

As we have already deduced in our previous studies, parables taught the willing hearers lessons about the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. We also concluded that the parables contain lessons about the Kingdom of God on earth.

1. PARABLE OF NEW WINE IN OLD WINESKINS

The Scribes question Jesus' ministry:

Matthew 9:3-4 "And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"

The Pharisees question Jesus' ministry with sinners:

Matthew 9:10-12 "Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."

Consider the above verses as a preamble to Matthew 9:16:

Matthew 9:16 "No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse."

A new cloth will shrink when washed and the contraction will cause the old garment to tear.

Matthew 9:17 "Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

New wine (Greek *Neos* = fresh and new) In time the wine will begin to ferment in an old wineskin and the fermentation will cause the wineskin to burst. The religious Pharisees and Scribes were having difficulty with the earthly ministry of Christ because their customs and traditions were being challenged. Jesus, through the parable teaches that the Old (Mosaic Law) cannot be combined with the New Covenant that was to come. Remember that the Old Covenant was promised to Israel.

Hebrews 8:13 "In that He says, "A NEW COVENANT," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."

Hebrews 8:10 tells us that the New Covenant would come to Israel as prophesied in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 31:31).

Hebrews 8:10 “ FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”

Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”

The Jewish leaders failed to understand that Jesus was the testator of the New Covenant and their position as interpreters of the Old Testament Mosaic Law was soon to become obsolete.

2. PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

Matthew 13:44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

The field is the world and the treasure is believing Israel. Christ's death was to atone for the sins of the world, the price he paid with His blood to secure believing Israel as His treasure. The treasure is hidden in the field (earth) until the owner returns to claim His treasure. This occurs when Christ returns to usher in His kingdom.

3. THE PRECIOUS PEARLS

Matthew 13:45-46 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

This parable illustrates again the value of the kingdom treasure – nothing else is worth the value of this pearl of great price.

4. THE NET AND FISH

Matthew 13:47-50 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

The fish (believers) will be saved but the bad debris (unbelievers) are cast away.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

While we acknowledge that these parables do not refer to the Christian dispensation, there are truths that we may relate to in terms of God rewarding the righteous and condemning unbelief. The powers of the world have already identified the land of Israel as a pivotal location in terms of world peace (Zechariah 12:2-3). The struggle for control over Israel in our time is evidence of the hidden treasure (Israel) being sought for by the systems and powers of the world. Salvation is to the Jew first and then to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16). The believer and student of the bible should take cognisance of the importance of rightly dividing the Scriptures (1 Timothy 2:15). The old system of the Law and the principles of the Kingdom which is the New Covenant was designed for Israel and Judah. Despite Israel failing to claim their inheritance (they rejected Christ), the Body of Christ as a new revelation made known through Paul the Apostle has made us partakers of the spiritual benefits of the inheritance. (Ephesians 3:1-9). We must not mix the Mosaic Law system and the Kingdom doctrine with the Body of Christ (Christianity) teaching.

Ephesians 3:1-9 “ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles--if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ.”