching the gospel.

1. The Ethiopian is converted.

2. Revival in Samaria – Simon the sorcerer

Acts 9 (A.D. 34) - Saul of Tarsus is converted.

Acts 10 (A.D. 41) - The Gentiles in the house of Cornelius are brought into the church.

Acts 13 (A.D. 46) - Paul and Barnabas begin the greatest missionary enterprise ever launched.

The mustard seed had germinated and was growing. From the Apostolic age, until the 3rd century, the church suffered severe persecution, but increased rapidly.]

In A.D. 300 Constantine was engaged in civil war with Maxentius to determine which one would be Emperor of Rome. Constantine desired to enlist the help of the Christians, as Christianity had become a very powerful force. He claimed to have had a vision in which he saw a flag unfurled; on it was a cross which had the following words written on it - "in this sign conquer." He said this was the sign to him that Christianity was the true faith. He also made it clear that should he be victorious, Christianity would become the official religion of the Empire. He was victorious; thus, Christianity became the official religion.

Everyone, the victorious and the vanquished, and those who had been conquered, were baptized into the so-called Christian Church. This unholy union of Church and State eventually plunged Europe into the dark ages. The Church became political, (birds) or evil men sheltered in its branches. These were the emissaries of Satan, with evil intent using religion as a cloak for their dastardly deeds.

It took the Reformation to shake Europe loose from this strangle-hold. Evil men are still within the Kingdom as we shall see in a moment. These parables could speak to the coming kingdom. Note the dispensational aspect of the parable. Looking at the parable in this way, there seems to be an analogy between the condition of things depicted in the first and the early chapter of Church

history. There was the first sowing of the seed, then the tares and wheat. After this, there was the abnormal growth of professed Christianity and finally the leaven permeating the meal through the instrumentality of the woman. These characteristics were apparent before the dark ages.

There are also those theologians who view the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven as the spread of the gospel. There are others who view the parables prophetically as showing the progress of good and evil. The mustard seed in the parable really outdid itself. From a very small beginning, it grew rapidly into a tree. In the first parable, the birds of the air represented the “wicked one” (Matthew), Satan (Mark), and the devil (Luke). The significance would be the same as the one found in this parable. The kingdom is likened unto a mustard tree. The mustard seed became something that it was supposed to become, while the kingdom had become something that it was never intended to be.

The Parables of the Kingdom and Treasure and Pearl

Matthew 13:44-46

The Introduction

These two parables present a very different picture to us than the preceding ones. As we review the preceding four we are inclined to ask, "Is the kingdom of heaven a failure?" The picture drawn by the Lord up to this point is a dismal one. What commenced as a magnificent and majestic movement gradually became corrupted as tares appeared among the wheat, as professors sheltered in the branches of the mustard tree, as the professing church hid the leaven in the meal which climaxed in the denial of the fundamentals of the faith. The result of all this is Christendom on the professing church in its present state of doctrinal chaos, worldliness, divisions and errors.

The question now naturally arises, "Is the kingdom of heaven a failure?"

One must admit that the present view of Christendom is dismal and discouraging. The picture of the natural man is one of complete failure. The Church is involved in politics, hunger marches, anti-war demonstrations—all kinds of protest movements, but they have neglected their great commission to preach the Gospel to all people. Psalm 73:16-17 says, "When I sought to understand this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I." In order to see the issue as God sees it, we must go to Him and allow Him to teach us something of the "riches of the

glory of His inheritance in the saints" (see Ephesians 1:18). This revelation is not for the crowd, but for His own people.

The Scriptural Meaning of the Parables

The parables of the treasure and the costly pearl have been interpreted in various ways. The most popular interpretations are listed below.

1. Christ is the treasure and the pearl, and we must sell all that we have to possess Him.
2. The man is the Lord. He is the One who sells all that He has to obtain the treasure and the pearl. In each case, He must become poor to gain possession of that upon which He had set His heart.

The main difference with those who interpret the man as being the Lord and those who do not is that they disagree on what the treasure and the pearl represent. Some even say that the treasure is Israel and the pearl is the Church and vice versa. Now that we have explained to you the generally accepted interpretations, let us determine what the parables mean in their context.

The First Parable: The Treasure

The first parable concerning the treasure, which was no doubt made up of various precious things (such as coins and jewels) represents the individual aspect of Christ's redemptive work.

The Second Parable: The Pearl of Great Price

The second parable is but one object, a pearl of great price. This represents the collective aspect of the redemptive work of Christ. We believe that the parables

teach different aspects of the same truth; the treasure and the pearl represent all whom He has purchased with His own blood.

We find double symbolism in the two things that are emphasized:

1. The costliness of the treasure or pearl.
2. The delight of the purchases.

Now let us consider the man who bought the treasure and the pearl. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. For a description of Him, see Colossians 1:15-19 and also Philippians 2, where God is highly exalted.

- He is "God over all, blessed forever" (see Romans 9).
- He is the Creator, upholder, and sustainer of all things.

What did he do? He sold all to buy the field and gain possession of the treasure and pearl (see John 3:16).

2 Corinth. 8:9 says, "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are to be seeking the treasure.

Ephesians 5:25 says, "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." We are to be "seeking the pearl."

Philippians 2:5-8 says that He, "Who being God... humbled Himself—and became obedient to death - even death on a Cross!"

Matthew 13:44-46 say that he sold all that he had.

Isaiah 52:14 states that "His visage was marred more than the Sons of men."

Psalm 129:3 says, "The plowmen plowed my back they made long their furrows."

Isaiah 53:5 says, "He was wounded (tormented) for our transgressions."

Matthew 27:45 says, "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." This is the merchantman and this was the cost. "Were the whole realm of nature mine [...]"

Psalms 69:1-2 says, "Save me oh God, for the waters are come into my soul. I sink in deep mire where there is no standing; I am come unto deep waters where the floods overflow me." "My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Is the kingdom of God a failure?

Was the death of Christ in vain?

If the parable of the recovered treasure is "God's view," then the parable of the purchased pearl is "faith's view." Ephesians 5:27 says, "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." A pearl is displayed to be admired.

Ephesians 2:7 says, "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Then in verse 10 we see that we are His workmanship, His masterpiece. In Ephesians 3:10 it says that, "He will show unto holy angels and powers through the Church the manifold wisdom of God."

The Rich Young Ruler

Mark 10

Let us look at the parable of the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-22. This classic parable reveals a young man coming to Jesus in a hurry. He comes running to Jesus as a serious and sincere seeker, kneeling reverently at the Savior's feet. It seems as though he is close to being saved, asking Jesus, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17) But when Jesus commands him, "Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me," this young man goes away sorrowful at the thought of losing his great many possessions. (Mark 10:21-22) At the last minute, he does not believe and turns his back on Jesus.

As far as the Scriptures reveal, he never comes back to Jesus, and is lost, perhaps forever. Similar to what we see with Agrippa, who says to Paul, "Almost you persuade me to be a Christian," this man is almost persuaded, yet does not submit and ultimately does not believe. (See Acts 26:28) Phillip Bliss, who wrote the hymn *Almost Persuaded* based on this interaction between Paul and Agrippa, writes:

"Almost persuaded now to believe, almost persuaded
Christ to receive, seems now too soon to say, oh Spirit,
go thy way, and some convenient day on thee I'll call.

Almost persuaded harvest past, almost persuaded, doom
comes at last.

Almost cannot avail, almost is but to fail.

Sad, sad, the bitter wail, almost, but lost.”

Beloved, we need to be more than sincere to be saved, and do more than confess and repent our sins, as this young man does. We need to believe and receive Christ as our personal Savior. The Lord Jesus is always interested in saving sinners. In fact, He came down from heaven to do this. Jesus Himself says, “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Mark 2:17) The Pharisees also say, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” (Luke 15:2) The Pharisees, by contrast, never receive sinners. But, as Paul teaches, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!” (1 Timothy 1:15) There is rejoicing in heaven when one lost sheep is found. (See Luke 15:7) Whatever else our friends in heaven know, or may not know, in respect to what is happening on earth, they always know when the Good Shepherd finds a lost sheep. He gathers the redeemed around Him and says, “Rejoice in me for I have found my sheep that was lost.”